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# MEDIA RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Xenia Finance Director Turns Over Reins

Xenia, Ohio (**June 23, 2017**) Effective July 31, 2017, City of Xenia Finance Director Mark Bazelak will retire capping over 33 years of service with the city.

Before Bazelak started his career with the City, he graduated from Xenia High School in 1979 and then attended The Ohio State University earning his Bachelor of Science Degree in Finance in 1983. Bazelak joined the City of Xenia on a temporary basis as a Finance Clerk on March 22, 1984, and was hired permanently on September 17, 1984. He consistently took on more advanced assignments to steadily increase his skills, abilities, and knowledge while working his way up the ladder, and his work ethic, professionalism, great analytical skills, and attention to detail prompted his promotion to Administrative Assistant in the Finance Director's Office on January 5, 1987. He was later promoted to Assistant Finance Director on October 2, 1988.

Bazelak was appointed as Finance Director effective September 1, 2004, and has served in that capacity since that time. Throughout the majority of his career, Mark was primarily responsible or oversaw the completion of the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). With his skills and high standards, the City was rewarded with Certificates of Achievement from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for excellence in financial reporting from 1986 thru 2013 (inclusive). The City also received the Auditor of State Award with Distinction for financial reporting in 2002, 2003, and 2011, which is a distinction given to fewer than 5 percent of local governments under Bazelak's direction.

Through sound financial management practices and principles, Bazelak worked to improve the City's bond rating from A1 to AA- from Standard & Poor's rating agency, which recognizes the City's strong budget flexibility, strong liquidity, strong debt and contingent liabilities profile, strong management conditions with good financial policies and practices, and budget performance.

Bazelak's contribution to the financial policies and practices also include the following:

- Developed the City's Investment and Debt Management Policies
- Developed the City's Economic Impact Analysis Policy
- Accomplished annual updates of the City's Financial Management and Accounting System Purchasing Manual as well as a comprehensive update in December 2003
- Developed the City's five-year financial projection analysis as a tool to measure the financial health of the City to determine current and future financial resource needs

- Oversaw the development and implementation of the City's Information Technology Strategic Plan
- Accomplished the replacement of financial system software in 2005 to improve employee productivity, enhanced service offerings to citizens and employees, and improved reporting capacity
- Sought and secured bond counsel and financial advisory services and managed debt refinancing and/or the issuance of bonds to finance numerous capital improvement projects including improvements at the City's Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants, the Radio Read Meter Installation project, Shawnee Park repairs and improvements, the Facilities Improvement Project (construction of the City Administration Building and improvements at the Justice Center [aka City Hall]) and capital purchases for public safety vehicles

During his career, Bazalak was also the recipient of numerous awards and member of multiple Boards, committees and groups dedicated to sound fiscal management. He also provided financial guidance to the City through the recession to include numerous levy campaigns, and provided leadership and knowledge for important initiatives including the development and implementation of the City's Wage Classification Plan from initial planning in 2006 through implementation in 2008.

Throughout his career, Bazalak never hesitated to tackle difficult assignments and provided excellent leadership to create a work environment conducive to efficient productivity, communication, and continued learning. His knowledge of the city expanded to all Departments and Divisions who counted on him to provide his invaluable expertise and sound judgment.

In leaving, Bazalak stated, "I would like to thank City Council, past and present, for the opportunity to serve the community as Finance Director. I have been fortunate to work with many tremendous people over the years. As I leave, there continue to be challenges to address, but Xenia is moving in a positive direction with the promise of endless possibilities."

Upon Xenia City Council's acceptance of Bazalak's retirement notice, Xenia City Council appointed Assistant City Manager and former Assistant Finance Director Ryan Duke to replace Bazalak. Duke began work under Bazalak's direction in January 2005, and was later promoted to assistant finance director in January 2008, where he served until accepting the assistant city manager position in November 2014.

Duke's work ethic, advanced technical skills, collaborative leadership style and experience providing oversight to all city departments and divisions provided the framework for his appointment as Xenia's new Finance Director.

According to Xenia City Council President Mike Engle, "The City of Xenia is fortunate to have been in the hands of such a seasoned fiscal manager and director as Mark Bazalak over many years. His rational fiscal stewardship and stellar performance in the Finance Department for more than 33 years served the taxpayers of Xenia well. We wish him well in his future endeavors and a very well-deserved and happy retirement. Engle added, "We are pleased to appoint Mr. Ryan Duke, who has worked directly for Mark Bazalak, to now take control of the reins of Xenia's financial affairs and are excited that not only does he have a strong technical and financial background, but a rare perspective and familiarity of all City operations given his duties as Assistant City Manager."