

2025 Interim City Manager Evaluation – City Council - Summary

City Council (9 members) 9 of 9 responded.

Overall, 58.4% of the scores were 6's and 84.4% were either 5's or 6's. The scores broke down as follows:

Score	%
6	58.4%
5	26.0%
4	12.3%
3	2.4%
1 or 2	0%
N/A	4.9%

The scores for each category are below, with “City Management” and “Financial Management” scoring at 100% 5 or 6 ratings, and “Intergovernmental Relations” scoring the lowest at 71.4% 5 or 6 ratings.

Category	Scoring 5 or 6
<i>Overall</i>	<i>84.4%</i>
City Management	100%
Financial Management	100%
Strategic Leadership	88.9%
City Council Relations	77.8%
Senior Team Leadership*	85.7%
Intergovernmental Relations*	71.4%
Community Relations	66.7%
Communications	88.9%
Self-Management	77.8%

* Both categories received two “N/A” scores each, indicating some respondents had a lack of personal knowledge or that Ms. Namburi’s limited time in the position left them unable to provide a rating. The “N/A” responses have been excluded from the scoring for these two categories and in the overall scoring.

Community Relations had the greatest disparity in ratings, with six council members giving a 6 rating, two council members giving a 4 rating and one council member giving a 3 rating.

1. City Management – Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role model for others.	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several are areas that should receive attention for development.	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas for development.	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are noticed by others.	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area appears well developed	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for others to follow.
				4 / 44.4%	5 / 55.6%

Strengths:

- **Leadership and Trust:** Krishna is well-respected by staff and has earned the trust of the leadership team. She effectively implements Council policies and aligns organizational capacity with Council goals, demonstrating sound judgment and clear communication of priorities.
- **Resource Management:** She ensures that city projects and initiatives are well-resourced, enabling successful execution and long-term sustainability. Her strategic approach reflects a deep understanding of the city's priorities, balancing input from staff, the City Council, and the community.
- **Collaboration and Morale:** Krishna fosters strong relationships across all levels of the organization, contributing to high staff morale, even during challenging times. Her oversight of labor relations is marked by clear guidance on contract negotiations, ensuring fair outcomes.
- **Adaptability:** She has shown an ability to adapt her presentations based on public feedback, particularly during community discussions about the levy.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Workload Management:** There are concerns about her workload and the sustainability of her hours. Feedback suggests she should take time for herself to avoid burnout and consider delegating more responsibilities.
- **Balancing Community Input:** As she steps fully into the City Manager role, she will need to balance input from all Councilors and the public while maintaining project momentum.

- **Strategic Execution:** Some comments indicate that while she has good instincts, the short time in her role has limited her ability to fully execute strategies and has the ability to adapt and change based on feedback from the public.

Overall, Krishna's leadership is seen as a positive force for the City of Salem, with many expressing gratitude for her effective management during a transitional period. There is strong support for her continued leadership, with an emphasis on the need for balance and delegation to ensure long-term sustainability.

2. Financial Management – Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role model for others.	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several are areas that should receive attention for development.	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas for development.	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are noticed by others.	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area appears well developed	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for others to follow.
				4 / 44.4%	5 / 55.6%

Strengths:

- **Budget Management:** Krishna has effectively managed the city's budget, demonstrating creativity in cutting expenses, such as reducing overnight travel and utilizing vacancy savings for overtime patrols. Her proactive approach has been noted as both creative and responsive.
- **Transparency and Trust:** She has built transparency and trust with the community, especially during discussions about the levy. Her ability to engage in fiscal prudence has been recognized, and she has received praise for her efforts in the first six months of her interim position.
- **Long-Range Financial Planning:** Krishna has developed a comprehensive long-range financial plan, ensuring the city is prepared for future needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility. She presented a balanced budget that clearly outlines service levels, enabling informed decision-making.
- **Resource Allocation:** Her strategic approach to resource allocation reflects a deep understanding of the city's priorities, balancing input from staff, the City Council, and the community. She actively seeks alternative funding opportunities, such as grants and partnerships, to support city initiatives.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Revenue Enhancement:** There is a suggestion for Krishna to bring forward options for revenue enhancement, including adjusting user fees and cost-recovery rates, to align community expectations with sustainable funding.
- **Pathway to Increasing Revenue:** Council members expressed a desire for a clearer understanding of the pathway to increasing revenue for the general fund, particularly regarding public safety elements.
- **Managing Growing Service Expectations:** Given the growing service expectations, there is a need for urgency in addressing revenue strategies to ensure alignment with community needs.

Overall, Krishna's financial management has been well-received, with strong support for her leadership and a recognition of the positive direction in which she is guiding the city.

3. Strategic Leadership – Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role model for others.	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several are areas that should receive attention for development.	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas for development.	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are noticed by others.	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area appears well developed	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for others to follow.
		1 / 11.1%		3 / 33.3%	5 / 55.6%

Strengths:

- **Vision and Communication:** Krishna is recognized as a clear and consistent communicator who inspires others. She effectively communicates a vision that aligns with the city's goals and encourages collaboration among various stakeholders, including councilors and community leaders.
- **Proactive Leadership:** Her instinct to manage councilor participation in neighborhood associations (NAs) received both praise and concern, both in protecting council members, but making a unitary decision without involving council members in the decision. Providing meeting summaries to all councilors ensures everyone receives the same information, facilitating better decision-making was praised by several council members.

- **Strategic Planning:** Krishna has taken a leading role in creating the City's Strategic Plan, demonstrating her capacity for strategic thought and leadership. She has effectively addressed major issues such as the livability levy and public safety, showcasing her ability to navigate complex city challenges.
- **Inclusivity and Respect:** She listens to diverse perspectives and treats all individuals with respect, fostering a safe environment for creativity and open dialogue. Her approach encourages collaboration and innovation among city staff and councilors.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Krishna consistently provides thoughtful, data-backed recommendations to the City Council, ensuring that decisions are grounded in sound reasoning and aligned with the city's long-term interests. Her ability to manage both short-term operational plans and long-term strategies is noted as a significant strength.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Public Sentiment Awareness:** While effective at identifying technical and policy trends, Krishna will need to stay connected with the community to understand current public sentiment. Creating feedback loops could improve her responsiveness to public concerns. This may require support from council and staff.
- **Engagement:** There is a suggestion to improve the optics the public may perceive when the City engages with different groups. Members of council received negative feedback from the public that some groups were not allowed to speak at the N.E. business forum.
- **Strategic Alignment on Key Issues:** Specifically regarding the airport, there is a call for clearer strategic alignment among members of council to ensure cohesive decision-making.

Overall, Krishna's strategic leadership is viewed positively, with strong support for her initiatives and a recognition of her potential to further enhance the city's strategic direction.

4. City Council Relations – Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several are areas that	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for

model for others.	should receive attention for development.	for development.	noticed by others.	appears well developed	others to follow.
			2 / 22.2%	2 / 22.2%	5 / 55.6%

Strengths:

- **Dedication and Integrity:** Krishna is recognized for her deep commitment to serving Salem and her integrity as a City Manager. She is focused on developing staff and is now extending that commitment to her work with the City Council.
- **Improved Communication:** Council members appreciate the shift towards a more transparent and collaborative approach. Krishna's systems-oriented methodology has helped reduce rivalries and promote a more unified environment among councilors.
- **Inclusivity and Support:** She is praised for giving everyone a voice and fostering a psychologically safe environment. Councilors feel supported and valued, which enhances collaboration.
- **Regular Updates and Engagement:** Krishna maintains open lines of communication, ensuring councilors are informed about city activities and challenges. She actively engages with councilors individually, which helps build relationships and understanding.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Decision-Making Process:** Some councilors expressed concerns about unilateral decisions made by the city, particularly regarding attendance at neighborhood associations (NAs). They prefer being presented with all relevant information to make informed decisions.
- **Navigating Council Dynamics:** As she continues to build relationships with councilors, there is a recognition that she needs to learn how to navigate the different expectations and roles of individual councilors.
- **Balancing Information Sharing:** While the current communication practices are appreciated, there is a desire for Krishna to continue developing her understanding of what matters to each councilor individually, ensuring that all voices are heard.

Overall, Krishna's approach to City Council relations is viewed positively, with strong support for her ongoing efforts to foster collaboration and transparency within the council.

5. Senior Team Leadership – Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role model for others.	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several are areas that should receive attention for development.	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas for development.	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are noticed by others.	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area appears well developed	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for others to follow.
			1 / 11.1%	2 / 22.2%	4 / 44.4%
2 N/A					

Strengths:

- **Strong Leadership and Team Morale:** Krishna sets a positive tone for performance, investing in staff development and fostering open, constructive discussions. Her leadership has reinvigorated a previously struggling leadership team, resulting in improved morale and higher performance levels among city staff.
- **Commitment to Staff:** She is deeply committed to the city staff and demonstrates a genuine care for their well-being. Krishna actively creates a culture where all employees feel seen, heard, and valued.
- **Effective Communication:** Krishna maintains transparency and keeps her team well-informed about organizational activities, which helps in aligning goals and expectations. She encourages a collaborative environment that fosters trust and respect.
- **Delegation and Empowerment:** She effectively delegates authority, allowing her team to act confidently and independently. This empowerment is crucial for driving sound decisions and fostering a proactive leadership culture.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Limited Observations:** Some council members noted that there is limited information available to fully assess her effectiveness in this area, especially in the first six months of her tenure.
- **Workload Management:** There are concerns regarding the workload of Krishna and her senior team, with suggestions for better delegation to prevent burnout. Some council members noted that they have seen the leadership team working excessively long hours.

- **Navigating Council Relationships:** As she continues to build relationships with councilors, there is recognition that she needs to learn how to navigate the different expectations and roles of individual councilors.
- **Visibility and Engagement:** While her presence is appreciated, there are suggestions for her to find trusted deputies to assist in community engagement and other responsibilities to ensure she does not become overwhelmed.

Overall, Krishna's leadership in the senior team is viewed positively, with strong support for her approach to fostering a collaborative and high-performing environment within the city.

6. Intergovernmental/Agency Relationships Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role model for others.	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several are areas that should receive attention for development.	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas for development.	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are noticed by others.	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area appears well developed	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for others to follow.
			2 / 22.2%	1 / 11.1%	4 / 44.4%
2 N/A					

Strengths:

- **Building Relationships:** Krishna is rapidly establishing her effectiveness with intergovernmental partners and proactively communicating with neighboring jurisdictions. Her efforts are recognized as a positive step towards collaborative outcomes for Salem.
- **Effective Collaboration:** She is noted for her ability to maintain strong, professional relationships with other communities and regional organizations. Her communication skills and trust-building enhance Salem's reputation and influence in regional initiatives.
- **Commitment to Engagement:** Krishna actively participates in community engagement efforts, including planning community listening sessions, which are crucial for understanding diverse perspectives and needs.
- **Proactive Approach:** Her approach to collaboration is informed by a lifetime of experience, and she is recognized for her willingness to listen and think creatively about intergovernmental relationships.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Limited Observations:** Some council members noted that there is limited information available to fully assess her effectiveness in this area, especially in the first six months of her tenure.
- **Opportunities for Demonstration:** There are suggestions for Krishna to demonstrate her skills in specific areas, such as fire services, airport management, and mental health responses, which could further showcase her collaborative capabilities.
- **Continued Development:** As she continues to build these relationships, it is important for her to maintain momentum and ensure that collaborative efforts are sustained and effective.

Overall, Krishna's efforts in fostering intergovernmental and agency relationships are viewed positively, with strong potential for continued growth and effectiveness in this area.

7. Community Relations – Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role model for others.	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several are areas that should receive attention for development.	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas for development.	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are noticed by others.	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area appears well developed	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for others to follow.
		1 / 11.1%	2 / 22.2%		6 / 66.7%

Strengths:

- **Visibility and Engagement:** Krishna is highly visible and actively engaged in the community. She invites input, responds to feedback, and represents the City well, demonstrating a strong commitment to being present for residents.
- **Positive Ambassador:** She is seen as a positive ambassador for the City of Salem, embracing her role and making herself accessible and approachable at public events.
- **Authentic Relationships:** Krishna builds authentic relationships with community partners and stakeholders, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in planning and decision-making processes. Her understanding of the community's needs is shaped by years of direct engagement.

- **Proactive Listening:** She actively encourages community input and listens carefully, ensuring that feedback is reflected in the City's priorities. This has helped strengthen trust and collaboration between the City and its residents.
- **Commitment to Improvement:** Krishna's dedication to showing up for everyone and her willingness to engage with various community groups have been noted as significant improvements over her predecessors.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Workload Management:** While her engagement is commendable, there are concerns that she should not be doing everything herself. Delegating responsibilities could help manage her workload and ensure sustainability.
- **Event Planning:** Some feedback indicated that certain community listening sessions, such as the one in NE Salem, were poorly planned, suggesting a need for better coordination in event organization.
- **Balancing Engagement:** As she continues to engage with the community, there is a call for better coordination between her efforts and those of the leadership team and councilors to ensure comprehensive outreach.

Overall, Krishna's approach to community relations is viewed positively, with strong support for her efforts to foster engagement and collaboration within the Salem community.

8. Communications – Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role model for others.	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several areas that should receive attention for development.	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas for development.	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are noticed by others.	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area appears well developed	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for others to follow.
			1 / 11.1%	2 / 22.2%	6 / 66.7%

Strengths:

- **Effective Communication:** Krishna is recognized for her outstanding communication skills, consistently responding to inquiries from councilors and the public in a timely and thorough manner. She speaks and writes clearly, ensuring that her messages are well understood.

- **Active Listening:** She actively listens to others, seeking clarification when needed, and demonstrates openness to considering different points of view. This fosters an environment where dialogue is encouraged.
- **Adaptability:** Krishna adapts her communication style to suit various situations, whether engaging with staff, council members, community partners, or residents. Her ability to provide detailed updates on specific projects in a timely manner is also noted.
- **Proactive Engagement:** She maintains a proactive approach to communication, ensuring that information of general interest is current and distributed through various methods to effectively reach the community and stakeholders.
- **Responsiveness:** Councilors appreciate her promptness in addressing issues and incorporating feedback into her decisions, which enhances trust and collaboration.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Resource Constraints:** Some feedback indicates a desire for more comprehensive communication from the city as a whole, acknowledging the limitations of resources available to execute these communications effectively.
- **Event Coordination:** There are suggestions for better coordination between the leadership team and councilors when planning events to ensure that communication efforts are aligned and effective.
- **Sustainability of Engagement:** While her engagement is commendable, there are concerns that she should not be expected to handle all communication efforts herself. Delegating responsibilities could help manage her workload and ensure sustainability.

Overall, Krishna's communication efforts are viewed positively, with strong support for her approach to fostering engagement and transparency within the city.

9. Self-Management – Score:

Rating Scale					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely demonstrates these qualities. Does not serve as an effective role model for others.	Demonstrates competence in these qualities only infrequently. Several are areas that should receive attention for development.	Occasionally demonstrates these qualities but some of these behaviors are clearly areas for development.	Frequently exhibits these qualities but occasionally shows lapses that are noticed by others.	Almost always demonstrates these qualities. Performance in this area appears well developed	Consistently demonstrates these qualities and sets a high standard for others to follow.
			2 / 22.2%	2 / 22.2%	5 / 55.6%

Strengths:

- **Strong Self-Management:** Krishna demonstrates excellent self-management skills, taking responsibility for her decisions and consistently following through on commitments. She upholds high ethical standards and maintains a professional demeanor, earning the trust and respect of her colleagues, City Council, and the community.
- **Approachability and Conflict Management:** She is approachable and effectively manages conflicts, actively seeking feedback to improve continuously. Her humility and willingness to ask for help when needed are noted as significant strengths.
- **Integrity and Professionalism:** Krishna exemplifies high standards of ethics, honesty, and personal integrity, which are recognized as second to none. Her calm and respectful demeanor fosters a positive environment for staff.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Work-Life Balance:** There are concerns about her workload, with feedback indicating that she works excessively long hours, which may not be sustainable. Some council members suggest that she should prioritize work-life balance and consider delegating more responsibilities.
- **Time Management:** Given the steep learning curve of her role, it is recommended that Krishna manage her time more intentionally by setting boundaries and allowing for recovery time to sustain her high performance over the long term.
- **Support Structure:** Suggestions include hiring an assistant city manager or restructuring the current leadership team to better support her and ensure that she does not bear the entire workload alone.

Overall, Krishna's self-management is viewed positively, with strong support for her integrity and professionalism, alongside constructive feedback aimed at ensuring her long-term sustainability in the role.

10. Additional Comments:

General Support and Appreciation:

- Krishna is highly regarded for her integrity, humility, and grace in leadership. Feedback express deep appreciation for her ability to step into the role following the previous City Manager's departure, ensuring continuity and effective leadership during a challenging transition.
- Her extensive experience and understanding of the city's operations, finances, and interdepartmental relationships are seen as transformative. She has successfully guided the city through fiscal challenges, significantly reducing the financial cliff previously faced.

Equity and Access:

- Feedback praises the transparent and collaborative approach with City Council. Comments noted that information is shared with all members of council and that all members of council are treated equally without catering to individuals, which was noted as an issue with former leadership.
- Recommendations for improving transparency include providing written explanations for decisions that connect resource allocations to council goals, using published matrices for prioritizing initiatives, and offering regular updates on project statuses.

Community Engagement:

- Feedback emphasizes the importance of greater investment in connecting with faith-based communities and focusing on communities of color, particularly in Wards 5 and 6. There is a call for better tracking systems for grants and procurement processes.

Work-Life Balance:

- While Krishna promotes work-life balance for others, there are concerns regarding her own workload and the sustainability of her hours. Feedback encourages her to set boundaries and delegate responsibilities to maintain her well-being.

Overall Sentiment:

- The overall sentiment is one of strong support for Krishna's leadership, with many expressing confidence in her ability to navigate the complexities of her role. Her collaborative approach, commitment to transparency, and ability to listen and engage with the community are highlighted as key strengths.
- Some respondents note they have a lack of exposure or personal knowledge of Krishna's performance in some areas.

This section reflects a collective appreciation for Krishna's leadership and a desire to support her in addressing challenges while continuing to foster a positive and effective city management environment.