



Dirk Brazil began his position as Alameda Interim City Manager on May 23.

Dirk Brazil Officially Named Alameda Interim City Manager

Ekene Ikeme

The Alameda City Council approved an agreement to appoint Dirk Brazil as the city's Interim City Manager at its May 17 meeting. Brazil will oversee city operations while the City Council searches for a new permanent City Manager.

The agreement calls for Brazil to work no more than 960 hours in a fiscal year at a salary of \$133.85 hourly.

Brazil has more than 35 years of experience working in state and local government, most recently as City Manager for Davis and Assistant County Administrator for Yolo County. Brazil has also held positions in the State legislature, the Office of Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis, and for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Since his retirement in 2017, Brazil has acted as Interim City Manager for South Lake Tahoe and as Interim Executive Director for Yolo Habitat Conservancy.

"I'm excited to step in as Alameda's Interim City Manager," said Brazil in a press release. "The City Council and city staff have a large and interesting mix of projects in motion and my job is to keep everything moving forward until a new, permanent City Manager is appointed by the council. I look forward to digging into the work and getting to know the community."

Before council voted on Brazil's appointment, he was asked by Council to address an incident that took place during his tenure as City of Davis City Manager and the follow-up investigation.

The incident is called the "Picnic-Day Incident," by many publications in the Davis area. On April 22, 2017, during a Picnic Day event, a van occupied by three plain clothes officers of the Davis Police Department made a U-turn and stopped in front of a crowd of about 50 people seemingly blocking an intersection. An argument ensued between the officers and a group of individuals at the intersection — it appeared it was unbeknownst to crowd that the occupants of the vehicle were police officers. Moments later the officers left their vehicle and a fight ensued between the two parties. One of the officers wore a vest that read "police" on it, according to reports. Two officers were hurt and five people were arrested.

After the incident an investigation began was scheduled. In his role as City Manager, Brazil hired John McGinness as the outside investigator. However, after the selection, the *Davis Vanguard* uncovered statements by McGinness on his right-wing radio talk show where he questioned whether African Americans were better off before the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"We hired an investigator, who was a former sheriff," said Brazil at the meeting via Zoom. "It wasn't very long into the investigation that some concerns were raised about something the investigator had said on talk radio that was unbeknownst to us. We severed the contract with him."

Brazil told the council that he was recommended McGinness by the then Davis Police Chief. He said after the police chief notified him of the comments, they agreed they needed to sever ties with McGinness to have a valid investigation.

Brazil eventually hired former U.S. Attorney for the Sacramento Region McGregor Scott to conduct the investigation. The investigation ultimately revealed the officers were in the wrong.

"The 'plan' the involved officers had initially devised to clear the crowd was inherently problematic, and it largely set the stage for what happened next," the report read. Brazil retired from his Davis City Manager position before the report was released.

Councilmembers were not made aware of the incident and the investigation until the day of the meeting, after they already selected Brazil for the Interim City Manager position, ("Dirk Brazil Expected to Become Interim City Manager," May 12). A resident emailed a letter to the council with a link to the *Davis Vanguard* article.

Nonetheless, council voted 3-2 to approve the agreement with Councilmembers Tony Daysog and Trish Herrera Spencer carrying the dissenting votes.

"Mr. Brazil has the background and experience to be an effective leader for Alameda and help move our city forward as we conduct a search for a new permanent City Manager," said Alameda Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft in the same press release.

Brazil began his tenure as Interim City Manager on May 23.

Rhythmix Brings Rhythms to isms in the Schisms



Richard Bangert

"Uprooted" actors with Navy semaphore signal flags choreographed to the music of Edwin Starr's Motown anti-Vietnam War hit "War" at Alameda Point last weekend.

Richard Bangert

On May 20-22 at Alameda Point, about 2,100 people experienced the talents of Uprooted, the third in the "Island City Waterways" series of free public cultural productions by Alameda's Rhythmix Cultural Works. There were eight performances, plus a special presentation to 500 students from Alameda Unified School District.

The six-act outdoor program chronicled how early aviation following World War I suddenly went from traveling air shows and cargo delivery to a traveling Air Force. Actor Robert Paine told how public attitudes about the U.S. getting involved in World War II changed radically, from indifference to gung-ho, when the Japanese bombed the U.S. Navy fleet in Pearl Harbor. As he called out the names of ships being attacked, taiko drummers signaled the beat of destruction.

Jimmy Doolittle came out of retirement to lead the now-infamous air raid on Japan, while others of Japanese ancestry were placed in internment camps.

One patriotic citizen who was drafted into the military in the mid-1960s and served as an engineer in the Navy was Ed Holmes.

Holmes is the Rhythmix script writer for this production and also a narrator and a presenter of his own uprooted roots in time of war.

Holmes's last port, after serving during the Vietnam War, was Naval Air Station-Alameda. The Bay Area became his new home. He found his passion in the stagecraft of mime at Laney College in the early 1970s. "I caught the mime wave," said Holmes, who went on to spend 28 years with the acclaimed San Francisco Mime Troupe, along with other acting and directing gigs.

His writing and acting talents flowered in this marriage of choreography, musicianship, dancing, and spoken word. Not remaining silent as a mime, Holmes had plenty to say in this production, but the other actors rarely spoke. The spoken word came mostly from narrations by Holmes and Paine and voice-over recordings as the actors performed.

In the act called "May's Letters," performers acted out a series of themes about life in the Tule Lake internment camp for persons of Japanese ancestry,

as the narrator read from letters written by internee May Okada. The setting for this act took place in a dry, dusty, field of dead grass near Alameda Point's O'Club, at 641 West Red Line Ave., that felt as desolate as the Tule Lake internment camp in northern California.

A high energy swing dancing performance celebrated the end of World War II.

The Navy jet mounted on a pedestal at Alameda Point's north gate served as poignant backdrop for the act called "Get in Line," in which Holmes tells of his own uprooting and getting in line.

A litany of "isms" that are intertwined with war and conflict — activism, nihilism, nationalism, idealism, collectivism, patriotism, totalitarianism, communism, environmentalism, imperialism, utilitarianism, socialism, fascism — were read aloud over the speaker system and acted out by performers, eventually devolving into everyone on the set fighting each other.

Holmes stepped onto the set and called a halt to the fighting. "If you're gonna argue all the why's and what-if's of global

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City Council Approves Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program

Sun Staff Reports

At its May 17 meeting, the City Council approved a pilot program that will give 150 low-income households in Alameda monthly payments of \$1,000 for 24 months, starting in spring of 2023.

The Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) Pilot Program was approved by City Council with a 3-2 vote. Councilmembers Tony Daysog and Trish Herrera Spencer voted against the plan. The city will appropriate \$4.6 million dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act 2021 to finance the program. Alameda received \$28.68 million of the pandemic-relief money in 2021.

Staff will begin deciding who the city will partner with to administer the program. Staff anticipates spending three to four months identifying program partners. The implementing partner will likely a nonprofit with existing ties to the target community.

Staff recommended the city work with Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI) to engage with the University of Pennsylvania Center

for Guaranteed Income Research (CGIR) as a research partner to help staff secure exemptions from the state for benefit programs.

MGI is a network of mayors advocating for a guaranteed income to ensure that all Americans have an income floor. The CGIR is an applied research center specializing in cash-transfer research, evaluation, pilot design, and narrative change. They provide mixed-methods expertise in designing and executing empirical guaranteed income studies.

The research partners will conduct the selection process.

One of the issues that remains to be resolved is who will qualify for the program. Staff did not have a confirmed definition of what constitutes as low-income. One staff member gave a preliminary definition as households making less than \$75,000 in total household income. The staff member said about 11,000 Alameda households fall under this threshold.

Councilmember John Knox

White supported the program.

"We want this to be a pilot, not in that it's just a short term...we want this to actually add to the volume of knowledge that is being collected and developed across the country," Knox White said at the council meeting.

Daysog was against the plan. "I don't think it's appropriate for any city to be throwing \$4.6 million dollars at a limited handful of just 150 households," said Daysog. "I don't think this is proper for this City Hall to do."

Guaranteed basic income has steadily gained popularity over the last few years. Unlike universal basic income, guaranteed basic income targets a specific group that meets certain criteria. Similar programs have recently begun in Stockton, Oakland and San Francisco.

The implementing partners will develop program structure, including program administration, distribution mechanisms for payments to participants, benefits communication plan and more.



Alameda County Office of Education

Alameda County Superintendent of Schools L.K. Monroe (left) presents a certificate to Alameda Unified teacher Veronica Rylander, who teaches eighth grade drama at Lincoln Middle School.

Alameda Middle School Teacher Given District Award

Sun Staff Reports

Lincoln Middle School teacher Veronica Rylander was named one of 18 Alameda County District Teachers of the Year for the 2021-2022 school year.

The Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) announced its 2022 Teachers of the Year on May 5. The teachers are selected by Alameda County school districts and regional occupational programs. Rylander won for the Alameda Unified School District.

Rylander is an eighth-grade drama teacher at Lincoln Middle School, located at 1250 Fernside Blvd.

"The last two years have had a profound impact on how our schools operate, and teachers have been on the frontline through all of the changes," said Alameda County Superintendent of Schools L. K. Monroe in a press release. "The honorees are recognized for their individual dedication and excellence in the classroom, and they collectively represent the more than 200,000 educators doing amazing work across Alameda County every day. These honorees personify the ACOE mission statement, 'to provide, promote, and support leadership and service to ensure the success of every child, in every school, every day.'"

All 18 Teachers of the Year awardees will be honored at the 33rd Annual Teacher of the Year Awards Ceremony on Thursday, Oct. 6, at the Castro Valley Center for the Arts.

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