

Opinion: South Lake Tahoe can endure any scrutiny

By Claire Fortier

Let's start with the elephant in the room: A councilmember has been linked to a bribery investigation.

If anything is amiss, the repercussions will be significant. If nothing is amiss, the devastation to this councilmember, her reputation and her family is immeasurable and horrific.

But no matter the outcome, the damage has already been done. Trust and confidence in the city's leadership has been shaken. A big question mark – “what now?” – hangs in the air.



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Which brings us back to the room: The city of South Lake Tahoe.

The city is doing a stellar job despite significantly reduced staffing and enormous cost cuts. The operation of the city of South Lake Tahoe rests with competent and hard-working staff and excellent management. While still under the pressure of budget shortfalls, the city is in far better financial shape than most other California cities.

Efficient and responsive government is what the city of South Lake Tahoe is doing every day at every level.

This didn't happen in a vacuum. Over the past few years, it has taken real work to focus our mission, fix our budget crisis and finish major projects, despite limited funding and staff.

The city has done that and so much more. It has been a key player in collaborating on regional planning and projects. It has created a community core in its community parks. It has managed events and projects beyond a scope ever considered before.

The work of the city is a constant process. Council set policy, city management puts policy into practice and city employees make that practice work every day, day in and day out.

When all aspects of the process work, city government works. And the city of South Lake Tahoe is working well.

Now it's up to City Council to make sure it stays that way. We must focus on goals we adopted. We must hold the city's best interests as our only objective. We must consider the future of our city, and not stay mired in the past.

As a council, we understand the significant challenges we face in coming days. We also understand that the investigation must work through the proper channels and not in the council chambers. We will cooperate with the district attorney in every way. And we will wait for all the conclusions to be drawn by his office, not by us.

We will stay focused the ability to deliver good government every day, day after day. That's what our residents rely on and what we have vowed to deliver.

So, in answer to the question "what now?" – we have a great city that is doing an excellent job. We plan to keep it that way.

Claire Fortier is mayor of South Lake Tahoe.