

# THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA MEDIATION PROGRAM “CAMP”

City Council

May 25, 2021

Office of the City Attorney



# CONTENTS

- What is Mediation?
- Purpose of the Mediation Program
- Program Description
- Mediators and Their Qualifications
- The Mediation Process
- Benefits of Mediation
- Questions



## WHAT IS MEDIATION?

- Voluntary, confidential, collaborative problem-solving process
- Facilitated by trained mediators at no cost to participants
- Provides better understanding in reaching mutually satisfying solutions
- Reduces grievances, formal complaints, and lawsuits
- The Virginia Courts division of dispute resolution services reported in 2020 71% of General District Court cases ended in agreement



## PURPOSE OF THE MEDIATION PROGRAM

- Provide responsive, informal, confidential, effective means of resolving conflicts
- Allows the opportunity to discuss issues and determine the underlying interests or concerns
- Empower parties to formulate a mutually agreeable resolution resulting in a memorandum of understanding



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Referrals/requests for mediation will be made through the Office of the City Attorney
- The requests will be screened to ensure they are appropriate for mediation
- Once screened and found appropriate two mediators will be assigned
- The expectation is the parties will be contacted within 3 work days to schedule the mediation at a mutually agreeable platform

# THE MEDIATORS

| Employee           | Department                    |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Steven DiBeneditto | CAO                           |
| Lorna Gerlt        | CAO                           |
| Meghan S. Roberts  | CAO                           |
| Keia Waters        | City Clerk & Clerk of Council |
| Sermaine McLean    | City Manager                  |
| Bernard Bickham    | Code                          |
| Lydia Guirguis     | DCHS                          |
| Gloria M. Saez     | DCHS                          |
| Stephanie Marzell  | Court Services                |
| Vyvyonne Dilbert   | Court Services                |
| Jeff Wobbleton     | DEC                           |
| Luis Santano       | Fire                          |
| Cameron Hall       | Fire                          |
| Holly Hemmatti     | Fire                          |
| Anna McClure       | Human Rights                  |
| David Miller       | Human Rights                  |
| Pat Ruble          | Human Rights                  |
| Namoode Kahn       | Human Rights                  |
| Barbara Direnzo    | HR                            |
| Tori Butler        | ITS                           |
| Ross Farley        | Library                       |
| Pamela Dudoff      | Organizational Excellence     |
| Ashle Labadie      | P&Z                           |
| Don Hayes          | Police                        |
| Jason North        | Police                        |
| Ryan Knight        | T&ES                          |
| Tarrence Moorner   | T&ES                          |



## THE MEDIATORS' QUALIFICATIONS


- CAO reached out to all departments requesting volunteers for CAMP and held a meeting explaining the purpose and training requirements
- Voluntary City employees from various departments throughout the City
- Mediators have 20 hours of training and 5 hours of self-study
- Less experienced mediators will observe 2 mediations, co-facilitate 2 mediations and lead/facilitate 2 mediations with debriefs with an experienced mediator
- Co-facilitators will debrief after each mediation
- Each party will receive an evaluation form to evaluate the mediators and the program



## THE MEDIATION PROCESS

- The Mediator will begin each mediation with an orientation of mediation, the ground rules of the session, confidentiality and mandatory reporting
- Each party will have an opportunity to describe the dispute
- There will be a joint discussion of the issues that brought the parties to mediation
- When appropriate the mediators may meet privately with each party during the session
- The mediators will facilitate problem solving and resolution of the dispute
- If an agreement is reached the agreement will be memorialized in writing





## BENEFITS OF MEDIATION

- Mediation will reduce conflicts between employees leading to a healthier and happier workplace
- Helps preserve ongoing relationships
- Assists the parties in direct communication resulting in a mutually beneficial resolution
- Fosters cooperation
- Saves time and money and often avoids litigation
- Supports staff in confrontational situations between employees and employees and the public



## QUESTIONS?

- “The Courts of this country should not be the places where resolution of disputes begin. They should be the places where the disputes end after alternative methods of resolving disputes have been considered and tried.”
  - Sandra Day O’Connor