



# Fox Point files

by Douglas H. Frazer

Susan Robertson serves as Fox Point's village manager. Tanya O'Malley is our village clerk. Their roles in village life are worth knowing.

Wisconsin has long authorized municipalities to adopt a "village manager plan." (Wis. Stat. § 64.15.) It was, and still is, considered to be one of the most efficient ways to run a municipality. In the mid-1940s, the village board recognized that the village had grown to the extent that it was time to bring in a trained professional to manage day-to-day village activities and services. On October 8, 1946, the board selected Colonel Erhard A. Teschan as Fox Point's first village manager.

A village manager might be compared to a chief operating officer of a private business; with the village board akin to a board of directors. The manager is appointed by the village president subject to confirmation by two-thirds of the village board (Fox Point Ordinance 2.02.) The village manager's duties include:

- hiring and firing village employees
- attending meetings of the village board and making recommendations concerning village administration and services
- maintaining village property
- overseeing construction and improvements pertaining to public works

## Annals of Administration: The Village Manager and the Village Clerk

Fox Point Village Clerk  
Tanya O'Malley



Fox Point Village Manager  
Susan Robertson



- preparing and submitting to the village board an annual financial budget and supervising the administration of the budget as adopted
- preparing the ten year capital improvement program
- managing labor negotiations
- representing the village at intergovernmental meetings, community functions, and other official meetings
- coordinating the village's recreation programs (pool, ice skating, tennis)
- working collaboratively with other north shore village managers with an eye towards reducing the cost of municipal services.

"Susan Robertson," says village president Mike West, "is a consummate professional. She is always well prepared on issues that come before the board and is willing to suggest options on how to proceed."

Robertson lives in Fox Point. She has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of

Florida and a master's degree in public administration from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She has been the Fox Point village manager since 1995. As a further extension of her dual role as village official and long time village resident, Robertson serves as a voting member of the board of review. (The board of review hears appeals in connection with real property tax assessments.) An animal lover, Robertson serves on the board of directors for the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission.

The office of village clerk is prescribed at Wis. Stat. § 61.25. The key functions of the village clerk include:

- elections administration
- agenda and minute preparation for the village board and subordinate boards and commissions
- village record management
- coordination of information technology services
- maintenance and updating of the village website.

- maintenance of the records of all ordinances, rules, bylaws, resolutions, and regulations
- countersigns (with the village president) all licenses, commissions, and permits, and most village contracts and agreements.

"Although Tanya is relatively new to the post," states Mike West, "she has quickly identified with the community."

O'Malley received her bachelor's degree from Alverno College. She has served in municipal government since 1998, starting with the City of Fitchburg in Dane County. O'Malley began her service as village clerk in 2007.

Elections require days of preparation. Poll workers – employed by the village – are trained. Ballots and other materials are ordered and sorted. The voting machines are tested. After the polls close, the clerk tabulates the results, canvasses the ballots (for village contests), and dispatches an auxiliary police officer for the immediate delivery of critical election documents to the county elections board.

Village administration runs smoothly in no small part due to the thoughtfulness and professionalism of dedicated public servants such as Robertson and O'Malley.

*Douglas H. Frazer is a trustee on the Fox Point Village board. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the village, the village board, other village board members, or Neighborhood Communications, LLC.*

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