



L to R: Village Clerk Lori McWilliams, Deputy Clerk Mary Ann Grieser, Admin Specialist Diana Manali

Many ask **what is the City Clerk?** What is their place in local government?

The Municipal Clerk (also called city clerk, village clerk, or town clerk) is the oldest of public servants, along with the tax collector, and traces back to before Biblical times. Clerks, in the early years, were often called “Remembrancers,” as before writing tools were available, the Remembrancer had to solely utilize their memory as the public record (www.sanantonio.gov). The term Clerk in America is traced to the early Colonists first order of business, where they established the office of the “Clerk.” According to a 1989 study by J. Walton Blackburn, titled **Review of Public Personnel Administration**, *“One of the most important, yet little recognized, category of public servants in the US today is that of*

a municipal clerk.”

Clerks are diverse leaders, dedicated high-level professionals, and often serve on the senior management team. It is imperative the Clerk has exceptional perception, judgment, and reasoning when retaining and recalling official actions and discussions. The Clerk must juggle copious responsibilities simultaneously; have considerable proficiency and strict attention to detail, exemplary organization skills, and the dexterity to coordinate unforeseen and never-ending changes. Clerks are inevitably exact, yet flexible with timelines, and balance interactions with confidence and an impartial demeanor.

Municipal Clerks are the hub of local government – the direct link between the residents of their community and their government. Municipal Clerks have significant interactions with every department, neighboring community leaders, and legislators, and are invariably involved in all aspects of government – local, county, state, and federal.

Clerks are creative and technical writers; facilitating binding legal documents including ordinances (laws), resolutions (policies), grants, agreements, minutes, final orders, deeds, Code of Ordinances and the Charter. Clerks are customer service specialists and legal advertising professionals who must maintain stringent time lines for legally binding advertisements. Clerks are the official custodian of records and ensure the municipal records are disposed of and/or maintained according to law. Clerks are skilled in procurement, budgeting and ethics, serve as trainers; and are tasked with solving complex and multi-faceted issues. There are many complex diversities of the job dealing with assorted personalities and an unyielding array of tasks. The Clerk is apolitical and works to please everyone (elected body, manager, department heads, staff, residents, legislators, visitors, etc.).

The Clerk is the historian – the permanent voice of the community. City Clerks organize and facilitate the elaborate council agenda packets, which consist of departmentally

interconnected and detailed documents. Following the meeting, the minutes are scribed with deliberate caution to ensure an accurate transcript of legislative action is maintained.

In Tequesta, the Clerk also serves as Public Information Officer (PIO) and Webmaster. As PIO, the position is tasked with maintaining strong relationships with the local media, ensuring accurate and timely information is disseminated via press releases, remaining knowledgeable and up to date on social media outlets, producing effective graphic design publications and producing the quarterly and Friday newsletters. The position of Webmaster includes maintaining and administering the contents of the Village's webpage.

The eminent political scientist, Professor William Bennett Munro, writing in one of the first textbooks on municipal administration stated:

“No other office in municipal service has so many contacts. It serves the mayor, the city council, the city manager, and all administrative departments without exception. All of them call upon it, almost daily, for some service or information. Its work is not spectacular, but it demands versatility, alertness, accuracy, and no end of patience.

The public does not realize how many loose ends of city administration this office pulls together.”

These words, written well over 50 years ago, are even more appropriate and pertinent today.