

Letter: Ex-mayor, journalist critical of SLT council

Publisher's note: *This letter was sent to the South Lake Tahoe City Council and Lake Tahoe News.*

Mayor David and members of council,

I am outraged at the seemingly underhanded manner in which council is handling the termination of a highly valued city manager. Nancy Kerry has been an exemplary city leader who has put the greater good of the city as her sole priority. I am not sure I can say the same about council, whom seem hell bent on needlessly destroying her excellent reputation.



Claire Fortier

As the former managing and opinion page editor of the *Tahoe Daily Tribune*, I often worked with Nancy when she was the communications officer for the city. She was readily accessible and always forthcoming with information, even as she protected the reputation of the city and its employees.

As I approached my first year on council, Nancy was thrust into the very difficult position of assistant city manger during the tenure of a contentious city manager and a budget crisis that resulted in mass layoffs. I watched her navigate angry unions reps, disgruntled city workers, egotistical politicians and a myriad of citizen complaints, all with unflappable calm and kindness. She drafted a strategic plan,

held council workshops to focus on priorities and helped draft a budget that eventually resulted in a positive cash flow for the debt-ridden city.

I was mayor when Nancy was given the role as city manager, and I still feel it was one of the best decisions we made as a council. During that year, Nancy managed to accomplish more than I could have imagined possible. From working with a devastated and greatly reduced city staff, she found compromise and commitment to move forward. She was instrumental in lobbying efforts that resulted in the passage of the Tahoe Regional Plan through two deeply divided states. She oversaw a pathway to revitalizing the city through such efforts as special events, infrastructure rebuild and incentives for small businesses. She worked with El Dorado County to find common ground on issues like the campground and the senior center. She often organized local agency leaders to focus on common goals and priorities. She redid the city's communication plan, organizational chart and capital improvement projects. She ended a decade-old deadlock on Harrison Avenue, which now enjoys an economic revitalization. She was successful in gaining the last low-income housing project to be built on the South Shore. She did all of this while graciously giving credit to everyone but herself.

Nancy Kerry has been the glue that has held the city together during some of its darkest days. For that, she deserves respect and support. It is certainly City Council's prerogative to determine the best person to manage the city. But don't, in the process, besmirch the reputation of a city manager who has been unfailingly faithful to her job and who has always sought the best outcome for the city and its future.

Sincerely,

Claire Fortier