

## **Robert S. Noe, Jr.**

Robert S. Noe Jr, more commonly referred to as ‘Bob’ was born on September 22, 1939 to Margaret Barker Noe, and Robert S. Noe. Starting school at Granby Elementary School in Norfolk Virginia, he soon moved to Elkin North Carolina with his mother and younger brother, where he attended Elkins Elementary and High School. After high school, he attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, serving in the Army from 1960 to 1962 before graduating. After graduation he worked for Atlantic Refining Company, before scoring an internship with the city of Durham. While completing the internship he also attended graduate school and graduated with a master’s in public administration in 1974<sup>1</sup>. After graduation he moved to Virginia and worked as the town manager in Herndon from 1972 to 1978.

Bob served as the County Executive for Prince William County from 1978 to 1989, during which time he oversaw the growth of the county. After leaving the county, he worked as a county manager in Florida, before returning to Northern Virginia as a Town Manager for Leesburg, a role he later retired from in 2004.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hedgpeth, Dana. 1999. “Ex-Pr. William Official to Manage Leesburg.” The Washington Post. August 5, 1999. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1999/08/05/ex-pr-william-official-to-manage-leesburg/e7d7f6d4-5a07-43f5-859d-fa8da7cd5f1a/>.

<sup>2</sup> Arzua, Lila. 2004. “Leesburg Manager to Retire.” The Washington Post. February 15, 2004. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2004/02/15/leesburg-manager-to-retire/f40d4533-5c7c-4fd1-8b86-c98a760a9024/>.

## **Transcript of Oral History Interview with Bob Noe (September 11, 2024)**

**Interviewee:** Bob Noe (BN)

**Interviewer:** Lauren Maloy (LM)

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

Interview Location: Cooper's Hawk in Ashburn, Virginia

\*Please keep in mind that this document is a verbatim transcription of the spoken word rather than a written document.\*

[Start Bob Noe Audio 1]

**LM:** Perfect.

**BN:** Do you know Sharon well?

**LM:** I don't actually. Do you know Sharon well?

**BN:** Yeah, I know Sharon well.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** [Laughs] My favorite story with Sharon -- I don't know what she did. Or what I did -- to what I did. What I did. But and I think at the time she was not County Attorney. I think she was an Assistant County Attorney --

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** -- but I'm not sure. But whatever she did, her office and my office were sort of across the hall.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** But I spent a lot of time in the County Attorney's Office. And whatever she had -- whatever I had done, I went to her, and I got down on the floor -- all the way down on the floor and said, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

**LM:** [Laughs]

**BN:** And I'm proud to have done that for my age and place in life and hers. It was one of the highlights of my life.

**LM:** [Laughter] Yeah.

**BN:** You're welcome to mention that to her and see what she says. I'd be interest --

**LM:** I will. I'd be curious to hear what you did.

**BN:** -- I'd be interested to see what -- I mean she probably remembers what I did.

**LM:** Really?

**BN:** But I can't remember. I've always had a bad memory.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And that's one reason I've been committed to the truth, because I can't remember. And I knew that early on that I couldn't remember what I said yesterday. So, I'll stick with what I say today.

**LM:** Well, there you go. We'll hold you to that. [Laughs] And Sharon actually -- she provided some notes on my questions for today. So, as I said before, she recommended you. So, actually, we'll just start with some general biographical questions. And just for the recording, can you say your name and spell it for the recording?

**BN:** Robert S. Noe, Jr. N-o-e.

**LM:** Okay. And this is Lauren Maloy. I work for the Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation, and today I'm interviewing Mr. Robert Noe at Cooper's Hawk in Ashburn, Virginia. And it's Wednesday, September 11, 2024. And so, when and where were you born? We'll start with --

**BN:** When and where what?

**LM:** When and where were you born?

**BN:** Norfolk, Virginia.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** September 22, 1939.

**LM:** So, almost your birthday?

**BN:** Almost my birthday.

**LM:** Okay. [Laughs]

**BN:** So, this might be my birthday celebration.

**LM:** Okay. Well, I hope you have a better celebration. [Laughs] And what are the names of your parents?

**BN:** My mother is Margaret Barker Noe, and my father is Robert S. Noe.

**LM:** And just can you talk a little bit about your childhood? Did you grow up in the same place in Virginia, or did you move around a bit?

**BN:** I was born in Norfolk, St. Vincent Hospital, which is now torn down. And I had a brother. When he was about 6 months, and I was about 7 -- my parents divorced. And my mother took my brother and me to her home in Elkin, North Carolina.

**LM:** Okay. And then where did you go to school? What's your educational background?

**BN:** Well, I started at Granby Elementary School in Norfolk.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** I went to -- when we moved to Elkin, I went to Elkin Elementary and Elkin High School. Then I went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Went in the Army for two years. Went to Germany from 1960 to 1962. Got out just as the Vietnam War was heating up. I went back to North Carolina, to Elkin, and worked for a while. We had a mill there called Chatham Manufacturing Company, which at one time was the world's largest woolen blanket mill. And then I went back to Carolina and graduated. How far do you want me to go?

**LM:** That's pretty good. Yeah.

**BN:** I mean, I can go on if you --

**LM:** Yeah, please go on. Yeah.

**BN:** All right then. I was -- after college, I went to -- I was employed by the Atlantic Refining Company. I had read in one of my political science courses -- I had read about -- we had a book that -- one of our books that we read in the course, as I recall, was about different careers. And it talked about being a City Manager. And I thought that would really -- that appealed to me. Well, back up. My mother was a nurse, and I grew up thinking I wanted to be a doctor. I went to Chapel Hill, and I didn't realize that being a doctor meant you had to pass chemistry.

**LM:** [Laughs]

**BN:** I mean, I was thinking of bedside manner and my love of children [laughs] and stuff like that -- not the academic required. And then just for the record, I had developed a real anger toward the University of North Carolina for giving me no -- we had what do they call them? Somebody -- advisers -- advisers.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** I got no advice. Zero advice. So, I took chemistry the second time [laughs] and flunked it again -- which made me struggle my entire academic career because of the quality when we said I lost in those two courses, plus another science course that I had taken. And so, anyway, I got over that. I graduated. [Laughs]

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** So, I don't know where I was with the rest of my story, but --

**LM:** Well, I think that that moves us into -- because my next question is when you first moved to Prince William County --

**BN:** Oh?

**LM:** -- and where you moved to? But if you want to talk before about what the steps were in your career after you graduated and how you got here.

**BN:** Well, I do

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** Because those are important to how I got to where I am.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** I went to work for the Atlantic Refining Company. Well, the whole story -- when I graduated I found out that Pinellas County, Florida was looking for sort of an intern/administrative assistant or something in the -- for somebody in the City Manager's Office. So, I applied for that cause I didn't know how to become a City Manager, and they never responded. So that didn't work.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** I went to work for Atlantic, and when I was working for them, I saw an advertisement by the State of North Carolina that they were hiring three planners -- a state requirement in planning in Raleigh. So, I applied for that, and I called the City Manager of Coco, Florida which is where I was working at the time and said, "I want to be a City Manager. I have the opportunity to go to work for -- or maybe to get a job with the State of North Carolina as a planner. What do you think?" He said, "Don't do it." He said, "That's too much planning. [Laughs] You won't need that." So, I didn't, but and I can't remember if I interviewed for the job or not. But anyway, somehow, I went to Chapel Hill, which was starting -- Chapel Hill is just 12 miles from -- oh no, 20 miles from Raleigh. Chapel Hill was starting an MPA<sup>3</sup> program. I went up there probably in June or July. And they were starting the program in September, but it was too late to get into that class. So, the professor that I talked to was one that I had known as an undergraduate. He said, "The city of Durham is trying to hire two interns. Why don't you go up and interview for one of

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<sup>3</sup> Masters in Public Administration

those?" So, I did, and they hired me. And I absolutely loved it. I mean, contrast that with chemistry, that I failed. But well, I can go back more further. When I was probably in 19 – well, it was when Eisenhower was elected -- 1952, I think. I stayed up and listened to both the Republican and the Democratic convention. I didn't know -- they didn't know that that meant anything at the time. But listening to those two conventions, I was excited by political science. I didn't know that, but I was. And so, then the next four years passed, and another convention, and I did exactly the same thing. [Laughs] I was just really intrigued by the democratic process and listening to both parties go through the roll call, and all that they did to nominate a president. And so, I can look back on that and know that my mind was talking to me, that I didn't know how to listen. And I said this is -- I can't think what to call it, but in my old age, my subconscious has really developed. There have been so many times late in life -- this is a confession -- but I [inaudible 0:10:41.8] so many times was my subconscious wakes me up at 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning thinking about some problem that I have. And it had an answer for me. And it's just, it's really incredible to me that -- you need to fix that?

**LM:** No. Got it. Let me just --

**BN:** It's incredible to me that my subconscious has become so active that in my old life that I wish it had been more active in my young life. It may have kept me out of some trouble. I don't know. But it's really been an education to see how my subconscious sort of takes over and wakes me up early in the morning, thinking about what I need to do about whatever it is I need to do. Even this morning, I mean --

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** -- it's still -- it is great. It's a wonderful thing. I just don't know why it took so [laughs] long to --

**LM:** To kick in.

**BN:** -- yeah. [Laughs] To kick in.

**LM:** So, then you interned, and that was in North Carolina.

**BN:** Interned in Durham.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And hired by Harding Hughes<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Israel Harding Hughes was the city manager of Durham from 1963 to 1977; also serving as the vice president and president of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, and the vice president of the International City Management Association.

Legacy. 2009. "Israel Hughes Obituary (2009) - Winston-Salem, NC - Winston-Salem Journal." Legacy.com. Legacy. August 20, 2009. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/winstonsalem/name/israel-hughes-obituary?id=25750699>.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** A great friend of anybody who wanted to be a City Manager. And Bill [inaudible 0:12:09.4], who was the first [inaudible 0:12:10.2] director. They hired me. Then I went to -- then I enrolled in graduate school, going part time, and went for some period of time. I don't remember how long it was. And then the final -- to get to the end, I went to school full time. I think I went for one semester and one summer. But then, when that was over, I interviewed in Henrico County, and there and I was hired in Henrico County<sup>5</sup>.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** Looking at my life, that was such a critical move for me because I was a dyed-in-the-wool Tarheel at that point, and my mother and aunt and -- my mother and aunt raised me, and they raised my brother as well. And they were both great influences in my life.

**BN:** Despite whatever you do yourself, it got me to Henrico County, which I can't imagine any place in the United States was a better place to learn the processes of government, the procedures, and policies. Henrico did things right, and contrasted with the City of Richmond, which is in chaos today and was in chaos then. In Chesterfield County<sup>6</sup>, which was corrupt then, I don't think it's corrupt now, but Henrico was doing it the right way.

**BN:** But it was such an education in terms of how to do the functions of government, the policies of government, the processes the right way.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And I learned those things over there for two and a half years. I applied for Herndon -- well, when I got to Richmond -- to Henrico, I expected to go back to North Carolina. And after one year, I thought Virginia is really not so bad. I don't care if I stay in Virginia or whether I go back to North Carolina, cause North Carolina is a very strong council-manager state.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And that's very important in the City Manager profession. So, I stayed -- and after two years, I wanted to stay in Virginia. Now the next step was the almighty had to have orchestrated because a friend of mine, Jay Lambert<sup>7</sup>, you may know Jay. I don't know if you do.

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<sup>5</sup> Henrico County surrounds Richmond on its northern end

<sup>6</sup> Chesterfield County surrounds Richmond on the southern side.

<sup>7</sup> J. Hamilton Lambert aka "Jay", was the county executive in Fairfax county from 1980 to 1990. If you would like to learn more about him, there is a book written about his life called "J's Journey: The Life, Leadership, and Legacy of J Hamilton Lambert".

TROMPETER, BRIAN. 2022. "New Book Focuses on Man Who Helped Bring Fairfax County into Modern Era." INSIDENOVA.COM. August 19, 2022. [https://www.insidenova.com/news/fairfax/new-book-focuses-on-man-who-helped-bring-fairfax-county-into-modern-era/article\\_c8bbe1ec-1fda-11ed-9441-832cddf39e41.html](https://www.insidenova.com/news/fairfax/new-book-focuses-on-man-who-helped-bring-fairfax-county-into-modern-era/article_c8bbe1ec-1fda-11ed-9441-832cddf39e41.html).

**LM:** I don't.

**BN:** He's very nice. Jay was a long-term Fairfax County employee. He graduated from high school -- no college -- and ultimately became County Executive in Fairfax County during the height of the challenging times that Fairfax went through in terms of growth and all the stuff that it went through.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** Economic development, and that's another story I can talk about in a little bit. But Jay is the first one I heard say that, you know, "All of us City Managers consider ourselves as brilliant and so smart about everything. And the fact is, we had the good sense to be employed in Northern Virginia." Which means we don't have any control over that. [Laughs] I mean, somebody else hired us, and we took the job. It wasn't our decision at all. It was somebody else's that got us to Northern Virginia. But I was hired in Herndon.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** It could not have been a better experience. Herndon was 6,000 people when I got there. I left six years later. It was 12,000. That kind of growth for a small town is just monumental. And for somebody like me who is trying to learn how to do what, I mean I didn't know -- I mean it's scary in a way how people like me can be appointed as a manager somewhere [laughs] and know so little. [Laughter] It is. But I learned quickly. We did really good things. It just -- it was an incredible experience for the council, I think, as well as for me. I recognized early on that top-notch staff were the key to doing what needed to be done. And because I started off thinking, "I needed a public works director." And I thought about hiring this fellow -- in fact, I tried to hire him from Henrico, who he didn't have the education for it. But I thought he had the experience., but I quickly realized that the experience is not all that counts. You've got to have the academic degree because the people you're dealing with in the private sector -- they're engineers and people who have been educated -- and they know they've got the credentials that you've got to have them too. So, it really -- that was a very enlightening experience for me to have -- to have gone through that first thinking that I wanted to hire a guy who could get the job done. And next realizing that I needed somebody who could sit across the table, because when you're reviewing plans, you're talking about taking the projects that they want to build, and the municipality has to maintain that all the pipes that are in the ground, and stuff like that. And that's not something I thought about, but I realized I needed somebody who could sit across the table from a professional engineer, dealing with a professional engineer on my side in order to protect the town and get what needed to be gotten. And it was a true education. I can't imagine any place in the country that could have been more educational.

**BN:** To have gotten to Herndon with the education that he gave me couldn't have deserved it, but I got it. And when I went to Prince William --

**LM:** Okay.



**BN:** -- needed exactly what I had been doing. And I mean it's amazing, and I've thought about this and talked to some people about it how me as a manager can be so uneducated, so unprepared in terms of the experience. And maybe the academics, but not the common sense. But and to be able to be lucky enough to get to a place -- I mean I didn't know what I could do till a manager. I mean, I just knew I wanted to be a manager. I wanted to be in charge. I wanted to get to the top and see if I could swim.

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** Or whether I'd sink. And that's an analogy that I used. Because I mean it was really sink or swim, and I learned I could swim. So, it was so important to me in my evolution to go to Prince William. They needed exactly the same thing. I was on the road to being prepared. I mean, I knew Henrico had been so instrumental in terms of the proper processes and procedures. The written -- I mean, the thing is that the government is formal, and it needs to be in writing. It can't be fly by the night, or let's do this or do that, or do something else. It's got to be according to a process. And I know that's an early conversation I had with the council -- with the Board of Supervisors. The processes of government are as important as the decisions you make because the processes have to be open. The people have to be able to see it and understand it and participate, and then it takes time. But when you finally get to the conclusion, you can be satisfied that everybody who had a dog in the fight got a say. And so, it was just such a wonderful experience for me to be in Herndon, and it was replicated in Prince William. I mean, I had some notes, but skipping ahead --

**LM:** Yeah, no, please.

**BN:** No. I don't need to --

**LM:** Well and I feel badly keeping you from your lunch.

**BN:** No, no, no. I mean, I didn't know exactly what you were gonna have us talk about. But early on -- I mean when I was in Herndon, we were so understaffed -- so understaffed.

**LM:** Really?

**BN:** Both in terms of the experience of the people that we had, the education that they had been doing -- the education that they had. And so, to some extent, Prince William was the same thing. It wasn't enough of people -- maybe they had the academic credentials, but they didn't have -- we didn't enough people. So, I had met with -- I want to go back a little bit and say that soon after I got to Herndon, the County Attorney resigned.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And they hired a man named Dexter Odin, who is -- he died about six months ago. But he was the premier attorney of anybody that I've ever known, and he had such a standing -- he was only part-time. He had a firm, Odin Feldman and Pittleman, but he was a part-time town attorney. But what he pointed out to me was that that's really the safest thing for the town

because if the town attorney owes his entire paycheck to the town, he's got to -- a weak attorney will cave to the council or maybe even the manager, but particularly the council.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** Whereas if he doesn't require the money that he's being paid by the town that's to support his family, he can tell the truth and tell the council what it needs to know. And then if it doesn't like it, it informs to fire him.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** It's just another client. But he turned out to be a lifetime friend and turned out to be my best friend. And we were together for 52/53 years. So, during that time, we hired an engineering firm. When I got to Herndon, the mayor said, "There's this guy, Jack Rinker, who's been -- he lives in Herndon. And he's been bugging me for -- he wants to work for the town -- not to be an employee but as a consultant." So, I interviewed Jack, and we ultimately hired his firm because the planned review, which -- soon after I got to Herndon, Fairfax County declared a sewer moratorium<sup>8</sup>. Which meant that all the development that was going to Fairfax County was probably the fastest growing county in the country, started coming to Herndon, which is four square miles. And we were totally overwhelmed and not prepared. So, I quickly realized that we needed to hire some consulting help, and we interviewed a few firms, and I hired Jack Rinker. And I finally realized that what I got from Jack was not only engineering expertise, but he had a perspective on the management part of it. And also, on the people who were doing the job in terms of how adept they were and just how they were qualified to do whatever. But he really -- I got far more from him than just an engineering consultant. I got so much management kind of stuff, and also the truth. He was committed to the truth in telling whatever it was, was honest as Dexter was. The law is the law. The truth is the truth, and we don't equivocate. And so, the three of us became lifetime friends because I was committed to the truth as well. [Pause] So, when it came -- I mean, Jack was probably -- I hired Jack before I hired Dexter, but I told the -- I went to the council -- to the Board of Supervisors and said, "Growth is overwhelming. We're not prepared. We cannot staff up fast enough. You don't want to pay the bill to hire enough staff people even to get them up to date. We need somebody who's up to date from day one." I said, "He's a personal friend. We're personal friends. We do things together, but I know of no person who is as competent in the engineering field as Jack Rinker." They said, "Hire him." We did. So that was important to the county's growth. I mean orderly and doing what needs to be done. And then we hired -- well, we didn't -- the county didn't hire Dexter Odin. But when I got to Prince William, there was an adversarial relationship between the City of Manassas and Fairfax County -- Prince William County.

**LM:** Prince William?

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<sup>8</sup> Grubisich, Tom. 1978. "A Sewer 'Emergency' in Fairfax County." The Washington Post. May 4, 1978. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1978/05/04/a-sewer-emergency-in-fairfax-county/8cdb0b69-e1b8-4a4f-9263-097563bc9ff5/>.

**BN:** And which was just sad because the city is so small in comparison to the size of the county. It was basically irrelevant what was going on in the city. But that's how they felt, and so that's how it was.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** But the staff in Prince William were talking about UOSA [Upper Occoquan Service Authority]. They said the State Water Control Board is out to screw us. They're making us do stuff that -- the water and sewer, particularly sewer, were just like gold in those days. Nobody had enough sewer capacity. And so, sewer capacity was the key element.

**LM:** Yeah. Again, if you want to a break --

**BN:** No.

**LM:** -- I can pause so you can actually eat your lunch. So yeah. [Laughs]

**BN:** I don't know where I was.

**LM:** Talking about water and sewer in Prince William.

**BN:** Oh, sewer being such an integral, important thing. So, when I said earlier that the staff in Prince William had been talking about UOSA, "They're out to get us. They're treating us" -- Prince William had a complex that it was not -- somehow, they didn't think we were up to par with Fairfax and Arlington and [inaudible 0:33:42.9]. And so, the governing body of UOSA was a board with two representatives from each jurisdiction: Manassas, Manassas Park, Prince William, and Fairfax. And so, I knew Dexter and his integrity as well as his -- he was probably the top municipal attorney in the state. And I called Jay Lambert, who was a friend of mine. I'd known Jay for a while. I said, "Jay, we really -- I want to make a change at the attorney at UOSA because the people that I'm hearing from, from Prince William County, are saying they're taking advantage of us. We're not being treated properly, and I need to get -- I need somebody out there that I can 100 percent rely on to tell the truth and then call it like it is." I said, "I want to hire Dexter Odin as the attorney for UOSA, and we need the Prince William votes -- and your votes and we'll have to get another one." So, we did. And so that put an end to the crybaby, Prince William, was coming back and saying, "Well, you know, they're taking advantage." Noman Cole was the State Water Control Board, and he was sort of public enemy number one in Prince William because he was the spokesman for the state. And all the stuff that Prince William -- that he thought Prince William was not doing that was up to snuff and everybody else was -- we weren't meeting the standard that everybody else was meeting. So, Dexter and Jack both played key roles because of the truth. They told the truth and called it like it was, and I knew that whatever they said was 100 percent reliable. And so, I could represent to the board that this is what's going on. This is what we need to do. There never was another obstacle with UOSA. We may not have agreed with everything they did, but the times of hostility with UOSA were gone.

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** And so we were on the road that we needed to be in order to do the kinds of stuff at UOSA that needed to be done. And so, they both played such key roles. And Dexter -- Dexter's firm is still attorneys for UOSA. Dexter died about six months ago, but his firm is still the attorney for UOSA.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And I think Jack Rinker's firm is still doing some engineering work for the county. They've gotten heavy into highways, but at that point, they were reviewing subdivisions. And that was important because when a subdivision is approved, the water lines and sewer lines primarily then taken over by the municipality. And so, if they were putting in inferior or substandard size or inferior quality of the pipe, then the government eventually would have to replace that with something that was a higher standard. So, they both played very key roles in my life as a manager and then but also in the lives of both Herndon and in Prince William County.

**LM:** I think that leads me to one of my other questions. And then after that, we can take a quick break and -- but really, I know you had a long tenure as County Executive, but what was your relationship like with the Board of County Supervisors?

**BN:** Well, that was another --

**LM:** Over that decade?

**BN:** --another great blessing in Prince William -- I meant to bring you a copy of the ICMA [International City/County Management Association] Code of Ethics. Because I'm sure that when I was in the process of applying, sometime during the interview process, I gave the board [inaudible 0:38:32.7] the ICMA Code of Ethics. Which I said to them, "This is the standard by which I live and how I do my job."

**BN:** There are some key parts of that code of ethics that I would have brought. Then I can mail you a copy of --

**LM:** I would like that.

**BN:** -- that are directly applicable to the local situation.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** I mean your -- I mean the one that stands out is that there are certain -- even in the law, there are five forms of government available to counties in Virginia. There were when I was there. I think there's still only five. One was the County Executive [inaudible 0:39:56.8].

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** But it provided with the County Executive shall have the prerogative to speak to any issue before the board. So, whatever was going on, I could talk. And my role -- I saw my role

and I said this to them, "My role is to tell you what I think. Whatever you do is okay with me, but I insist on telling you what I think because in my view, I too represented the people. I represented all the people." And so, the chairman was elected at large, but everybody else was elected by district. So only the chairman and the County Executive spoke for quote "all the people."

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And I took that very seriously. [Pause] That's what got me to where I am -- telling the truth and being willing and able to speak truth to power. And I never had any hesitation because that was my job. And I took my job -- I couldn't have taken it more seriously because I too represented all the people. And if I didn't speak for them, who would? Maybe the county. But the Code of Ethics was very important in my career because it enabled me -- it emboldened me to speak truth to power. And it got me where I am.

**LM:** And a very successful career.

**BN:** I think so.

**LM:** Yes.

**BN:** I think so. And we have such a camaraderie in Prince William. I had five manager jobs. In three, they wanted to do what needed to be done. Prince William is one of them. So, there's a compatibility that goes with the manager and the governing body when they want to do what needs to be done. And as I told you, if you weren't a young female, I hope [inaudible 0:43:10.7].

**LM:** [Laughs] Go for it. You're fine.

**BN:** [Laughs] I was gonna say. But you don't know -- I mean I didn't know how uneducated I was, how illiterate, and there's so much I didn't know and so little that I did. [Laughter] But I did learn quickly, and I mean, "Experience teaches a dear school what a fool will learn in no other." Benjamin Franklin said that.<sup>9</sup> [Laughs] And I got the experience, and I learned. It's really part of who I am. I don't know where I was going with that, but I don't know what story I was about to tell.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And maybe it will come back to me, but I don't where I was. [Laughs] I can't remember.

**LM:** That's fine. Yeah. Let me recalibrate [inaudible 00:44:17]. Well, some of the questions that Sharon helped me with -- you covered a lot of this. But she wanted me to ask about the President's Cup. She said, "How did that come about?" and "What are your key memories of the President's Cup?" What do you remember, or can you talk about?

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<sup>9</sup> The actual Benjamin Franklin quote is, "Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other."

**BN:** Robert Trent Jones was one of the premier golf course architects in the world. An old man, when he came to Prince William, and when I met him -- when we all met him. But it took some doing -- it took some cooperation with the City of Manassas because the City of Manassas owned -- I believe they own Lake Manassas. The golf course was built on the shores of Lake Manassas. So, it took some very close cooperation, but it is today one of the premier golf courses in the country. And I don't think it's on the regular tour, but the pros still come there and play golf<sup>10</sup>.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** But it took such an effort by primarily our staff. I mean economic development, which was Diane Lingle, who is now Diane Brazenton. Roger Snyder, who was the planning director, is somebody who knows far more than I do, and we were members. And he also has the clippings.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** I mean, he's got -- I mean, I think he has everything documented. I had -- at one point, I had clippings. I mean, I had 15 or 20 or something -- 5 or 10. I don't know what I had, but my wife has constantly been asking me to clean up the basement, clean up the basement, clean up the basement. And when I tried to find them, I couldn't find them. So, I fear and think that I threw them away because I was cleaning up the basement.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** But so, Lake Manassas -- I mean, the President's Cup was because of Robert Trent Jones. And the Governor of Virginia used to have -- probably still does have a dinner in New York along with I don't know who else. but many other local government and probably other municipalities. But we went to New York, and Robert Trent Jones sat at our table, and which was just, I mean, that was perfunctory. But the essence of it is that he designed the golf course where the President's Cup is held. And that will be something to point to forever, that that happened on our tenure. Everybody who was involved in it are proud to have participated.

**LM:** No, absolutely. I'm gonna take a quick break if that's okay.

**BN:** Sure.

**LM:** Okay. So, we'll start the next part of this recording. Let me make sure. Okay. We're on the record again. [Laughs]

**BN:** I wouldn't want to finish the interview without talking about the Board of Supervisors and the role that they played because of course they're the governing body there -- the ultimate

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<sup>10</sup> Trent, Robert. 2025. "History - Robert Trent Jones Golf Club." Robert Trent Jones Golf Club. 2025. <https://www.rtjgc.com/history>.

authority. But they did what needed to be done, and I haven't often found that. But they were very receptive to -- I frankly don't remember anything that was of any significance that I recommended to the board on behalf of the staff that they didn't do.

**LM:** Really?

**BN:** So, they really wanted me -- we established early on, and I can talk about that in a second. We had no vested interest in anything, cause well -- well, let me talk about the board and the county attorney, then I want to go back to this other thing. The board was truly in my opinion looking for people who could do the job that they were hired to do. They gave me total freedom to do what the county executive is supposed to do. And they did what they were supposed to do, and that's not always the case, and sent so many -- well, that's not always the case. But they were open to doing -- they wanted to do the right thing, and when we presented things that seemed to be the right thing, they were ready to go. Early in my tenure, and I think it was probably -- I was hired in September, and I believe that the next election was a year from the following November, which gave us some time. Well, what I'm trying to get to is to say that we prepared a document that we called "major issues." I didn't know what the issues were, and I had moved from a town of 12,000 and a staff of probably 100 to I don't remember what the population was. [Laughs] I don't remember what the staff was, but it was significantly larger than Herndon. And I didn't know what the issues were, and I didn't -- I never had thought of a process that would tell me what the issues were. But I decided -- they were really -- they had been through -- the county had been through a couple of three county executives --

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** -- in relatively short order. And somewhat at least at the chagrin of the board, and the people, and maybe somewhat laughing behind their backs. I don't know that for sure, but they needed to change it. And I didn't know what I was getting -- they didn't know what they were getting, but we both got lucky. Or I certainly got lucky. I think they would say they did, too. Not knowing what the issues were, I thought of a process that would tell me, and then we could tell the board what the -- I mean, put it down where we can all agree what the issues are that we called it "major issues." And we convened the staff over several times, not just department directors but deputy directors and even first-level supervisors over the large room and a large number of people. And anybody in -- what I learned in my previous work was -- well, back up. When I was trained in Henrico County, the county manager made presentations of every issue before the board.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** So that's what I learned. So I went to Herndon, and we prepared the agenda -- changed the process to what Henrico County was doing but changed the process to formalize it. And then I made every presentation. And I took some issue to the council, and they went the other way -- didn't support me. Well, we had a staff meeting, usually the day after a board council meeting, and the staff was somewhat chagrined at my inability to get to whatever the issue was [laughs] through the council. So, I said, "I've learned. I surrender. Okay. From now on, you will make the

presentation for the issues that originate in your department." I was so lucky to have learned that in Herndon. And so, when I got to Prince William, that's the system that I installed.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** Every department director made the presentation for whatever he had before the board, and that's exactly how it should be. What that taught me was they want to participate -- everybody wants to participate in the processes of government. They want to be involved in all the intricate stuff that's going on. And to deprive them of that, they don't want to stay. And so, we developed such a team among the staff, and I think the board felt the team aspect of it as well. We were all in it together, doing whatever needed to be done, and they were happy with it. The staff was happy with it. They were participating in the most important stuff that was going on. And so -- and I have to say the county attorneys always -- I wanted to say that they were so supportive. The law can be interpreted a lot of different ways, but the county attorneys were -- I mean, I think they were always honest. They were always trying to bridge an interpretation that supported whatever the way that the county -- the board staff wanted to go. And so, it was just a team -- a team -- top to bottom, inside out. I mean it just -- it was just a team -- a tremendous feeling not often achieved. Not often achieved. But the board had great leadership. Don White was the chairman when I was appointed. Kathy Seefeldt became chairman, and she was appointed -- she was elected probably for five -- well, she was at that point the board elected its own chairman.

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** But she was elected by the board, I think, for five consecutive years. So, she and the staff went through a period together where she was just awesome. She was just awesome. And I may have -- but every chairman was awesome. And the greatest thing that I can say is they never tried to get into the manager's business. I mean, they stayed away. I mean the personnel issues that were the exclusive prerogative of the county executive. One time and I told people -- I gave an introductory welcome to the town -- to the county, to every new group of employees. I did it once or twice a month. And I said to everybody, and I preached it to the department directors, "I have an umbrella. You stay under the umbrella. I protect you from anything that goes on, including giving up my job. But if you get yourself in politics, there's gonna be an immediate separation." And one time I had an employee that became involved in politics, and the only -- I mean, I had promised that if you got involved in politics, they'll be a separation. So, we separated. And I had a member of the board come to me and say, "Is there any alternative that you can do other than separation?" I said, "No." He said, "Thank you."

**LM:** Wow. Well, that was one of the things that Sharon had asked me to talk about was how much everyone worked together under your administration and --

**BN:** I don't know how it could have been closer.

**LM:** -- during your time. Yeah.



**BN:** I mean, the board was always supportive. I mean, I developed a saying years ago that I think they approved 98 percent of everything I ever took to them.

**LM:** Really?

**BN:** For certainly all of the major stuff. I don't remember taking anything that they didn't approve. [Laughs] But I mean sometimes they didn't approve everything I recommended in the budget, but that's a different sort of thing.

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** Rather than taking one issue before it and seeing what they do.

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** But they were just always very supportive. The County Attorney, while independent, was just as much a part of the team as everybody else. We had Terry Emerson, who started as -- he was County Attorney when I was appointed -- then John Foote, and then Sharon Pandak. But all of them were just splendid to work with, doing -- telling the truth and doing what's in the best interest of the county. So, it was just an awesome team, and it was one that the staff -- I mean, hiring people and they're getting in and seeing what's going on was maybe not a new experience for everybody, but a new experience for many of them. Because we had such a camaraderie that does not exist -- did not exist in so many governments. I don't remember any backbiting, or hostility, or backstabbing, or anything like that. Well, we had a little bit of that, I think, at the beginning of my career, but those people -- the way I try to characterize it, and I believe to a large extent that existed -- I tried to introduce a new way of doing business. So rather than firing people, they got uncomfortable because they didn't want to do -- didn't want to do it or couldn't do it or one thing or another. But they didn't -- they just didn't want to fit in, and so they left of their own. So, I had to relieve very few people, but we relatively quickly reestablished almost an entirely new workforce. And that was to everybody's benefit. I mean, we didn't have the bloodshed that's required when you have to terminate people, and they saw that it wasn't a place where they were gonna be comfortable. They'd be happier somewhere else, and they left. So, I only -- as I can remember, I only relieved one person.

**LM:** Really?

**BN:** Yeah. And that's -- I don't want to say any more than that on the record.

**LM:** Okay. That's fair.

**BN:** [Laughs] But to tell you more than that.

**LM:** Well, I just have a few more questions. One, I didn't even know this was a possibility. Sharon said the possibility of LEGO coming to PWC<sup>11</sup>?

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<sup>11</sup> In 1993, Prince William County or Carlsbad California were in competition to be the site of a new theme park for Lego. Hsu, Spencer S. 1993. "IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, LEGO 'AN-TI-CI-PATION.'" The Washington

**BN:** LEGO?

**LM:** Mm-hmm.

**BN:** I don't remember that.

**LM:** Okay. And what about -- we did talk to Kathleen Seefeldt a little about this<sup>12</sup>, but I guess towards the end of your tenure, there was the start of the controversy with the Williams Center and --

**BN:** Yeah.

**LM:** -- Manassas Battlefield. And I just wanted to hear your thoughts on that.

**BN:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Pause] Til Hazel -- one of the largest and I would say one of the premier developers in Northern Virginia from the 1970s until I don't know when called me one day. I was in a meeting -- a manager's meeting somewhere. I don't know where I was -- maybe Williamsburg. And said he was thinking about buying this piece of property that would be on Interstate 66, which would be mixed. It would be a shopping center and residential area. What did I think -- how did I think the county would respond? I said, "I think they would welcome me with open arms." So, we proceeded down that route. And when the issue first came to the board, the issue was how much residential is it? Because Prince William -- I mean, if you were anti-housing -- you got your house. You didn't want anybody else moving in. So, you didn't want any more housing. So, this whole focus was not on the shopping center, but it was on the residential, and what number of units do they have -- what kind are they? It was adjacent to the battlefield, and to some extent, all of Virginia was the battlefield in the Civil War. So, it's hard to stay away from, but the issue became -- well, going back a little. Our people had to go shopping at Fair Oaks, Tyson's Corner, anywhere in Fairfax County, but nowhere in Prince William County. And not even -- there was nowhere to go to the south. So, we needed -- I mean, we were losing so much tax revenue because our citizens were going to Fairfax County to shop. So, the shopping center was gonna be a boon for us from a lot of different perspectives. And Annie Snyder<sup>13</sup>, whose name you may have heard or have not, but Annie once or frequently said, "Bob Noe has never seen a development that he didn't like." But what I learned in Herndon and what I learned in -- reiterated in Prince William is that when the market is ready, there's nothing gonna stop -- no amount of citizens, no amount of money, no amount of anything. When the market is ready, whatever the market is ready for, it's gonna happen. And so, if you follow what happened

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Post. November 18, 1993. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1993/11/18/in-prince-william-county-lego-an-ti-ci-pation/ea836c85-b824-4914-bfd4-db806dcd685f/>.

<sup>12</sup> The Office of Historic Preservation did an oral history with Kathleen Seefeldt in 2023: Seefeldt, Kathleen. 2023. Review of *Transcript of Oral History Interview with Kathleen Seefeldt (October 23, 2023)* Interview by Lauren Maloy. <https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2024-08/Kathleen%20Seefeldt%20Transcript.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> McLELLAN, DENNIS. 2002. "Annie Snyder, 80; Fought to Preserve Manassas, Va., Battlefield and Environs." Los Angeles Times. July 27, 2002. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-jul-27-me-snyder27-story.html>.

locally, the daughter of Annie Snyder and one of her colleagues, I mean, recently were in the process of selling their property [laughs] for residential.

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** So, you know, so much for the philosophy. And I don't criticize that because I mean I made up a story that if you and your sister Sharon grew up on a farm and you both went away to college, do you want to come back and farm? Or do you want to take your education and go somewhere and do something else?

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** And so, 99 percent say, "I want to take my education and go somewhere else." [Laughs] So when mom and dad die, who wants to move back on the farm? You want to do what everybody else is doing. You want to sell the farm for the highest and best use because that's money in your pocket. And so, it's a very easy concept to understand, and it's universally true. [Laughs] I mean, if you have Fauquier County had the big -- the best land use preservation program I knew. And that was multiple people -- multiple billionaire people who lived there who could afford to buy thousands of acres and pay millions of dollars, and that preserves the land.

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** As long as they want to preserve it, nobody's gonna touch it. If they ever get to the point where maybe they've died and the family -- the children -- if they want to keep it, they can keep it. But if they want to sell it, it's going and it's going for whatever the highest and best use is for [inaudible 0:19:15.7]. So, we all have that element of greed, and when our time comes, we want our time in the sun. We want our share [laughs] of the prize. So, no reason to feel greedy about it. That's just a fact of life. So, I don't know where I was.

**LM:** No. That was a great summation of that.

**BN:** Well then, the argument continued. I mean it got to be not how many housing units are there, but you're encroaching on the battlefield. And we went to Congress -- I mean, they went to Congress. We went to Congress. John Warner had recently been elected, and he said, "Come, let us gather together. We can work this thing out." So, he worked it out<sup>14</sup>. And the end result was that Til Hazel -- they had something called a legislative condemnation. I believe is what it was called -- where the federal Congress approved taking his land for \$80 million. And so, Til Hazel got \$80 million for his efforts building -- trying to get that thing through. We were left with no shopping center, no place to shop, and so whatever is there today is there today. I mean, Prince William survived, and we get through whatever the obstacle is; we get through that. But we did what I believe to be in the public interest, and that was where we would get pressing to have the

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<sup>14</sup> Harris, John F. 1988. "WARNER PLAN WOULD BLOCK MALL." The Washington Post. September 7, 1988. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1988/09/07/warner-plan-would-block-mall/a156044c-af35-4cc1-9456-6ed2e9c40354/>.

shopping center built and whatever residential thing with it, not significantly encroaching on the battlefield. But we had some powerful people -- Jodi Powell was one from the Carter Administration. Willard Scott, I believe, was -- do you remember him?

**LM:** Mm-hmm.

**BN:** Willard, I think was opposed to it. They would weigh in once in a while on TV during the weather or during whatever, and let their views be known.

**LM:** I didn't know he did.

**BN:** Yeah. And I don't remember who else, but I think it was a blow to the county. But we did the best we could, and we lost. But in the process, we -- Kathy Seefeldt and I -- well, that's another story. Before that happened, the governor announced a competition for something called the "Center for Innovative Technology." There were three contestants. I don't remember who the other two were, but the Center for Innovative Technology was eventually built along with the Dulles Greenway. I don't know if you know the building over there? You do know it?

**LM:** I do. Yeah.

**BN:** Okay.

**LM:** I had talked about it with Kathleen Seefeldt as well.

**BN:** Okay. All right.

**LM:** Yeah.

**BN:** They built it there, but we put together a presentation. We had a public information officer [inaudible 0:23:08.5], a fellow named Mike Gleason. And I don't remember who -- he had a friend in the broadcast business. I don't remember his name. I wanted to say Ken Burns, who does the movies and stuff like that, but I think I'm wrong. I think it was somebody else. But he had somebody somewhat of that stature who narrated our presentation for it. So, we all trooped down there, I guess in a van. We made our presentation, and I think every one of us felt like there's no way in the world we could possibly have improved on this presentation. So, if the presentation is gonna get it, we're in. But we got out of there, and I remember thinking, riding back, I'd never had such a high. And I think everybody else in the van was feeling the same thing. And I said I thought -- I don't know if I said it to the group -- but I thought now I understand somebody who does drugs. If they get this high and feel this good on drugs, I can understand [laughter] why they're doing it. But it was such a high, and we all felt that we had really represented the county well. And I think there was some feedback from people on the committee that we had done exceedingly well, but we didn't know at the time. You know. I don't know if they did or not, but think probably they did, that the governor had already decided where it was going. [Laughs] And it wasn't gonna be Prince William. But it was going through the process, a tremendous effort with Roger Snyder and Diane Lingle -- Diane Brazenton, and I don't remember who all else. There were a lot of people involved -- John Schofield. I don't remember

who all participated in that project, but it was an awesome team job. Mike Gleason, who is now dead, but he was responsible for getting the narrator. It was just a tremendous experience with the staff. It was a team effort, and that's what we had in Prince William. We had a team. Everybody was on the team. We had different roles, but we were doing what was in the best interest of the people.

**LM:** Well, I think I -- I have a couple, but I'm wondering the best way to end this. One of them it says, "Do you see Prince William County taking a larger role in matters related to local government in the state or in the General Assembly?" Did you see that?

**BN:** Well, primarily thanks to Pierce Homer, we had a legislative liaison. I lost my train of thought.

**LM:** Yeah. I'm sorry. It's kind of a broad question. If you saw Prince William County taking a larger role in the state --

**BN:** Oh well, we hired -- Barry Lawrence was our first legislative liaison, I think.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** And then we hired Pierce Homer, who really expanded the job and really became sort of devout -- understanding the go-to person for so many localities in the state, that know what's going on in the General Assembly to how to get things done. And he would appear to -- he's truly an outstanding staff person and went on to be Secretary of Transportation --

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** -- for the state. But well, I don't know how much -- I don't think -- I don't have any further to go. Though when we did become involved -- I mean that's where so much is done that's critical to our success. And so being a meaningful player in the General Assembly is important. Pierce, as I said, expanded that role and really put us on the map in terms of professional expertise on how to get stuff done. And so, I mean, I would say that Pierce Homer is primarily responsible for whatever stature we attained in those days, and I don't know what it is today. But he certainly got it started -- well, he certainly got it started. Pierce was another -- I mean, we had so many outstanding people -- Pierce, Roger Snyder, John Schofield, Diane Brazenton, Connie Balkcom in the Manager's Office, Larry Hughes. Gosh, I shouldn't have maybe named anybody because I'll leave somebody out. We truly had an outstanding staff. We truly did. It was a team, and I was just pleased to have been on the team.

**LM:** Well, I think that's the place to end it. I guess my last question would be if you could pick a single accomplishment during your time as county executive? Do you have something that you're proudest of?

**BN:** Well, there are multiple things. I mean, it would be impossible to say which was most important. But recently I had reason to check the agenda -- the agenda -- well, the agenda. And the agenda is made up of resolutions and ordinances. Because what local government does is

either pass resolutions or pass ordinances -- make law. And I checked to see if they were still using the system that I installed, and they are. So that -- I mean that's something that you do every day. Nobody knows about it. Nobody cares about it. It's routine, but it's been institutionalized. So, I'm proud of that.

**LM:** Now it's merely 20 years later, right?

**BN:** Beg your pardon?

**LM:** Nearly 20 years later or over 20 years later you started using that?

**BN:** Well, I left in 1989/1990.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** So that's 24 - that's 34 years that they continued with that. So, I'm proud of that. I mean it's not something anybody else probably is interested in, knows about, or cares. But it makes a difference to me because it was -- what we did, in my opinion, in retrospect, was we built a foundation that can support what's going on in Prince William today, and what has gone on in the interim. But it was a firm foundation, and it has survived. And then that's just one of the examples that still needs -- the way the government does its business. It will be open, and systematic, and legal, and fair -- that's what we have.

**LM:** Okay. Well, let's end there. Unless there's something else that you'd like to talk about?

**BN:** Well, I don't know. I am gonna mail to you if you'll give me a copy of the ICMA Code of Ethics.

**LM:** Please, yes.

**BN:** Because that's something that was fundamental in my career. Well, I didn't say anything about the management information audit. That was a function we established in my first budget.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** Where we established an internal consulting group rather than having to go outside to pay people. We had our own consultants inside that could --

**LM:** Oh, really?

**BN:** -- we could take any issue and study it and see what they came up with as the right answer. Oh, we also built -- well, I hadn't been there very long, and Terry Emerson came to my office one day and said, "Come on. We're going to see Judge Sinclair who is the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court."

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** And we went over there, and he said, "Now he's gonna talk to you about needing a new courthouse." So, Judge Sinclair said, "Well, we need a new courthouse. We're embarrassed. We're humiliated. We're overcrowded. Please do something to help." I said, "I commit to bringing the need to the attention of the board." So, it required a referendum in order to - they had tried to move the courthouse before I got there, and they lost the referendum. This time, we were cooperating with the City of Manassas. When Manassas wanted to keep the courthouse in Manassas, so they agreed - I think the law required a 5 percent contribution. They were ready to do 10 percent is what I remember, but I don't know what the percentage was really. But they agreed to increase whatever percentage they were required to pay in order to keep the courthouse in Manassas. So, we built the courthouse. Then we built the Regional Jail. Then we built the County Administration Building. -- three of the most major complexes that any government can build. Frequently, when a government builds one of them, whoever the City Manager or County Executive, County Administrator is -- is fired because they invariably go bad -- I mean, something happens.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** Something happens. We had a leak in the County Administration Building where the -- somehow the roof drainage was tied into something that looked like a straw that went through the wall of the building. And then somehow the drainage was supposed to go out there. Well, the people who built the building didn't understand what that was. So, they put concrete cause concrete in there. So, when we got the building, the building started leaking. So, I took a little flack for that. But Chuck Benson is the one. Is your recorder still on?

**LM:** Yes, yeah.

**BN:** Oh, okay.

**LM:** If that's okay? Yeah.

**BN:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** Chuck Benson -- I mean Chuck deserves so much credit for being able to deliver those three buildings pretty much on time, on budget, and I think never got the credit that he was entitled to for just getting them open and functioning. Because so many places there's a snafu somewhere along the way that gets the -- [inaudible 0:34:47.4] for everybody. But we didn't go through that. I attribute that to Chuck Benson. I talked about when I had staff meetings. I had more -- there were department directors. I had deputy directors. Sometimes lower-level people, because as I said, what they wanted to do is participate in the government. And rather than hire consultants for the most part, we had staff committees, and I took a diversity of all -- whether you had a dog in the fight or not. I put like -- the police or fire may not have any interest at all on something going on in the general government. That I wanted to include those people in that committee because they may not appreciate what they were learning. But if they move on up and

someday become Chief, it might be important to them. And so, I really focused on involving lower-level people in the stuff that was going on and having committees that look at the problems that needed to be solved, as opposed to hiring consultants. That was -- I think that was a key. I had established administrative regulations that, you know, that was important to the process when I was there, leading with all the stuff we've talked about. [Laughs] I kind of think I can skip that.

**LM:** Okay, okay.

**BN:** But that was important as well. I mean, just as an example.

**LM:** Right.

**BN:** I said, "Don't argue with the board. When you're up to make a presentation, you make it, make your recommendation, and say 'Thank you, Madame Chairman.'"

**LM:** And that's it.

**BN:** And that's it. And don't get yourself engaged in a dialogue because it's there, you've done everything you can, everything you're supposed to do, it's their decision, keep your seat and keep your mouth closed. It worked.

**LM:** That's good advice. Yeah.

**BN:** It worked. I mean, they worked. [Paying the check and talking about issues with the house in the morning]

**LM:** Well, I'll turn this off unless you want to --

**BN:** No. I don't know of anything else. I think I've talked about everything that I had on my list.

**LM:** Okay, okay. Let me see --

**BN:** Thank you so much for inviting me and for listening.

**LM:** Thank you for coming. And I know it took a lot of time out of your day, and I really appreciate this. This is --

**BN:** No. I have --

**LM:** -- my job and, yeah.

**BN:** -- more time than I've got anything else. [Laughs]

**LM:** Okay. [Laughs] Well, you also have a lot of stress right now. So, I'll stop this.



**BN:** If you have any questions, please call me.

**LM:** Okay.

**BN:** But give me your -- if you have a card?

**LM:** Yeah. I hope I have one with me. Let me look.

[End of Bob Noe Audio 2]