

Municipal Attorney Applicant Interview

Cheryl McKay

September 5, 2024

6:05 p.m. via zoom (time is approximate)



Municipal Attorney



Applying For Position		
Job Title: Municipal Attorney	State: AK	Location: City and Borough of Sitka

Personal Profile			
First Name: Cheryl	Middle Name:	Last Name: McKay	Work Phone: [REDACTED]
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	Address: [REDACTED]	
Address 2:	City: [REDACTED]	State: [REDACTED]	Zip Code: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]			

Educational History				
Institution: University of Colorado	Location: Boulder	State: CO	Major: Law	Degree: Juris Doctorate
Institution: University of Alaska	Location: Anchorage	State: AK	Major: Journalism	Degree: B.A.
Institution: Boston University	Location: Boston	State: MA	Major: Communications	Degree: none
Surname when in school if different:				

Work History

Agency	State	Position	Start Date	End Date
Municipality of Anchorage	Alaska	Deputy Municipal Attorney	08/14/2023	present
Population	# of FTEs in agency	# of FTEs in dept.	# of direct reports	Budget Size
290,000	280,000	14	3	\$612,000,000.00

Type of Organization -full service, contract, or other additional comments.

Full service

Involuntary Employment Separations

No

Controversies

No

Desired Salary and Available Date

Desired Salary:



Available Date:

Negotiable

Background Check: Later in the recruiting process, candidates deemed 'finalist' may be requested by the hiring organization to have a background check conducted. A background check will not be conducted without written consent from the candidate. If a candidate decides to not consent to a background check, the hiring organization may decide to remove the candidate from the remaining recruitment process. By checking the box, I am agreeing that I have read and understand this disclaimer.

Disclaimer: Prothman is a recruiting agency, contracted by our clients to assist in the outreach, collection, and preliminary screening for vacant job openings within our clients' organization. Please note: the selection of finalist candidates and the final hiring decision is at the sole discretion of the hiring agency (our client). At no time does Prothman select finalist candidates or make the final hiring decision. By checking the box, I am agreeing that I have read and understand this disclaimer.

I certify that all statements on my application and other materials are true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that falsification of information relevant to employment or failure to fully complete the application form may disqualify my application. I agree and give my consent that any person, firm or organization listed herein is authorized to furnish Prothman with reference material concerning my character, past employment or any other information requested. I understand and agree that the hiring agency or its agents retains the right to determine the fitness and adaptability of applicants for

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employment.

Candidate's Signature: Cheryl L. McKay

Date: 2024-08-02

CHERYL L. MCKAY



August 1, 2024

Prothman.com

Re: Municipal Attorney for the City and Borough of Sitka

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for the position of Municipal Attorney for the City and Borough of Sitka. This is a unique position and I believe it will align with my professional strengths and personal goals. Sitka is a beautiful place, and my family's history reflects our ties to the community. As my career progresses, I am interested in assuming a leadership role in a smaller community, preferably on the water. I want the opportunity to use my skills and experience to work together with an administration and legislative body to make good things happen.

As I stated in my answer to the "supplemental question", my husband and I are interested in living in a vibrant, collegial community. While we have lived in Anchorage for many years, we are committed to relocating to a place that is welcoming and where we can contribute our efforts. I believe my legal experience, both in the private and governmental sectors, would be a good fit for the City and Borough of Sitka, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss this position further.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl L. McKay".

Cheryl L. McKay

CHERYL L. MCKAY

Experienced senior attorney and executive with diverse background within the public and private sectors. Proven track record of success in managing complex business transactions, high-stakes litigation, resolving disputes without litigation, and challenging public policy issues.

EDUCATION

University of Colorado, Juris Doctorate. National Moot Court semi-finalist, Evidence Award and legal clerk in the National Indian Law Clinic. 3.8 GPA.

University of Alaska Anchorage, B.A. Journalism/Public Communications. Chancellor's Scholar Award. 4.0 GPA.

Boston University, Public Communications and Marketing.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Admitted to practice in the State of Alaska, the United States District Court for the District of Alaska and the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Municipality of Anchorage, Assistant Municipal Attorney, Acting Deputy Municipal Attorney and Acting Municipal Attorney (on a limited basis). (August 2023 – Present.) Legal officer for the Civil Department for the Municipality of Anchorage and counsel to the Mayor of Anchorage, Mayoral Administration, Departments and the Anchorage Assembly. Responsible for contracting, employment matters, including federal and state discrimination complaints, transactions and legal issues raised by Municipal departments. Advised directly on critical legal issues, including settlement of high-stakes litigation, U.S. and Alaska constitutional issues on municipal government and environmental health and safety issues. Called upon to lead the Department and supervise a staff of 12. Key accomplishments include:

- Guided negotiations for Union collective bargaining agreements.
- Advised the Mayor and Assembly through the administrative transition.
- Negotiated the resolution, without litigation, of fair equal employment complaints with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Anchorage Equal Rights Commission and the Alaska State Commission on Human Rights.
- Supervised outside legal counsel in defending high-profile civil litigation against the Municipality.

Cheryl McKay, P.C., President and CEO. (2018-2023.) Provided consulting and legal services for small and large businesses and individuals. General counsel in all aspects of management and conflict resolution. Conducted annual meetings, provided advice and support in corporate governance and strategic planning. Represented several rural government City and Borough administrations.

Alaska Native Village Corporation Association. (2023-2018.) *Pro bono* legal counsel, providing advice, legal counsel and training to Alaska Native and Tribal organizations.

Landye Bennett Blumstein LLP, Partner in large Pacific Northwest law firm. (2023-2019.) Represented clients in a diversity of civil matters with a focus on commercial law, real estate and

leasing transactions of over \$250 million, including for Alaska Native Corporations and Alaska's largest real estate developer. Conducted training for senior management and boards of directors. Represented Alaska's only Tribal college and several cultural institutions. Supervised associate attorneys, paralegals and support staff. Frequent urban and rural travel.

Bankston, Gronning, O'Hara, Associate Attorney. (1999-2003.) Built an educational practice representing school districts throughout Alaska. Represented school boards and educational administrators throughout rural Alaska, including defending administrative appeals. Provided legal support to commercial attorneys.

State of Alaska Court of Appeals, Law Clerk to the Honorable David C. Stewart (ret.) (1998-1999.) Researched and analyzed legal authority relevant to cases before the Court. Wrote bench memoranda, drafted opinions and additional analysis as needed to assist Judge Stewart and the Court in the process of making and issuing decisions.

Native American Rights Fund, Law Clerk for nonprofit legal organization defending the rights of Native American tribes, organizations and individuals. (Summer 1996.) Researched and drafted materials for the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government*, 522 U.S. 520 (1998) and *Williams v. Babbitt*, 115 F.3d 657 (9th Cir. 1997).

Birch Horton Bittner & Cherot, Law Clerk. (Summer 1995.) Researched and drafted memoranda to support attorneys in law firm with offices in Alaska and Washington, D.C. Areas of practice included commercial transactions, natural resources and Alaska Native and Federal Indian Law.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

American Legion Jack Henry Post 1, Unit 1 Auxiliary, Sergeant-at-Arms. (2022-Present.) Service to support United States active military and veterans. Coordinated public events with Alaska's Congressional delegations and other dignitaries.

American Legion Auxiliary Department for the State of Alaska, Public Relations Director, (2022-2023.) Contributed to public communications on behalf of the Alaska American Legion.

Anchorage Bar Association, Director and Past President. (2003-Present.) Provided services to guide the Bar Association in fulfilling its mission of professionalism, integrity and collegiality. Served as the Pro Bono Liaison to the Alaska Bar Association.

Avant-Garde Learning Alliance, President and Chairman. (2003-2018.) Provided leadership to nonprofit organization dedicated to improving teaching, education and learning for Alaska Native communities.

OTHER MEMBERSHIPS

Alaska Bar Association, Member. (1998-Present.) Government, Alaska Native Law, Corporate Counsel, Employment and Real Estate Sections.

American Bar Association, Member. (1998-Present.) Business, Employment, Law Practice Management & Public Contracting Sections.

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Commonwealth North, Member. (1998-2003.) Member of non-partisan public policy organization. Participated in the Urban-Rural Divide published study.

Color of Justice program founded by the **National Association of Women Judges.** (1998-2003.) Volunteer mentor to encourage youth to pursue diversity in legal professions.

Anchorage Association of Women Lawyers, Member. (1998-Present.)

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Judge Nora Guinn Award from the Alaska Bar Association for extraordinary or sustained effort to assist rural Alaska, especially its Alaska Native population, in obtaining justice through the legal system. (2021.)

Alaska's "Top 40 Under 40" award. (2002.) Awarded by the Alaska Journal of Commerce for commitment to the community and professional excellence.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Rhode Island, Cheryl is Alaska Native (Iñupiaq) and of Scottish heritage. Ms. McKay is eligible for a European Union foreign passport. She is a shareholder in Bering Straits Native Corporation and Unalakleet Native Corporation. She enjoys traveling, cooking and learning new things every day. Cheryl has been playing piano and singing since childhood and enjoyed an earlier career as a musical theater director. She lives in Anchorage, Alaska with her husband and family pets. Willing to relocate and available for international, domestic and travel throughout rural Alaska. Fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Grammar and punctuation nerd.

C H E R Y L L. M c K A Y

SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY QUESTION

August 1, 2024

- 1. What have you learned about the City and Borough of Sitka that makes you interested in this position, and why is now a good time in your career to consider this position? If selected for this position, are you fully committed to relocating to Sitka?*

I appreciate these questions for several reasons. I am a senior attorney with 26+ years of experience in Alaska and, to a small extent while in law school, Colorado. After my clerkship on the Alaska Court of Appeals, I joined a well-established local law firm where my practice focused on education law. In that role, I was fortunate to travel throughout rural Alaska serving local school boards and participating in public processes. I then joined a large Pacific Northwest law firm, where I was able to focus on advising Alaska Native Corporations and nonprofit organizations, Tribes and Alaska businesses in all manners of business, corporate and real estate transactions, employment matters and board governance. After maintaining my private practice during COVID, I felt the call for public service, so I joined the Municipality of Anchorage's legal team, serving as a line attorney and Acting Deputy Municipal Attorney. I currently serve as a line attorney and Acting Municipal Attorney on several matters.

When the position of Municipal Attorney for the City and Borough of Sitka came to my attention, I felt compelled to apply. First, as a senior attorney, I would like the next stage of my career to be in a leadership role, practicing in areas where I have developed expertise and sound judgment. Second, my husband and I would enjoy living in a smaller, close-knit community, and I suspect that Sitka would suit us well. We like to be near the water, and my husband's business of shrink wrapping boats could serve the area. My family has close ties to Sitka, and I grew up hearing many stories about Sitka. My mother, Ida Traeger, was the first Alaska Native from Unalakleet, Alaska to attend high school out of the village. She attended what was then Sheldon Jackson High School, graduating in 1950. One of my sisters graduated from what was then Sheldon Jackson Community College. While we would maintain our small condo in Anchorage for rental reasons, we are fully committed to relocating to Sitka, pending a visit and selection of housing.

This is a good time in my career to consider this position. I have the experience and judgment, am knowledgeable about Alaska Native and governmental affairs, and am committed to serving the public interest. Thank you for considering my application.