SPOTLIGHT ON TRANG NGUYEN, FINANCE DIRECTOR

Trang Nguyen took over the reins as the City’s new Director of Finance in April after almost five years as RPV’s Deputy Finance Director. Trang previously worked five years for the City of El Segundo as the Accounting Manager, a year at the City of Downey as the Assistant Finance Director, and 10 years with Torrance Unified School District as the Accounting/Finance Manager. Trang took a few moments out of her busy schedule to answer a few questions about herself and her role as the Finance Director.

What led you to into a career in Finance?

I’ve always known my strength is in numbers so accounting and finance were logical career choices. I would have to credit my career to RPV’s former Finance Director Deborah Cullen. Deborah took a chance on me when she offered me the Accounting Manager position in El Segundo in 2010 and then again gave me the opportunity to be the Deputy Director here in 2016. Without Deborah’s mentorship, there wouldn’t be a Director Nguyen today.

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CARING AND COMPASSION IN THE TIME OF COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to communities throughout the United States and the world. The resilience, can-do pragmatism, and neighborly attitude of RPV residents has been front and center during these turbulent times. In the months since the initial LA County and State “Safer at Home” orders were issued, City residents have consistently found creative and compassionate ways to express their strong sense of community.

Below are a few tips for staying safe, informed and involved, because we are truly all in this together.

Attend a virtual City Council Meeting:

City Council meetings have been held primarily via Zoom since March.

Meetings are on the first and third Tuesdays of the month starting at 7 p.m. and will be live-streamed on the City website at rpvca.gov and televised on RPVtv Cox 33/Frontier FiOS 38. Visit rpvca.gov/participate for information on how to participate in public comment.

Contact the City Clerk’s office at 310.544.5217 or at CityClerk@rpvca.gov with any questions. If you require a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in a meeting, please email adarequests@rpvca.gov.

Show Your Appreciation

The City encourages residents to support our first responders, health care workers, essential workers and local restaurants, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. City Staff and Council members have delivered meals to grocery workers, firefighters, healthcare workers and others during the pandemic to express our gratitude for their service. Find out how you can help at rpvca.gov/coronavirus.

Meals from RPV restaurants were delivered to the following sites:

- Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Pathology Department
- Torrance Memorial Medical Center Emergency Department
- Lomita Sheriff’s Station
- L.A. County Fire Stations No. 53, No. 85 and No. 106
- Ralphs
- Smart & Final
- Both RPV Trader Joe’s
- Porterstypedef=

Blood donations are down dramatically since the onset of COVID-19. The American Red Cross has implemented additional precautions to ensure the safety of its donors and staff. For more information, and to find a blood drive or donation center, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1.800 RED CROSS (1.800.733.2767).

continued on page 2
What’s Not:

Safety protocols.

What’s Open:

Residents and park visitors are encouraged to enjoy our wonderful parks and open space, while following social distancing and pandemic. On May 13 after two months of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LA County beaches are open.

The City is preparing for the eventual re-opening of park buildings and the resumption of a fuller level of park services in coordination with LA County guidelines. To go the Recreation and Parks page at www.rpvca.gov or call 310.544.5260 for updated information.

RE-OPEN, OH MY!

PARKS AND TRAILS AND BEACHES

SUMMER 2020

Beaches, parks and trails, including the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, were re-opened on May 13 after two months of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Residents and park visitors are encouraged to enjoy our wonderful parks and open space, while following social distancing and pandemic.

CURRENT STATUS OF PARKS, TRAILS, AND BEACHES

What’s Open:

• Park turf areas
• Walking paths
• Most trails and nature reserve areas (check trails.rpvca.gov for up-to-date information on temporary trail closures and trail circulation plans)
• Paddle tennis courts at Ladera Linda and the tennis court at Upper Point Vicente/City Hall
• The dog parks at Eastview Park and Rancho Cannons (Upper Point Vicente/City Hall)
• Outdoor restrooms
• Basketball courts

What’s Not:

• All park programming remains canceled until further notice
• Indoor and outdoor sports leagues

• Instructional courses and group sessions/private events
• Playgrounds
• Baseball and soccer fields
• Park buildings

LA County Beaches Are Open:

On May 13, Los Angeles County officials opened LA County beaches with restrictions (these restrictions apply to RPV beaches). To stay current on all beach closures and reopening updates, visit: beaches.lacounty.gov.

The City is preparing for the eventual re-opening of park buildings and the resumption of a fuller level of park services in coordination with LA County guidelines. To go the Recreation and Parks page at www.rpvca.gov or call 310.544.5260 for updated information.

SUNNY DAYS AHEAD

Did you know you can get 50% or 100% of your electricity from solar power without having to install solar panels?

Southern California Edison’s Green Rate program gives you the opportunity to purchase more of the energy you use from renewable sources. If you’re unable to install solar panels on your roof, this might be a good solution to support the environment.

On behalf of Green Rate customers, SCE purchases additional solar energy to meet the needs of Green Rate participants from California developers within SCE service territory.

• You may elect your level of participation (50% or 100% of energy usage)
• Your energy costs are estimated to be 1.26 cents higher for each kilowatt hour (kWh) of energy that is served on the Green Rate.
• For the average bill of $100 per month usage of 50 kWh, this equates to an extra $3 per month at 50% participation and $6 per month at 100% participation.
• You may de-enroll from the Green Rate at any time without penalty.
• SCE’s Green Rate program is Green-e® Energy certified and meets the environmental and consumer-protection standards set forth by the nonprofit Center for Resource Solutions. Learn more at www.greenrate.com.

To enroll, visit on.sce.com/3f8FNmH or call 1-866-701-7867.

GREEN CORNER

YOU'VE READ IT, NOW SHRED IT!

The next City/EDCO document/paper shredding event is on Saturday, October 17, 2020 from 8 am to 11 am. Mark your calendars. More information will be provided in the next newsletter. If you cannot wait until then, there are several other options such as on-site shredding companies where you can drop off your material, stores that have tamper proof shred console boxes, and mobile shredding services.

RECYCLE AND WIN $250!

In your July EDCO billing you will find the “Recyclers of the Month” entry card. If you recycle your yard waste in the green container(s) and/or your paper, newspaper, cans, bottles and glass in the blue recycling container, fill out the entry card, affix a stamp and mail it in. At each City Council meeting two lucky verified recyclers will win a check for $250 plus a personal emergency preparedness kit! You could easily be one of the 48 lucky winners. If you pay online, please see EDCO’s online link that is available in July and follow instructions. This is one way the City thanks RPV residents for recycling. If you need more blue or green recycling bins, call EDCO at 310.540.2977.

CRIME BUSTER CORNER

MAKE SURE CRIME DOESN'T PAY OR COST YOU

When it comes to crime prevention, follow the scouting motto: Be Prepared!

Public safety is a top City priority and the City is committed to help you become educated, prepared, and connected.

Neighborhood Watch

Consider joining your local Neighborhood Watch. The RPV Neighborhood Watch has been running for over 28 years as an active community-run organization. Contact Gall Lorenzen – Founder of the Neighborhood Watch – at rpvnw@ix.netcom.com for more information or to join.

If you would like to organize your own neighborhood watch or learn additional information on public safety programs, please contact the City Manager’s Office by emailing Administrative Analyst Shane Lee at silee@rpvca.org.

COVID-19 Scam Alert

Be aware of COVID-19 related scams and hacking attempts:

• Individuals and businesses selling fake cures for COVID-19 online and engaging in other forms of fraud
• Phishing emails from entities posing as the World Health Organization or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
• Malicious websites and apps that appear to share virus-related information to gain and lock access to your devices until payment is received
• Seeking donations fraudulently for illegitimate or non-existent charitable organizations

Criminals will likely continue to use new methods to exploit COVID-19 worldwide.

If you think you are a victim of a scam or attempted fraud involving COVID-19, you can report it without leaving your home through a number of platforms:

• Contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866.720.5721 or via email at disasterfraud.gov.
• If it’s a cyber scam, submit your complaint through https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx.

Tips To Avoid Computer Fraud

• Do not open attachments or click links within emails from senders you don’t recognize.
• Do not provide your username, password, date of birth, Social Security number, financial data, or other personal information in response to an email or robocall.
• Always verify the web address of legitimate websites and manually type them into your browser.
• Check for misspellings or wrong domains within a link (for example, an address that should end in a “gov” ends in “com” instead).

COVID (Continued from page 1)

Testing Options:

For current information on testing facilities and hours, go to the County's testing website: covid19.lacounty.gov/testing.

Use Reliable Sources for COVID-19 Information:

LA County Department of Public Health: publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus
California Department of Public Health: cdph.ca.gov/covid19
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): cdc.gov/COVID19

Sign up for “Notify Me” city listservs at rpvca.gov/notfy
Follow the City on Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Sign up for emergency alerts from Alert SouthBay by:

• Testing “alertsrb” to 888-777, which returns a link to register for Everbridge (for COVID-19-related alerts, text the keyword “cv19rpv”)
• Registering online at alertsouthbay.com

Sign up for emergency alerts from Alert LA County at https://lacounty.gov/emergency/alert-la/.

COVID by the Numbers

As of June 9, 2020

LA County Cases: 5,822
Deaths 2,707
City of RPV Cases: 96
Deaths: 11

For a list of cases broken down by city, demographic characteristics, and settings, visit: http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/locations.htm.
RPV SUPPORTS LOCAL BUSINESS

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on local businesses throughout California and the United States. While RPV has a relatively modest commercial presence, local businesses have been hard hit. Below are local, state, and federal resources available to City businesses.

STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

In addition to local resources, state and federal programs are currently available to help small businesses financially impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

State

1. California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (iBANK)
   - Banks that issue direct loans to small businesses
   - Loans may cover up to 90% of eligible building costs
   - Loans have interest rates as low as 3.5% or at the Prime Rate

2. California Small Business Loan Program (SBLOAN)
   - Loans may cover up to 100% of eligible business costs
   - Loans have interest rates as low as 3.5%

3. California Small Business Assistance Loan Program (SBALP)
   - Loans may cover up to 100% of eligible business costs
   - Loans have interest rates as low as 3.5%

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FEDERAL RESOURCES

1. SBA’s Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
   - Loans may cover up to 90% of eligible business costs
   - Loans have interest rates as low as 3.5%

2. SBA’s Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
   - Loans may cover up to 100% of eligible business costs
   - Loans have interest rates as low as 1%

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COUNT ME IN

The great American 2020 census is underway and RPV is doing great. The current return rate is 74.3%, which is just below PVE and ahead of VNL and Rose Hills. For comparison sake, the overall U.S. response rate is 60.5%. The goal is 100% compliance so it’s up to everyone to do their part.

The census, which occurs every ten years as mandated by the U.S. Constitution, provides the basis for proportioning congressional seats, redistricting, and distributing more than $675 billion annually in federal funds. This is crucial as it is estimated that California and local communities could lose $1,950 per year for ten years for each person not counted in the decennial census.

Please be sure to respond online, by phone, or via mail at once and please note that the Census Bureau will never ask for your Social Security number or bank or credit card account numbers, money or donations, or anything on behalf of a political party.

For more information, please visit the official 2020 Census website at http://2020census.gov.

TRANG NGUYEN

(Continued from page 1)

Tell us about your past work and educational experiences and how they prepared you for your current position as RPV’s Finance Director.

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and a Master’s Degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Leadership and Managing Change at Pepperdine University. I have also been in the public service sector for over 18 years. I have done everything from a grant-writing and processing timesheets for substitute teachers to managing a $365 million modernization project and developing a budget of over $150 million.

Many of our readers may have worked with me as a Finance Director at a City Council meeting, or know they help create and manage the Preliminary Budget, but there may not know all that a Finance Director does. Can you elaborate on your responsibilities as Finance Director?

I like to think of the Finance Department as the gatekeeper for the City’s assets. Besides developing the City’s annual budget, I monitor the City’s internal controls to prevent misuse of funds and fraud. I oversee the day-to-day operations, and participate in labor negotiations. I collaborate with other Directors and the City Manager to carry out City Council goals. I continuously monitor the business process and find ways to be more efficient and effective. I’m also the City’s Treasurer, so I’m responsible for monitoring the City’s cash flow and investment portfolio.

What qualities should an effective Finance Director possess?

An effective Director needs to be an effective leader. Obviously, it is important for a director to have technical expertise but I think an effective Finance Director needs to have a vision, be an agent for change, and be able to build effective relationships. You started as a Finance Director in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. What has it been like taking on a new and challenging position in the midst of the worst financial crisis in decades? Any advice for our residents during this difficult time?

Taking on a new position at any time would be a challenge in itself, but taking on a director position during a pandemic, in the middle of a budget season, was beyond challenging. I am fortunate to be in a position where I am surrounded by a group of hard-working, dedicated professional colleagues, so I didn’t have to ask for a better outcome.

And as my mom has always reminded me, with every challenge there is an opportunity. The best advice I can offer during this difficult time would be to be patient, respectful, and kind to one another.

How would you describe the current state of RPV’s finances at this time? I think the current state of RPV’s finance is stable because of the long tradition of being fiscally responsible. The leadership of the prior and current management and City Council is what helped the City weather the fiscal impact of COVID-19. We were able to absorb a projected $6 million loss this year and were able to do it with minimal impact to services and our employees. We also were able to propose a Preliminary Budget that looks like it will only have a very slight Preliminary Budget and not very many cuts to our service levels. What would you like the residents of RPV to know about you? Well, First and foremost I just want to say that I am grateful for the opportunity to serve this beautiful community as the new Director of Finance. I am not naive about the City Manager, Ara Milharian, for believing in me and my vision. I’m excited for this new chapter in my career. This is not an opportunity that I take lightly. So I just want the residents of RPV, the City Council, and the City staff to know that I am here to serve. If there is anything I can do for you, please do not hesitate to reach out.

How do you enjoy spending time away from work? Outside of work, I am very family oriented and enjoy spending time with my son and daughter. I also have nieces and nephews. My 10-month-old nephew. They are my babies, my world. Seeing their smiles and being goofy with them brings me so much joy. I also like to travel to quiet and peaceful places where I can be away from the noise and the hustle of everyday life.

What activity have you missed the most during COVID-19? What I miss most during this lockdown is my playtime with my nieces and nephew. As I mentioned earlier, I am hanging out with my little ones. I miss having them running toward me and calling me “Bac Lo” which means “auntie” in Vietnamese. I usually host karaoke parties with them, laugh with them, tell them funny stories, and hold them.

Favorite book, movie, type of music/sport etc…?

I think my all-time favorite book would have to be Motherless Daughter by Hope Edelman. My family life was this way for a long time because I have so many, but the one that I can watch over and over again without getting bored is the 1970 classic Love Story. My favorite sport to watch is basketball because that’s my support that I can make sense of when watching. My favorite music right now is K-Pop, because they are the only ones I get to listen to when I am with my daughter.