

# Payroll Supervisor Dolewski's hard work pays off with City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison has named Payroll Supervisor Anna Dolewski as the recipient of the latest City Manager Leadership Award.

"As a full-service City, Payroll in Costa Mesa can be a very complex operation," City Manager Farrell Harrison said. "But with Anna in charge, I have complete confidence that everything will run smoothly. She is such a valuable member of our team and I'm honored to present her with this award."

As the Payroll Supervisor, Dolewski provides her expertise and analytical abilities for the labor contract negotiations. Upon adoption, Dolewski works with IT and Human Resources to ensure the labor contracts are correctly implemented in the City's payroll system.

She is diligent, detail oriented, and is passionate about ensuring Costa Mesa's staff are correctly compensated. Her passion and strong work ethic are to be commended.

During COVID, Dolewski took the lead for Finance on setting up the payroll processes to ensure City staff could electronically track their COVID time correctly for cost recovery reporting.

She is also the lead to ensure that the COVID sick time approved by the Federal Government during the COVID shut down period is fully reimbursed. During this period of time, she successfully navigated the Internal Revenue Services inquiries related to tax submittals, proving yet again her detailed day-to-day processes and strong internal checking systems work.

Aside from the normal bi-weekly payroll processing efforts, Dolewski also ensures the City transmits the correct CalPERS payments, State and Federal Taxes, and all health benefit payments biweekly. She also processes W-2's annually, a long and arduous process in the beginning of each calendar year.

She always avails herself to all City staff for any payroll-related inquiries. In fact, she makes sure to personally meet with each new employee and explain payroll. She also meets personally with each staff member who are planning to retire.

Further, as a full-service City, with complex Police and Fire schedules, she has a thorough understanding of those safety payroll complexities, and is able to ensure that the City's payroll system correctly captures those complex formulas.

For many years, Dolewski was the only staff member in the payroll office for the City. Throughout her many years in payroll, she worked with Information Technology and Human Resources staff to create specialized payroll modules to ensure that the payroll processing is fully automated; thereby reducing error and ensuring proper internal controls are in place for payroll.

Dolewski started her career with the City of Costa Mesa over 35 years ago as a part time staff member in Central Services. She quickly promoted into the Finance Department, working her way through multiple areas within the Department. She was a Clerk Typist, Office Specialist I, Accounting Specialist I and II, Payroll Coordinator and is currently the City's Payroll Supervisor.

She is instrumental in the daily, monthly, quarterly and annual payroll processes for the City. In fact, in 2022, she processed over 17,300 payroll checks and 780 W2s.

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# Alma Reyes promoted to Deputy City Manager of Costa Mesa

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison has promoted Alma Reyes to the newly created position of Deputy City Manager, moving her into a vital role at City Hall as she assists with the day-to-day management of the City.

“Alma is a trusted and immensely talented member of my team and has worked alongside me for years to assist the City Council, manage the City Manager’s Office, assist with complex projects, and help solve constituent issues,” Farrell Harrison said. “She has accomplished a lot in her time with Costa Mesa, and I am proud to promote her into this new role, where she will have expanded responsibilities and duties. I look forward to working closely with her on our high-priority initiatives.”

Mayor John Stephens congratulated Reyes on her appointment.

“Alma is a consummate professional who has served the City with excellence and enthusiasm for many years,” Mayor Stephens said. “There is no problem too big or small for Alma to solve. She is the ‘go to’ when we need to get stuff done. Alma will be an outstanding Deputy City Manager, and we are very fortunate to have her in that position.”

Reyes has been the Assistant to the City Manager since 2019, managing Constituent Services, the City Manager’s department budget, key Citywide projects and City special events. She began her career with the City of Costa Mesa in January of 2011, where she began her first job as a Management Analyst for the Public Services Department.

In April of 2013, she transferred to the Parks and Community Services Department to serve as both the Management Analyst

and Recreation Supervisor. In November of 2015, Reyes moved into the Fire & Rescue Department to serve as a Management Analyst, and Chief Dan Stefano praised her passion for public service, team value orientation, and engaged professionalism.

“I have spent my formative years working for the City of Costa Mesa, with the desire to continue my career working in an organization that I have come to consider home,” Reyes said. “I am humbled and excited to take on this new role and work alongside dynamic and professional colleagues to carry out the City Council’s vision to fruition and continue to provide high-quality services and experiences for our vibrant and diverse community, businesses, and visitors. The City of Costa Mesa really is CostaMazing!”

Prior to working in Costa Mesa, Reyes worked for 10 years for the City of Hawaiian Gardens in various areas of local government including: Administration, Public Relations, Public Safety, Public Works, Recreation, Code Enforcement and Finance.

Reyes holds a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and Public Policy from California State University, Long Beach, and a Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice and Public Administration from California State University, Fullerton.

She begins her role effective immediately.

**MEDIA CONTACT**

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**Street sweeping cancelled**

# today Wednesday March 29

Due to the inclement weather, street sweeping has been canceled today March 29. Street sweeping will resume back to normal schedule Thursday March 30 weather permitting.

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## **Senior Management Analyst Kristin Stevens presented with City Manager Leadership Award**

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison presented Fire & Rescue Senior Management Analyst Kristin Stevens with the City Manager Leadership Award.

“Kristin has a wide range of skills and talents and is always willing to step up wherever she is needed,” Farrell Harrison said. “Her positive disposition, thoughtful intelligence, and outstanding work ethic are just a few of the many attributes that she shares every day. I’m proud to present her with this award.”

In 2015, Stevens began working for the City of Costa Mesa as a Part-Time Management Analyst in the City Manager’s office where she was a key member of the communications and marketing team.

In 2018, Stevens accepted a full-time Management Analyst position with Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue (CMFR).

During her tenure with CMFR, Stevens has been an active member

with several notable achievements and accomplishments.

In 2018, she was tasked as the department's lead in creating and compiling the Department's first comprehensive CMFR Annual Report and continues to do so every year-end. She strengthened the CMFR brand and social media presence within the community, and oversees the ambulance operator cost recovery revenue program.

As the management analyst, Stevens is involved in every aspect of our annual budget.

If that's not enough, Stevens also serves as a member of the City's PIO team and events/planning team. Lastly, she completed the Leadership Tomorrow program in 2020.

Chief Stefano has recognized Stevens as one of the highest performers in multiple areas for the CMFR and the city, always willing to embrace the value of taking things from good to great!

She attended Saddleback College where she earned her Associates of Arts degree. In 2010, she earned her Bachelors of Arts in Communications degree from California State University Fullerton, and in 2015, she completed her Masters of Public Administration degree from California State University San Bernardino.

While working toward her goal of higher education, Stevens worked as an intern for TMZ, and eventually for the Orange County District Attorney's office. Stevens worked for the City of Huntington Beach as a Public Aide in the Public Information office.

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# **CMPD veteran Dianne Gonzalez receives City Manager Leadership Award**

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison announced that Police Department Community Services Specialist Dianne Gonzalez is the recipient of the City Manager Leadership Award for the month of February.

“Dianne was recently promoted to a new role in the Special Investigations Unit where she has excelled at her job,” Farrell Harrison said. “She works diligently to not only make the unit run as efficiently as possible but through her work she also makes the police department, and the City better. I’m grateful she is on our team.”

Gonzalez initially worked for the Costa Mesa Police Department (CMPD) from 1987 to 1991 as a Police Records Technician and a Community Service Officer. In 1991, she went to work as a Police Dispatcher for Irvine Police Department after receiving her Dispatcher certification. She then went to work in the private sector as an Executive Assistant from 1992 to 2006, and returned to CMPD in December 2006 as a Police Records Technician.

Nine years later, in August 2015, Gonzalez promoted to Senior Police Records Technician. As a veteran Senior Records Technician, she was relied upon to train personnel and help organize the yearly case files. In the Records Bureau, she was known to be extremely knowledgeable and experienced, as well as courteous and friendly.

In March 2022, Gonzalez promoted to Community Services

Specialist (CSS) and was assigned to the Investigative Services Bureau's Special Investigations Unit (SIU). In just a year, she has become an invaluable member of the SIU team.

She assists the sergeant and investigators on a daily basis with tasks, including creating and processing criminal court cases into the Electronic Direction for Complaint System (EDC) and preparing court packages for the Orange County District Attorney's Office and City Attorney.

She assists by performing various record checks on vehicles, criminal histories, address locations, and countless Record Management Systems/COP Link searches for investigators, who are often in the field. Her efforts have been a great help in identifying suspects and locations during surveillances and undercover operations.

Gonzalez handles the registration and permitting pertaining to all license massage establishments and therapists within the City of Costa Mesa. She has been able to identify issues with licensed or unlicensed establishments quickly to efficiently address the situation. She has streamlined the owner and therapist permitting process, resulting in a shortened process from two months to two weeks. A number of business owners and massage therapists have expressed their appreciation for her efforts to expedite the process.

Gonzalez regularly communicates with the Costa Mesa Business Licensing in the Finance Department and the California Massage Therapy Council to advise on issues that are discovered.

With the recent approval of Measure Q, SIU became responsible for assisting the Planning Department with marijuana dispensary applicants DOJ/FBI fingerprint live-scan. In this process, Gonzalez reviewed each applicant to ensure they met requirements and have no violating convictions.

Gonzalez is a longtime resident of Costa Mesa and an Estancia High School alumna. She also attended Goldenwest College,



where she received a POST Dispatch Certificate.

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## **Costa Mesa to receive \$630,000 grant toward making streets safer**

The U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded a \$630,000 Safe Streets and Roads for All grant to the City of Costa Mesa to develop a Safe Routes to School Action Plan.

The grant will provide the City with funds to develop a comprehensive safety action plan with specific implementable project concepts to enhance safety on streets used to access each of the Newport-Mesa Unified School District campuses located within the City.

Costa Mesa is one of seven jurisdictions to receive this federal grant funding in Orange County, and will receive nearly 25% of the total funding allocated to the county.

“The City of Costa Mesa is excited to receive this grant award from the USDOT for safer walking and biking to school and encourage healthy and active transportation options for students in our community” said Mayor John Stephens. “As the popularity of walking and biking increases in Costa Mesa, we look for opportunities to improve safety and mobility for vulnerable roadway users including school aged children.”

Fifth District Council Member Arlis Reynolds, who has led the way on advocating for safe street programs for Costa Mesa, was also happy to see the City get this funding.

“That we won one of the largest grant in Orange County

signifies our focus and leadership on street safety for our community,” she said. “This grant is a huge win for our community, especially our students and their families, and sets us up for significant safety improvements on walking and biking routes to school.”

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the new Safe Streets discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over the next five years.

This first funding cycle of the grant program, announced on Feb. 1, 2023, will award \$800 million to 510 communities across the United States.

The program focuses on implementing low-cost roadway safety treatments and action plans to increase the safety of all roadway users.

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## Costa Mesa Residents sought to serve on City Committees

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking residents to serve on the following City Committees:

**Animal Services Committee:** This committee assists with the planning of animal related events, explores and provides recommendations to improve animal services, and promotes pet licensing within the City. The City is recruiting for three regular members for a two-year term. For further information, please contact Recreation Coordinator Jessica Torrejon at (714) 754-5128.

**Active Transportation Committee:** This committee assists with the review, update and implementation of the city's Active Transportation Plan in order to make recommendations for their improvement to the City Council. The City is recruiting for five regular members for a two-year term. For further information, please contact Active Transportation Coordinator Brett Atencio Thomas at (714) 754-5275.

**Fairview Park Steering Committee:** This committee provides advice to the City Council regarding the implementation of the Fairview Park Master plan and impacts of Measure AA on Capital Improvement Program projects, maintenance and activities. The City is recruiting for three regular members for a four-year term and one alternate member for a four-year term. For further information, please contact Fairview Park Administrator Kelly Dalton at (714) 754-5135.

**Finance and Pension Advisory Committee:** This committee provides advice to the City Council regarding events and issues which may affect the financial status of the City. It also evaluates annual and long-term pension and financial impacts from changes in CalPERS contribution rates and/or actuarial schedule changes. The City is recruiting for five members for a two-year term. Applicants shall have pension knowledge or shall be residents or individuals that conduct business within the City and have a background that includes experience in securities trading, financial planning, banking, auditing, accounting, or a closely related and relevant field. For further information, contact Executive Assistant Stella Giragossian at (714) 754-5243.

**Historical Preservation Committee:** This committee serves to maintain, preserve, educate and promote the city's historical resources. The City is recruiting for five regular members for a two-year term and one alternate member for a one-year term. For further information, contact Recreation Supervisor Kevin Stoddart at (714) 327-7561.

**Housing and Public Service Grants Committee:** This committee meets on an as-needed basis and helps to promote community understanding of the activities funded by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) with a focus on social service grants. The City is recruiting for five regular members for a two-year term. For further information, contact Grant Administrator Mikelle Daily at (714) 754-5678.

**Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee:** This committee addresses issues that will help improve the quality of life in mobile home parks and to review matters concerning mobile home parks in the City of Costa Mesa. The City is recruiting for two park owners or his/her representative, two mobile home resident owners, and one independent citizen at-large all for a two-year term. For further information, contact Principal Planner Phayvanh Nanthavongdouangsy at (714) 754-5611.

**Application Process** – Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Commission Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website ([www.costamesaca.gov/apply](http://www.costamesaca.gov/apply)).

The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; emailed to [cityclerk@costamesaca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@costamesaca.gov); or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

The deadline is 5 p.m., Thursday, March 9, 2023. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the March 21, 2023 City Council meeting.

#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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# Costa Mesa streets will get a little bit slower as speed limits lowered in 17 segments

Costa Mesa drivers will need to slow down as City officials are lowering the posted speed limits on 17 segments throughout the City, in accordance with a recent engineering and traffic survey for speed limits and state law.

These speed limit reductions reflect recent laws governing speed limits and the City's goals to improve the safety of all our residents, whether on foot, on bikes or in vehicles, where applicable. Additional reduction measures will be made in June 2024.

"Costa Mesa is leading the way when it comes to keeping pedestrians, bikers and drivers safe," Mayor John Stephens said. "Thank you to our Public Works team for undertaking this important, life-saving initiative."

The speed limit reductions align with the City Council's enhance safety and reduce collisions as we build out our bikeway and walkability infrastructure.

"I'm thankful for the state laws that allow these speed limit reductions," said Council Member Arlis Reynolds, who has championed safe streets for bicyclists and pedestrians. "This is just one step of a multi-pronged approach our city is taking to make our streets safer for everyone."

And Public Works Director Raja Sethuraman cited the safety factor of lowering the speed limits.

“Reduced speeds will benefit all travel modes by improving safety and operations along several major corridors throughout the City,” Sethuraman said.

The speed limits will be lowered on the following 17 street segments:

- 16th Street from Whittier Avenue to Placentia Avenue (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Adams Avenue from Royal Palm Drive to Harbor Boulevard (45 mph to 35 mph)
- Adams Avenue from Harbor Boulevard to Fairview Road (45 mph to 40 mph)
- Anaheim Avenue from 19th Street to Superior Avenue (30 mph to 25 mph)
- Avenue of the Arts from Sunflower Avenue to Anton Boulevard (35 mph to 25 mph)
- Baker Street from Red Hill Avenue to Airway Avenue (40 mph to 35 mph)
- Harbor Boulevard from 19th Street to Newport Boulevard (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Hyland Avenue from MacArthur Boulevard to Sunflower Avenue (40 mph to 35 mph)
- Mesa Verde Drive East from Adams Avenue to Harbor Boulevard (40 mph to 35 mph)
- Newport Boulevard Northbound from Bristol Street to Del Mar Avenue (45 mph to 40 mph)
- Newport Boulevard Northbound from Santa Isabel Ave to 22nd Street (45 mph to 40 mph)
- Paularino Avenue from SR-55 to Red Hill Avenue (40 mph to 35 mph)
- Placentia Avenue from 19th Street to 18th Street (40 mph to 35 mph)
- Randolph Avenue from Bristol Street to Baker Street (25 mph to 20 mph)
- Red Hill Avenue from Baker Street to Bristol Street (50 mph to 45 mph)

- Royal Palm Drive from Baker Street to Adams Avenue (30 mph to 25 mph)
- Whittier Avenue from 19th Street to City Limits (35 mph to 30 mph)

Signage changes to the posted speed limits are underway by Maintenance Services Division staff.

For any questions, please contact Sethuraman or Jennifer Rosales, Transportation Services Manager at 714-754-5343.

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## **City reports \$4.3 million surplus and \$83 million reduction in pension liability**

The City of Costa Mesa announced a \$4.3 million General Fund surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, despite three years of an ongoing global pandemic and without the use of reserves.

On Tuesday, Feb. 7, the City Council was presented with the City's audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report that also reflected a sharp decline of almost \$83 million in the City's net pension liability.

"This positive financial report is a truly a team effort," Mayor John Stephens said. "I want to thank my City Council

colleagues for their shared dedication to Costa Mesa's financial health. The City Manager and the Finance Director also deserve a lot of credit. This is the type of performance you can expect when you hire the right people, put them in the right positions and give them the freedom to do what they do best."

According to the report prepared by the City's Finance Department, the City showed revenues of \$165.7 million compared to expenditures of \$161.4 million. The surplus was attributed mostly to sales tax revenue increasing by \$13.5 million year over year, and the transient occupancy tax (hotel tax) increasing by \$4.1 million over the prior fiscal year, as travel restrictions implemented during the pandemic were lifted.

"I am excited about the outstanding financial results achieved for FY 2021-22," City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison said. "This outcome proves that Costa Mesa, under the leadership of the City Council, and under the direction of Carol Molina as the City's Finance Director, is serious about its long-term financial sustainability. I could not be more proud."

As of June 30, 2022, the City has a total General Fund Balance of reserves of \$57.8 million. This exceeds the City Council's adopted General Fund Reserve goal of \$55.0 million by almost \$3 million, a noteworthy achievement.

"This achievement is a result of a strong leadership team dedicated to outstanding public service while remaining financially prudent" Finance Director Molina said. "I would like to thank the City Council for their vision and commitment to sound financial practices that make strong fiscal results possible."

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# New applications are being accepted for Community Development Block Grants for 2023-24

The City of Costa Mesa is accepting applications from interested, tax-exempt nonprofit organizations operating within its jurisdiction that provide public services that benefit low- and moderate-income Costa Mesa residents and are eligible for grant funding under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

HUD has not notified the City of its actual 2023-2024 grant; however, for planning purposes, an estimated \$140,000 in CDBG funds may be available on a competitive basis for public services for fiscal year 2023-2024. The application and related instructions are available on the City's website here: [Public Service Grants Program | City of Costa Mesa \(costamesaca.gov\)](#).

Applications must be submitted to the City of Costa Mesa Housing and Community Development by 2 p.m., Monday, Feb. 13, 2023. Late applications will not be accepted.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [mikelle.daily@costamesaca.gov](mailto:mikelle.daily@costamesaca.gov) or (714) 754-5678 prior to the application deadline.

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# **Sandbags available for residents at Costa Mesa City Hall**

As a big winter storm approaches, Costa Mesa and the region, the city's maintenance service crews have made sandbags available at City Hall in case of flooding.

Sand bags are available for free to Costa Mesa residents in the southeast corner of the City Hall parking lot at 77 Fair Drive. The location is self-service and bringing your own shovel is suggested as supplies could be limited. The number of sandbags is limited to 15 sandbags per household.

No commercial use please.

[Click here for instructions.](#)

Also, the Costa Mesa Sanitary District will have a sandbag station at the Robin Hamers Yard, 1741 W. Wilson Street. Sand and bags are provided, but residents will need to bring their own shovel.

City crews will patrol potential flooding spots to make sure catch basins are clear of debris and operational. Crews are also ready to respond to other weather-related incidents.

Please report flooding issues to 714-754-5252.

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## **Costa Mesa residents sought**

# to Serve On City Commissions

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking residents to serve on the following City Commissions:

**Parks and Community Services Commission:** This Commission meets monthly, and advises and makes recommendations to the City Council on matters pertinent to public parks, recreation programs, equipment, facilities and improvements in operation and administration for the benefit of the residents of the City.

The City is recruiting for three members (Appointments by Council Members Andrea Marr, Manuel Chavez, and Arlls Reynolds), each for a four-year term and one member (Mayor John Stephens' appointment) for a two-year term.

For further information, contact Executive Assistant Laura Fautua at (714) 754-5009.

**Arts Commission:** This Commission meets monthly, and consists of seven Council-appointed positions. Selection for the Arts Commission is at large, with a minimum of four Costa Mesa residents, and/or up to three non-residents involved with the Arts. Interested candidates will be required to complete an Arts related questionnaire highlighting their individual interests and/or accomplishments related to the Arts.

The Arts Commission represents the Council's desire for ongoing policy focus, along with responsible oversight of the City's investments in the Arts.

To align with the motto of "City of the Arts", the City acknowledges the vital role the Arts play in the community. The general objectives of the Arts Commission shall be to ensure that the City of Costa Mesa is a place where creativity can flourish; a place where imagination, inspiration and innovation are held in high regard; a place where Arts

Education is essential to all; and a place where Arts and Culture can promote civic pride and enrich the daily lives of the Costa Mesa community.

The City is recruiting for one member for a four-year term (Appointment by Council Member Don Harper).

For further information, contact Arts Specialist Laurette Garner at (714) 754-5300.

**Planning Commission:** The Commission meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month and advises on planning, land-use, and development matters. The Commission is the final decision-making body for certain discretionary land-use approvals such as design review and conditional use permits.

The Commission also functions as an advisory body to the City Council for Zoning and General Plan amendments.

The City is recruiting for three members (Appointments by Council Members Marr, Chavez, and Reynolds), each for a four-year term and one member (Mayor Stephens' appointment) for a two-year term.

For further information, contact Administrative Assistant Anna Partida at (714) 754-5612.

**Application Process** – Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Commission Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website ([www.costamesaca.gov/apply](http://www.costamesaca.gov/apply)).

The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; emailed to [cityclerk@costamesaca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@costamesaca.gov); or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

The deadline is 5 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the Jan. 17, 2023 City Council

meeting.

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