



AARON PESKIN
佩斯金市參事

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Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin Honors City Controller Ben Rosenfield for 26 Years of Public Service

“Colleagues, today is a day that I have been dreading since our esteemed Controller, **Ben Rosenfield**, told me back in September that he would be ‘stepping away’ from his heralded role as the City Controller – and all-around problem solver – after serving as a true public servant for the last 26 years.

Ben is one of those stable, consistent and dedicated public servants who grew up in City Hall, after relocating to San Francisco and being hired by former Mayor Willie Brown in 1997. He was a trusted budget and financial advisor serving five Mayors, (though our Budget & Legislative Analyst, Harvey Rose, did comment that he’d served with five Controllers!), and many more Boards of Supervisors through recessions, economic expansions, good fiscal times and bad. Ben served as a Mayor’s Budget Analyst, City Services Audit Analyst, Mayor’s Budget Director, and Deputy City Administrator before being appointed by Mayor Gavin Newsom and confirmed by the Board of Supervisors as San Francisco Controller in 2008.

We’re all aware of the role he played furthering the funding of Rainy Day and other Budgetary Reserves through prudent fiscal management and stewardship, and practical planning, that has ensured we’ve enjoyed AAA bond ratings from Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s and Fitch and healthy reserves for years.

He was an anchor during some of the darkest days of the pandemic, with an entire team of hard-working staff that worked around the clock at the Emergency Operations Center and City Hall to interface with FEMA and the federal and state government, and help the City run on a successful COVID pandemic operation, even while litigation, future uncertainty and dwindling coffers all loomed overhead.

City and County of
San Francisco



Board of Supervisors,
President

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For many new legislative aides who have succumbed to the myth and the lore, we've had to clarify that **Ben Rosenfield does NOT have a secret "Magic Money" couch cushion vault** that he empties out to help us close the budget deficit and seal the 11th Hour Budget Night Negotiations. But, Ben, you have always been a closer, and when we see your exhausted smile on Budget Night after the final vote, we know it's going to be okay.

While his financial advisor work is well known, many don't know that Ben also oversaw so many other functions of our city government that only a neutral and extraordinary ethical leader can do: everything from performance audits to investigating ethics and city corruption complaints. He has been our ombudsman, our Chief Financial Officer and our City Referee. There's a reason that every new Commission or Oversight body always has a seat for the Controller's Office, and why we rely on his unbiased, non-partisan leadership. Actually, his bias has always been: **"whatever is best for San Francisco and San Franciscans"**.

We've all benefited from his diplomacy and collaboration during some very tough budget years, as well as during many rounds of business tax updates and tax policy debates. When budget negotiations would reach a fever-pitch, Ben was always there to calmly state the facts and steer the discussion toward options and solutions, and he was often sent into the fray to be the City's messenger and ambassador with outside parties from labor unions to community-based non-profit and for-profit business advocates.

This requires trust, a seeming impossibility in modern day governance. And that trust was built over many years demonstrating a profound integrity and work ethic that has made Ben a beloved advisor for so many, not just elected leaders.



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I can tell you that my Chief of Staff actually cried when I told her that Ben was leaving. For many legislative aides, his nickname was “**Clark Kent**” – probably because of the studious glasses and mild-mannered demeanor, but also for his reputation for being an **undercover Superman** who was always there to save the day. Ben has mentored and empowered so many city workers to be the **very best versions of themselves**, and for that I’m deeply appreciative.

You’ve been a trusted confidante for so long, I’m still not quite sure what we will do without you. But I know that the incredible team that you’ve assembled in your office will continue to uphold your legacy and that your successor will only benefit from the groundwork that you’ve laid.

No one will be able to replicate your stories, though, so I look forward to your memoir. I know that you feel more comfortable leaving now that I’ve given Willie Brown a commendation in this Chamber, to which you commented that now you’d seen everything, so you can go in peace. Although I fully expect you to keep your pledge to come back and help pinch hit in the tough months ahead.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Ben, for all the incredible work that you’ve accomplished and everyone that you’ve mentored, but also for your friendship and your wise counsel. You have my deepest respect. My thanks also to your family and your wife, Vivian, for sharing you with us all. And with that, I know my colleagues have words to share, as well.”

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