

City of Poulsbo

Office of Mayor Rebecca Erickson



December 18, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

City of Poulsbo, Mayor's Office
200 NE Moe Street, Poulsbo, WA 98370
360.394.9880
www.cityofpoulsbo.com

City of Poulsbo Hires First City Administrator, Rob Gelder

Mayor Erickson is pleased to announce the appointment of Rob Gelder as the City of Poulsbo's first-ever City Administrator. Rob will begin his new role on January 16, 2025, bringing over 13 years of dedicated public service experience to the position. This hire marks a significant step toward ensuring professional continuity in the city's administration as it continues to grow and evolve.

"Rob brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that will be invaluable to our city's future," said Mayor Erickson. "His background in leadership, budget management, policy development, and strategic planning will help provide the stability and guidance needed as Poulsbo moves forward. This role will allow for professional management that supports the vision of the City Council and better serves our residents."

Rob Gelder's deep experience in local government leadership, budgeting, and legislative affairs makes him well-suited to help drive Poulsbo's future initiatives. With experience overseeing a wide range of departments and navigating complex government regulations, Rob will be instrumental in managing the city's operations, enhancing services, and implementing the community's vision for the future.

"I have a passion for local government," said Rob Gelder. "It's where we touch the lives of residents every day, and I am excited to support the City of Poulsbo in implementing its community-developed vision for the future. I look forward to working alongside the Mayor, City Council, staff, and residents to ensure that Poulsbo continues to grow and thrive while maintaining the values that make it such a special place."



Rob Gelder's Work Experience

- **Thurston County, Assistant County Manager**

April 2023 – Present

In his current role at Thurston County, Rob provides leadership and direction to multiple departments, managing a budget of \$212.7 million and overseeing 497 full-time employees. His focus includes building departmental resilience, delivering capital projects, and implementing new processes such as a Public Safety Assessment for Pre-Trial Services. Rob is also leading the reintroduction of LEAN process improvement training for county staff.

- **Kitsap County, County Commissioner, District 1**

March 2011 – May 2023

As a Kitsap County Commissioner, Rob played a key role in managing a \$469 million budget (\$113 million general fund). He led the county's legislative agenda, worked with state and federal legislators, and oversaw numerous departments, including public works, parks, and human services. Rob's accomplishments include launching the county's diversity, equity, and inclusion program and expanding public open space by adding nearly 5,000 acres. He also served as President of the Washington State Association of Counties and a board member of the National Association of Counties.

- **Martha & Mary, Director of Development**

February 2004 – March 2011

Rob led the fundraising, community relations, marketing, and legislative affairs efforts for this non-profit organization. He built strong partnerships with community stakeholders and legislators to support the organization's mission.

Rob's Leadership Philosophy

Rob is committed to collaborative, servant leadership that empowers staff within the organization. His focus on organizational change, community engagement, and employee morale has been central to his leadership style throughout his career. As someone who has worked to build diverse and inclusive workplaces, Rob is passionate about ensuring that services are delivered in a way that honors the diversity of the community.

About Rob Gelder

Rob is an experienced public administrator with a strong background in local government, budget oversight, legislative affairs, and community engagement. He is a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Washington County Administrators Association (WCAA) and has actively participated in regional planning efforts through the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council and the Puget Sound Regional Council.

About the City of Poulsbo

Poulsbo, located in Kitsap County, Washington, is a picturesque city known for its vibrant

community, waterfront views, and Scandinavian heritage. With a population of over 11,000 residents, Poulsbo continues to grow and evolve, offering a variety of services to improve the lives of its residents.

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NK Herald