

Bobby Humes
Mayoral Nominee for Director
Seattle Human Resources Department
Confirmation Questions
2019

1) Why do you want to be the Director of the Seattle Human Resources Department?

I am passionate about HR and people systems. I believe that the City of Seattle is in a unique position to leverage its value of equity with a firm strategic vision. I believe I have that vision, as outlined in my responses below. I have also grown fond of the various partners in cabinet leadership and members of the executive teams. I see this role as an opportunity to support their success as well.

Most importantly, I believe in the people of Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR). I believe that given the opportunity, they can create and sustain vital human resources systems that can be best in class, not only in the public sector, but across the region. I desire to build a winning culture here and leverage the immense potential within this department.

I enjoy work that is challenging, requires a great deal of external and internal collaboration and has the potential of creating lasting value for employees and constituents. I believe in public service and feel that this is the right role for me to bring my years of military experience, education and leadership. I want to be part of the team that turns the tide at SDHR for the benefit of the employees of Seattle and its constituents.

2) What is your vision for the Seattle Human Resources Department (SDHR) over the next several years? What are your goals for the Department?

Over the next several years my vision is to create best in class HR products, services and supports through the lens of equity. We will do this by:

- Evaluating critical HR systems and functions through the lens of the HR value proposition. The HR value proposition is a philosophical framework which shifts HR from passive transactional personnel management to strategic HR consultation. I believe this cannot be done within SDHR alone but must be done through City-wide focus on the practice of human resources.
- Identifying key HR outcomes through shared governance. Through a model of shared governance, the City can leverage HR talent and outcomes by establishing a shared HR workplan which closes gaps among the critical HR systems and functions necessary to support all City employees. This governance model involves City-wide oversight of a City HR workplan, shared resources and outcomes from HR leaders across the City, and opportunities for HR professionals to be part of interdepartmental functional teams to

leverage talent and scale HR products City-wide in record time. Specific HR outcomes that may be accomplished through shared governance include:

- Human Resources Information System Upgrades
 - Leave Administration
 - Talent Acquisition and Retention
 - Anti-Harassment & Anti-Discrimination Training Implementation
 - Policy Development and Update
 - Employee Development
- Creating a center of HR excellence through customer service and consultation. Specific to SDHR, we can leverage many centralized functions and develop our central cost manual around the products, service and supports we provide other departments. We must do this by measuring the return on investment we provide customers and ensure that individual employee performance is connected to overall organizational effectiveness. Where we have gaps in performance, we will develop our staff to become resident experts in their field of practice. We will seek opportunities to deploy this expertise to serve HR professionals in departments as we work to support their consultative expertise as well. I see this as a much-needed maturation of the practice of HR City-wide. However, this work must begin with SDHR team members.

3) What are some of the notable accomplishments you achieved as Interim Director?

I am proud of what we've been able to accomplish together as a team in just a short time since I started as Interim Director in February 2019.

- We are on pace with developing and implementing the recommendations and directives from the Anti-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Inter-Departmental Team (IDT) and Executive Order 2018-04, respectively. This includes providing support in standing up the Office of Employee Ombud (OEO), the Human Resources Investigations Unit (HRIU), and drafting updates to Personnel Policy 1.1, which is in progress.
- We have a measurable department workplan that is tied to division, team and individual performance outcomes and expectations. The bedrock of our department-wide goals are four key elements: (1) Executive Order 2018-04, (2) HR Shared Governance Framework, (3) Labor Negotiations, and (4) Workforce Equity and Race and Social Justice. Per the mandate of EO 2018-04, our workplan was vetted and submitted on time.
- I am most proud that employees have shared with me the difference they feel in the environment. We conducted a department all-staff meeting in late Q1, which was widely attended and provided an opportunity to strengthen the clarity of our focus for 2019 and provide an opportunity for employee voice. An all-staff meeting will be scheduled each quarter with a different focus on culture, morale and effective communication. To that end, we have increased our sharing of critical information with staff. Most recently, we have developed messaging to share our financial outlook with staff.

4) Prior to becoming Interim Director of the SDHR you were a Human Resources Division Director at Seattle Parks and Recreation.

a. What are some of the notable accomplishments you achieved in that position?

- We developed and implemented a department-wide RSJ training called Foundations of Change. This training was to re-educate staff on our commitment to RSJI and to create dialogue that would be focused on moving the department along the RSJI continuum and becoming a multi-cultural organization. We also began a conversation on gender equity at this event. Over 800 employees participated in the training. The planning and development team received a team Seattle Management Association (SMA) award in the RSJI category for that work. Currently, the team is developing the outline to continue that work in Foundations of Change Phase II where team dynamics are the focus. I had a hand in crafting that vision prior to leaving SPR.
- Prior to leaving SPR HR, we conducted a retreat and team members worked collaboratively to develop the 2019 workplan as well as identified key performance indicators (KPIs) that would then become team and individual performance outcomes. The team is still operating under that work plan.
- I empowered the team to work more collaborative and customer driven. During the period of maximum constraint (POMC) our Human Resources Business Partners deployed across the city to eliminate the need for our staff to visit Parks' Dexter location for HR support. We also enabled division directors to provide direct investment in HR services and supports while receiving bi-monthly metrics on return on their investment.

b. Please provide an example that illustrates your strategic planning and management abilities.

Our department-wide RSJI training, Foundations of Change, is a great example. We had limited time and resources, but with the focused support of a capable and creative team I developed learning outcomes with my training manager. We used those learning outcomes to think through and create learning activities/experiences. I must give credit to my learning manager who's understanding of adult learning theory and commitment to racial and gender equity created relatable and thought-provoking exercises for this training.

We then had to think through the logistics, such as how we were going to deliver the training to 650-700 employees and maintain some degree of daily operations. We leveraged our relationships with RSJI Change Teams and other racial equity champions across the City and created a "train the trainer" module that was widely successful. We adjusted along the way as partners gave us insights into how to make the activities more focused to our learning outcomes.

After the event was over, we conducted an after actions review. We went line by line, hour by hour and discussed what worked and what didn't and what we would do differently. We learned a lot, we documented our learning, and we made sure that our vendors were paid accurately. We didn't know that we would be nominated for and receive the Seattle Management Award for RSJI, our focus was on our employee and our culture. At the end of the day, employees were excited about the conversation and appreciative that we had taken the time to pause and focus on what mattered most.

c. What are some of the things you hoped to accomplish but didn't?

While at SPR I had an idea to create an HR training and support center for crew staff employees. We find that it is often hard for crew staff to come to Parks headquarters on Dexter Avenue and meet with HR professionals. In an effort to remove that barrier I had a vision to create a learning lab that was away from Dexter and would offer career develop support, conflict resolution assistance, and an overall place to be heard with some element of added confidentiality.

I also wanted to see our HR business partners (HRBPs) more involved in the various worksites around the city. The team did a lot of its work from their offices and I never considered that the best place for the business partner to be. In my mind a business partner is the best partner when they are directly involved in the business and that most certainly involves physical presence where the work is happening. Strategically, this would provide an opportunity for increased accessibility which may address more upstream workplace issues before they become process bound. These goals didn't happen because of my interim appointment to director of SDHR.

5) The SDHR Director has primary responsibility for the developing and managing the department's budget.

a. What is your experience developing and managing a department budget of approximately \$19 million and 112 employees?

While I do not have experience managing an entire department's budget beyond my time as SDHR Interim Director, I do have experience managing physical assets totaling over \$100 million dollars during my time in the United States Army. This management was focused on maintaining operational readiness of equipment used in deployable services to the overall mission of the armed forces. I was subject to annual audits and accountable to potential investigations of the care and maintenance of these assets.

During my time as Interim Director, I have elevated our finance manager to our executive leadership team and created controls for financial oversight. I have also directed our finance manager to share, by division, our 2019 financial projections and we are currently working on sharing this information with staff. The goal is to create visibility of our financial management picture and to inform reductions in administrative costs and caps on overhead spending in personnel dollars.

b. What is your experience developing and implementing budget reductions?

I have provided HR services and support to include consultation to senior leaders on methods to create budget reductions in the public sector. I was involved in the 2018 budget reduction planning for Seattle Parks and Recreation, where we were able to ensure staff had ample time to find other employment and job transfers. I was also involved in budget reductions in the Kent School District. While I was not involved in the overall management of the reduction process, I was able to support some employees in finding other employment opportunities and developed internal communications in an attempt to help the organization heal from the jarring effects of budget reductions.

6) We have heard concerns about morale at SDHR. What have you seen in your time as interim director? How do you plan to address the concern?

In my time as interim director I have seen a staff starved for communication, vision and empowerment. I plan to address the concern by being accessible both physical and in terms of being involved in the work. For example, my impression is that past directors may not have brought staff into decision making processes enough. I am committed to ensuring staff involved in the work can voice critical opinions and suggestions that yield the best possible outcomes for our customers. We are providing regular communication to staff on our areas of focus and updates to the executive to ensure employee are empowered with information that helps frame how their work has impact on the City.

In the first 30 days I made a concerted effort to work with key leaders to develop our four priority areas for 2019. With this as our foundation, we communicated with staff why these areas are of importance and how these areas should shape the value they bring to the organization. I've also worked to ensure that every employee has performance goals for the year, not as a means of creating or supporting a punitive culture but creating the framework for a growth mindset culture where employees can fail, learn, grow and succeed.

Recently, staff put on a Game of Thrones potluck and voluntary costume contest. It was great – I attended and wore a dragon costume, though I couldn't stay long. It was great to see staff relaxed and I believe they see me as approachable and earnest when I say that we can be high quality performers and enjoy high quality time together just as we are. I am currently on a campaign to ensure I have coffee with all ~125 staff. It's important that I get to know their work, their hopes and ideas, and their concerns. I don't plan to promise that I can fix or address everything, but I want all employee to know and feel that I am willing to listen. My core expectation for our leadership team is that they are willing to listen as well. A culture shift only works if it lives beyond an individual – that is the goal.

7) What do you see as the biggest challenges to SDHR in the coming years?

There are several challenges looming for SDHR in the coming years:

- *Attracting top talent.* We are not the department written about in the papers. Nor are we the failures and missteps of the past. We must work to create a strong brand image both internally and externally so that the best and brightest HR minds want to be part of our work. We have critical skill shortages in classification compensation and labor relations, two areas of critical important to our current operations. Our talent acquisition team is currently working on filling vacancies on these teams.
- *The ability to make data informed decisions.* There isn't a concrete central clearing house for HR data across the City. HR information is being managed in as many ways as there are departments. This isn't a result of HR professionals doing the wrong thing to support their business clients, this is the result of a lack of vision for HR data analytics, most specifically predictive analytics. We should be able to identify trends in our HR operations and create strategies that help close gaps and remove exposure to liability. We are operating on a downstream basis – a strong HR operates from an upstream basis. We will work with our partners in IT and FAS to create a more aligned HR information system.
- *HR Shared Governance.* We must build a City-wide system that yields best in class consistent and competent HR products, services and supports. City employees benefit from career growth in opportunities across the City. As such, we owe it to them to provide as much consistency in their employee lifecycle through our work. That said, our HR consultative services must be based on a shared workplan and measurable outcomes.
- *Limited resources, ever expanding priorities.* We must think critically about how we are organized in our function and operation to leverage our current talent and still provide value to our customers. This may mean eliminating some programs for a period of time to focus on other programs. This will also mean more reliance on shared governance as the priority method of scaling innovations across the enterprise.

8) What specific and measurable outcomes should SDHR look to when defining success?

SDHR should define success as:

- The ability to implement and sustain direction from EO 2018-04 City-wide, with the ability to monitor implementation and perform quality assurance audits as necessary.
- The ability to implement shared governance and develop a 2020 City HR workplan.
- The ability to repurpose existing resources to meet the needs of current City-wide initiatives led by the department on a priority basis. This would include: (1) state paid

leave, (2) labor relations bargaining, ratification and management training, and (3) emergency management preparation development.

- The ability to implement supports and expectations around foundation knowledge, skills and abilities for all SDHR employees.

9) As someone who has worked within the City in a department, what is your perspective on whether some functions of SDHR should be centralized? Which functions make sense to be centralized and why?

As someone who has worked within the City in a department, I believe that systems-based and process quality elements should be centralized. For example, I strongly believe that each department should continue to manage talent acquisition in a de-centralized way. However, management of contracts and customer experience relationship with the vendor should be conducted by central staff at SDHR. I believe this same example is true for leave administration, workforce equity, benefit administration, personnel policy development and HR investigations. Additionally, best practices identification for systems use and HR process should be conducted by SDHR through shared governance. SDHR should audit departments' use of centralized resources and processes to maintain expected quality and system/process outcomes. I come to this belief because I have observed that each department has its own culture and unique business lines. Each department benefits from having HR supports and service delivery tailored to meet its needs.

10) What is your organizational management approach? How will you review internal operations at SDHR to determine if they warrant improvement?

My organizational management approach is based on:

- *Strategy.* I have begun work to establishing a 3-5 year strategic plan that incorporates the needs of the organization and its members, the broader HR community and critical areas where there may be gaps in the practice of HR and the critical needs of employees to improve upon the employee lifecycle.
- *Consistency.* Annually, creating a workplan aligned to the strategic plan with support and oversight from the Mayor's Office and other key partners in the HR community.
- *Accountability.* Division directors are accountable to ensure that the annual workplan is integrated into their project and operational framework and that each team within their department has relevant key performance indicators which help identify workplan progress and overall division effectiveness.
- *Empowerment.* Each individual employee creates performance goals with their manager that are aligned to division goals. Employees are also encouraged to identify learning targets for the year to aid in their development. Each employee is given the opportunity

for a stretch role which allows them to work in an area of interest and provides an opportunity to create City-wide value through shared governance.

- *Visual.* I believe that performance dashboards help tell a story for our employees and our customers. My vision is to provide employees and clients with an annual report which details customer return on investment from centralized HR services and supports as well as oversight of the shared governance structure.
- *Stewardship.* We are currently operating in an environment where fixed cost elements such as personnel overhead have been managed like a variable cost. We will focus our alignment on our personnel overhead on the targeted results of our strategic plan.

We will create more high functioning teams internally and City-wide to leverage latent talent and capture unspent utility costs by being more focused on talent alignment to strategy outcomes. I have also charged our directors with cutting administrative costs by 5-7% through 2019. We will target another 10% next year and re-evaluate if I am confirmed.

As we move into our central cost manual creation, we will identify ways of earmarking dollars to invest in our staff to mature the centralized HR practice as means of providing expert-level support to HR teams across the enterprise.

11) What is your leadership approach?

I believe I am an engaged and motivating leader. I meet with my direct reports regularly and engage with them around their work, their practice as executives in the field of HR and as people with diverse backgrounds, lifestyles and interests. I am committed to my staff's growth and development; I give feedback where it is necessary, and I am unwavering in communicating my expectations. I believe that communication is key and while confidentiality is vital to our work as HR professionals and leaders, secrecy is damaging to the culture we are trying to create.

To that end, I am a culture-focused leader and I am working to create a flatter organization from a communication and accessibility standpoint. It's important that we eliminate the idea that there are two types of team members here, leader and employees, there is only one type of team member, all are leaders, some are – by position – more accountable to outcomes than others.

I own failures with staff – not as a form of weakness – but as a model to the reality that we all make mistakes and how we adjust and make corrections helps us build character and our department brand. I am laser-focused on ensuring that we understand the concept of brand integrity and how that begins with individual integrity.

12) What steps will you take to ensure that you work effectively with the City Council? How will you ensure that Councilmembers and Legislative Department staff receive timely

information needed from your department for Council to make sound policy decisions, particularly regarding priorities that may differ from those of the Executive Branch?

My staff are aware of the specific timelines for deliverables for City Council review and we will meet our deadlines and provide high quality products to enable City Council to make the best decision for our employees and constituents. When contacted by City Council members, we will make sure that we fully understand your requests, we will provide a timeline on when we can respond to your requests, we will utilize our tools and resources to provide data-driven responses where necessary, and we will provide high quality responses to your inquires.

Where priorities differ from those of the Executive Branch, we will strive to provide a comparative analysis of your request, complete with relevant data to aid in the conversation. We will work to serve as bridge, in partnership with City Council staff, to ensure the Executive and City Council can make the best policy decision that supports the goals of the City and the needs of its employees and constituents.

13) The Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative is a citywide effort to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities in City government. Can you provide specific examples of how you would develop and apply your commitment to equitable hiring and fair representation?

With the initial passage of I-1000, we have already begun to review our Targeted Recruitment plan to ensure we are focused on strategies and tactics that are focused on increasing representation of high quality talent in areas where our representation falls short. This will mean fostering relationships with Native American tribes, Latinx community leaders, Asian and Refugee community leaders, and others, all while ensuring we are focused on redefining what we mean by “the greater Seattle area” as commuting becomes common place for potential talent living outside of city limits.

We will also work to create a more equity quality hiring process focused on performance which will allow candidates to share their success in a hiring process and not simply attempt to say the right words. We will improve on our hiring decision making skills by training our managers and decision makers. We will improve onboarding programs to focus more on team integration and mentorship to ensure people of color are provided resources and supports during their first 30, 60, and 90 days. We will implement stay interviews and improve on our measurement of exit interview data to inform on issues impacting people of color and causing them to leave the City.

14) What steps will you take to ensure that SDHR and all City Departments maintain a welcoming and safe workplace for City employees? Can you provide some specific examples?

We are accountable to implementing the recommendations from the Anti-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Interdepartmental Team and the Mayor’s Executive Order 2018-04 in response to those recommendations. We will coordinate with the Office of Employee Ombud (OEO) where

possible to identify department environments that may require leadership interventions and we will work with those department heads and division leaders to create plans of accountability to change environments. We will also invest more time in ensuring candidates for management positions have some background in leading people and not just the technical work of the job. Through the shared governance framework, we will create more tools and resources for people leaders and we will improve upon our E3 performance management system to reflect our City-wide values and consider particular changes such as 360 reviews for managers, so employees have a voice in how their managers show up in the work place.

15) How do you imagine SDHR's work will intersect with the new Office of the Employee Ombud? How will you ensure with the Office of the Ombud is able to properly coordinate with the Investigations Team?

Our department will work with the OEO cooperatively and on an as-needed basis to ensure autonomy and confidentiality. Our policy team may work with the OEO to ensure there is an understanding of policy precedent as they review a particular matter. Our service delivery and recruitment team will provide services and supports to the office as needed as we do with other departments of that size. Additionally, the Director of OEO is part of a collaborative team of leaders focused on creating a safer more accountable culture for our employees and in that way in my role I will be a systems-based partner with the director as well as the director of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

We are currently in the process of working with LAW, OEO, HRIU, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Labor Relations, HR Policy and WorkForce Equity Division to create the value stream for a supportive employee environment. This work is focused on the coordination of timelines, resources, case information, communication and confidentiality to ensure employees understand their options in addressing issues in the workplace. This value stream mapping work should be finalized sometime in Q3.

16) The Seattle Silence Breakers have raised concerns regarding harassment, discrimination and mistreatment of City employees. What is your approach to addressing the issues they have raised, and ensuring a safe and respectful work environment at the City?

As we work to operationalize the recommendation of the AH/AD IDT members via EO 2018-04 it is important that both my team and I continue to listen to these partners. An approach to regular communication and accountability to the stated outcomes of our current work is essential in building continued trust. I will extend an offer for regular meetings that identify concerns and will invite leaders from OEO, HRIU, SOCR and ADR to hear any continued concerns and to offer updates on the work that is being conducted to respond to the IDT recommendations.

17) What does the current SDHR bargaining/labor relations team currently have in terms of skills, strengths and opportunities to represent the city in labor negotiations? How would you define success for this unit?

Currently, the Director of Labor Relations position will be vacant as of June 14. While a recruitment process was in place, it did not yield a final candidate. The recruitment process is ongoing as two additionally competitive candidates are being considered. Several key positions on the team had been vacant: both lead negotiator and negotiator positions. These positions are in the process of being filled by permanent hires and one out of class (OOC) opportunity. The team is in flux as two long time employees enter retirement and others have signaled that they desire to move on to other opportunities.

Success for this unit would be defined as:

- Strategic vision aligned to the long-term needs of the City;
- An updated grievance records keeping system and significant draw down of the number of grievances;
- Consultative relationships with HR business partners in departments;
- Staggered bargaining cycles;
- Focused manager training on ratified bargaining language; and
- Consistent and collaborative labor management meetings City-wide.

18) The SDHR Director is a member of the City's Retirement Board (SCERS).

- a. What experience and expertise do you have in the area of retirement, particularly public retirement systems?**

I do not have any previous experience or expertise in the area of public retirement systems. However, in my five months as interim director, I have participated in the SCERS onboarding process and worked to understand the strategic plan and fiscal priorities of the plan. I have also spent additional time working to understand the legal responsibilities and ethics of serving on the retirement board. We also have staff who are experts in the area of our work.

- b. What challenges do you see for the City's Retirement System over the next five+ years?**

- Identifying the best environment, social and corporate governance investments that represent the City employee values and yield promising long-term returns;
- Climate change may significantly change market which could require a shift in the investment strategy; and
- A downturn in the market could shift individual investment strategy/needs and could cause more employee eligible for retirement to leave the plan to seek greater returns elsewhere.

- c. SDHR manages the City of Seattle Voluntary Deferred Compensation Plan (457 Comp Plan). What ideas do you have to make the plan more approachable and accessible to employees? How will you coordinate info about SCERS and the 457 Comp Plan?**

Ideas to make the plan more approachable and accessible include:

- Partner with our vendor to target employees who have not signed up for the benefit; and
- Communicate the plan benefit in engaged ways such as a retirement savings calculator on department websites and employee self-service and pay warrants.

Information may be coordinated by:

- Partnering on mailers and other targeted communications where employees may be engaged in one benefit but not the other; and
- Hold traveling employee information sessions jointly including Payroll to ensure employee have accurate pay and withholding information as well as these benefits.

19) Under normal circumstances how long should a hiring process take?

Normal can only be defined by the stated goals of the organization. A company's normal timeline will be different than our normal by location, division, team and job type. A strong recruitment team can typically close out a recruitment in 30-45 days.

20) How will you continue to work on improving workplace equity across all city departments?

Set a great example is first and foremost – we have work to do in our own department. We can then leverage our own change into a compelling stories and best practices to assist other departments. We will also work to highlight the work of what other departments are doing to improve equity across all City departments. Most importantly, we will ensure that the practice of HR, a fundamental ability of HR professionals will be to lead and consult with equity as they support the City's business lines. We have, for so long, pushed that work to SOCR. It's time to own that work in the practice of HR as well. We will look for ways to embed equity into every learning for HR professionals and will ensure that equity is represented in the City-wide goals of the shared governance framework.

21) Through Resolution 31712, the Seattle Dept of Human Resources has been extensively involved in advancing a green jobs initiative through an interdepartmental team. The resolution defines a green job as "one that preserves or enhances environmental health as well as the economic and social well-being of people and communities, centers on communities most negatively impacted by climate change, and pays a living wage while providing career pathways."

- a. Can you describe any work experience in the environmental sector that will inform your leadership in advancing the green jobs initiative? What specific steps would you take to give community members access to green jobs in our city?"

While I don't have work experience in the environmental sector I do have experience recruiting across a wide variety of jobs types. Specific steps that I would take to give community member access to green jobs:

- Identify which City jobs are considered "green" and understand why;
- Promote and celebrate employees in green jobs currently;
- Create internal pathways for other City employees to consider green jobs;
- Partner with equity recruitment partners and trades groups to share green job opportunities through job fairs and other targeted recruitment strategies; and
- Share the benefits of green jobs and green jobs opportunities among young professionals, women and historically underserved/under-represented populations.