

CONTRACT

MB set to fire its city manager

Some say administrator Dave Carmany, while well-liked, has not been best fit

By Carley Dryden
cdryden@langnews.com
@carleydryden on Twitter

The Manhattan Beach City Council seems poised to dismiss its top city administrator Monday morning, a move one former official attributes to simply a poor fit.

The council is scheduled to discuss City Manager Dave Carmany's employment contract in open session, specifically the "evergreen" clause that has allowed the contract to automatically renew each year without written notice of termination. The council is expected to direct the city attorney Monday

to notify Carmany that the contract will not renew, according to a staff report.

In closed session immediately following the public meeting, the council is expected to discuss the appointment of an acting/interim city manager.

Mayor David Lesser said Friday it would be inappropriate to comment or speculate on items scheduled to be discussed in closed session. If any action is taken Monday, it will be announced immediately after the private meeting, he said.

But a former city official said a potential dismissal should come as no shock to the community.

"There was always some issue of concern (with Carmany), whether it was rumblings of staff morale or rumblings of interaction with the council," said the official, who requested anonymity. "I just think the personality/community fit question

was always on the back of some people's minds."

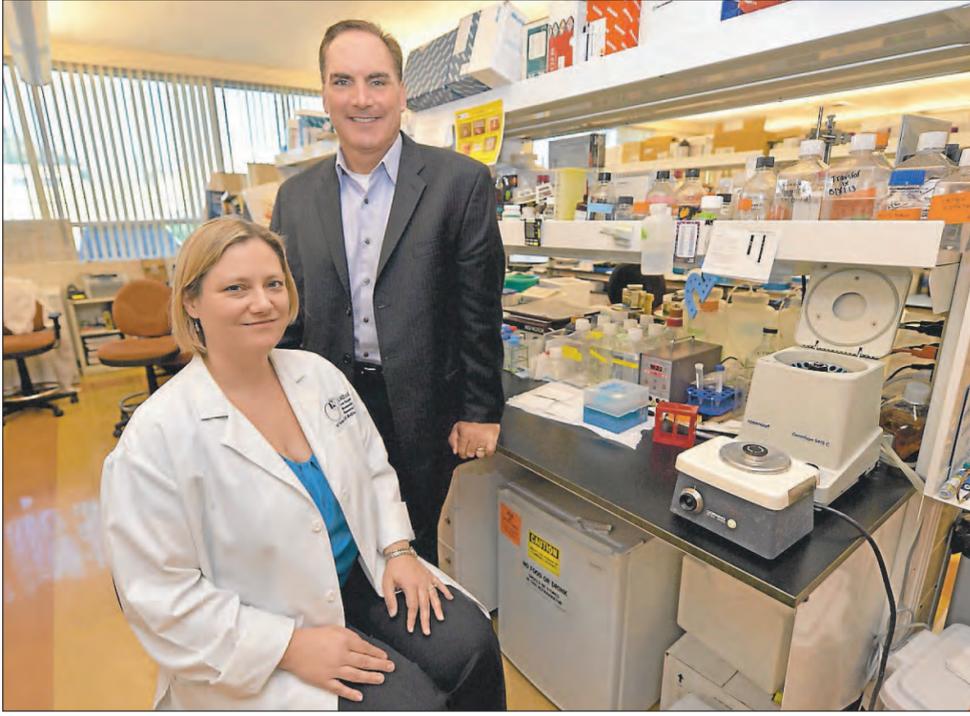
The official, who is still familiar with the workings at City Hall, said council members like Carmany personally, and said the city manager clearly "knows his stuff," but he just isn't the best fit for Manhattan Beach.

"We've had city managers that interact very closely with the city, who jump in with both feet into all things community



City Manager Dave Carmany was hired in 2011.

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ROBERT CASILLAS — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

When Mark Dant learned his then 3½-year-old son had a rare genetic disorder, he set out to pay for research to treat it. Starting with a bake sale, he went on to create a foundation to fund research at LA BioMed near Torrance. Dr. Patricia Dickson, with Dant above, is among those at LA BioMed who have worked to develop a treatment for the disease.

'ORPHAN' DISEASES

LA BioMed gives hope to families

By Muhammed El-Hasan
muhammed.el-hasan@langnews.com
@dailybreezebiz on Twitter

Mark Dant remembers clearly the September day in 1991 when a doctor broke the news to him and his wife that a rare genetic disease would dramatically shorten their son Ryan's life.

"I still have this mental picture of my 3½-year-old son wiping the tears off my wife's face as the doctor told us that Ryan had this disease for sure and that he would die by the time he was 10, absolutely by the time he was 15," Dant recalled. "And then he would be in a lot of pain before he died, possibly blind or deaf, mentally challenged, more than likely in a wheelchair."

Twenty-two years later, Ryan is still alive while struggling with the effects of mucopolysaccharidosis

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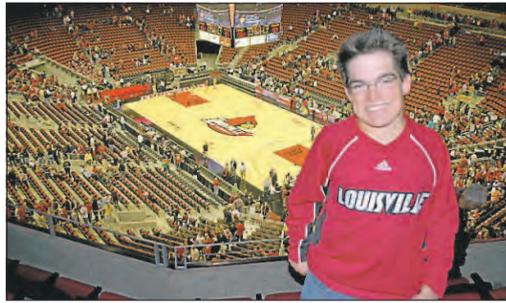


PHOTO COURTESY OF DANT FAMILY

Ryan Dant, who plans to attend the University of Louisville, was born with a rare genetic disorder. His condition dramatically improved during an LA BioMed medical trial of a new drug.

HERMOSA BEACH

School board candidates grapple with overcrowding

By Rob Kuznia
rob.kuznia@langnews.com
@robkuznia on Twitter



When it comes to the academic achievement of students and the professional achievement of their parents, it's pretty tough to beat the tiny K-8 Hermosa City School District.

But as the eight candidates competing for three school-board seats in Tuesday's election will emphasize, stratospheric test scores don't mean the district has it easy.

Partly because of the economy-of-scale issues associated with running such a small district, partly because of the community's reluctance to support taxes and bond measures, the district struggles financially, and in the past couple of years has even faced the threat of outright dissolution.

Although that threat seems to have passed, Hermosa schools now are grappling with overcrowding. Back in the 1950s, the district had six campuses; now it's down to two, even though the number of students — 1,400 — is about the same.

So overcrowded are the two schools — View, which serves K-2, and Valley, which serves grades 3-8 — that classes are being held in multipurpose rooms meant for school plays and town-hall meetings, not daily instruction.

Music is no longer taught for free in the schools. Because of private donations,

ELECTION » PAGE 15



Carleen Beste



Margaret Bove-LaMonica



Jim Caldwell



Mary Campbell



Douglas Gneiser



Michael Goodhue



James Scott



Seth Weiss

RANCHO PALOS VERDES CITY COUNCIL

Candidates focus on how to deal with landslide, pension reform

By Donna Littlejohn
donna.littlejohn@langnews.com
@donnalittlejohn on Twitter

A Rancho Palos Verdes resident who served on the City Council when the city was founded is challenging two incumbents in Tuesday's election.

Ken Dyda, 82, who served on the panel after the city was incorporated in 1973, is trying to wrest a seat from Councilmen Brian Campbell,

59, and Anthony Misetich, 53, who were both elected in 2009 and are seeking second four-year terms.

At a Sept. 10 candidates' forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters, the candidates all touched on past accomplishments along with future challenges the city will face, including how best to deal with the ongoing Portuguese Bend landslide and other thorny infrastructure problems.



Brian Campbell



Ken Dyda



Anthony Misetich

While they agreed on many issues, Dyda said he wants to "improve the control and oversight of the

council on city operations."

Both incumbents talked about starting work earlier this year on the \$20 million

San Ramon Canyon stabilization project that will install 400,000 feet of steel pipe beneath a landslide area that will divert stormwater runoff to the ocean.

The goal is to stabilize the eroding canyon. It also will help protect the switchbacks on Palos Verdes Drive East and prevent the mudflow that plagues Palos Verdes Drive South at the San Pedro border.

Quoting Mayor Susan

Brooks, Misetich called it the largest infrastructure project the city has ever undertaken.

"Four years ago that was a campaign issue," Campbell said. "Now we are under construction and it's going to be done a lot quicker than most people think, in April."

Dyda said a bigger challenge awaits, however, in dealing with the ongoing Portuguese Bend landslide.

CANDIDATES » PAGE 15

TURKEY TROT

Get out for fun run on Thanksgiving morning

The city of Torrance invites the public to sign up early for the Turkey Trot 3-Mile Fun Run at 8 a.m. Nov. 28 at Sam's Club. Fee is \$30. Go to thanksgivingday3milefunrun.eventbrite.com to register or for complete details.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Volunteers needed to become AARP tax aides

Help provide free tax return preparation and e-filing to low and middle-income taxpayers, with special attention to ages 60+ in the South Bay. Training and equipment provided. Apply at www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide.

WILMINGTON

Riot erupts following the 1970 death of reporter Ruben Salazar

Blog: SOUTH BAY HISTORY

The skinny: Wilmington exploded into violence Aug. 31, 1970, the day after L.A. Times reporter Ruben Salazar was killed by a tear gas shell during a riot in East Los Angeles. A crowd gathered on Avalon Boulevard the following evening and a riot began when police tried to disperse them. No one was killed, but 27 were arrested.

BLOGS.DAILYBREEZE.COM/HISTORY



Treatment

FROM PAGE 3

type 1, better known as MPS1. Ryan's survival is a tribute to his parents' efforts to raise funds that helped lead to a treatment. That treatment was developed and refined by researchers at LA BioMed, an independent, non-profit research institute on the campus of County Harbor-UCLA Medical Center near Torrance.

A decade ago this year, the life-saving treatment that saved Ryan was approved by the FDA. There are variations of MPS, which is a disorder caused by a deficiency of lysosomal enzymes. Without these enzymes, the body experiences a buildup of a certain starch that eventually prevents proper organ function and body movement. With fewer than 1,500 people nationwide with MPS, the condition is known as an orphan disease. That means it is not common enough for a treatment to be very profitable for pharmaceutical companies.

Legislation has helped make orphan diseases more visible by offering added incentives to develop treatments, but such disorders are still often at the bottom of the list for research labs. "Maybe three or four are born in California each year with this disease," said Patricia Dickson, an LA BioMed scientist leading research on treatments. "These are rare disorders and it's hard to get people interested and excited about doing work on them because they've never heard of them."

That was the dilemma the Dants faced in 1991. They knew almost nothing about MPS1 and there was no treatment.

The devastated parents, who had previously planned a large family, decided not to have other children since they had a one-in-four chance of having the genetic disorder.

So they stopped thinking about the things that fill parents' dreams for their children, like high school, driver's licenses, girlfriends, marriage and children of their own.

Ryan, who loved playing catch with his father in the front yard, also gave up hopes of becoming a Major League Baseball player.

"And when you did think of it, literally I would start crying. So we didn't," said Dant, who is assistant chief of police in Carrollton, Texas, a Dallas suburb where he lives with his wife, Jeanne, and Ryan. "So we cried for a year. I actually remember lying on the floor next to my son's bed many nights during the week listening to him breathe, wondering if we would have the courage to do the right things for him as time went on."

"And after a year, something just woke me up and said if we do nothing, nothing would change. And so I got up off the floor and had a bake sale."

They raised \$342. But they still had not yet met a scientist who was doing work on the disease. Their goal was to raise money and then search worldwide for someone who could develop a treatment for the disease, said Dant, 54, during a recent interview at LA BioMed.

The Dants founded the Ryan Foundation to organize fundraisers and promote awareness of the disease.

After raising enough money, the Dants hosted a conference in 1994 at Disney World to bring together genetic researchers with families affected by the disease. That is where they learned

about a researcher at LA BioMed.

Mark Dant called that scientist, Emil Kakkis, who had started work on an enzyme replacement therapy to treat MPS1 but was stifled by a lack of funds. Kakkis gave the Dants hope.

The foundation held a charity golf tournament in Dallas that allowed the Dants to give Kakkis a \$40,000 check.

The fundraisers continued, to the point that the Ryan Foundation has donated about \$2 million to LA BioMed's research so far. The charity eventually branched out and started funding other scientists with another \$1 million.

That money allowed Kakkis to make dramatic progress, which caught the attention of a pharmaceutical company that further funded development of a new drug called Aldurazyme.

Exactly eight weeks before his 10th birthday, Ryan was among 10 children to take the first of what would become weekly transfusions of Aldurazyme as part of a medical trial at LA BioMed. By then, the effects of MPS1 had already ravaged his body, causing his liver and spleen to become twice the normal size. His hands had curled up and stiffened, making it impossible for him to throw a baseball. Walking was difficult and running almost impossible.

He also suffered excruciating headaches that would make him vomit. And his mind was losing its sharpness, with cognitive decline such as memory loss.

As the doctor who first broke the bad news to the Dants had said, the disease was leading Ryan to an early death.

But within a few weeks after the drug trials, Ryan started to see and feel his

body change. His bloated abdomen was shrinking to normal size and he could move with greater ease.

The family was starting to wake up from its long nightmare.

Ryan started talking about his future, a topic that had all but ended in the Dant household. The boy who gave up dreams of becoming a pro baseball player now hopes to be a sports equipment director for a university.

He recently finished junior college and plans to transfer to the University of Louisville, which gave him a scholarship that involves his working on the football team's equipment staff.

Ryan's battle with MPS1 is not over. After 11 surgeries, he continues to have problems with his hands and other body parts. And the original treatment does not prevent buildup of starch in the brain.

Ryan is undergoing a trial to use Aldurazyme to clear out the excess starch in the brain and help reverse his cognitive decline.

In September, the National Institutes of Health awarded a \$1.5 million, five-year grant to a team of researchers led by LA BioMed's Dickson to use brain imaging to better understand the disease's effects. Dickson took over the research of the disease after Kakkis left the institution to start his own medical organization in the Bay Area.

"We can correct the primary defect," Dickson said. "You're missing an enzyme and we can give that enzyme back."

As for the Dant family, their life continues to change for the better.

"It put him back on track and allowed him to think about tomorrow," Dant said of Ryan. "It was the culmination of so much pain and effort and hope."

BELL

Ex-city manager to keep retirement funds

Former Bell City Manager Robert Rizzo will be able to keep his retirement account and pension despite pleading no contest to corruption charges associated with granting himself a huge salary and generous benefits.

City officials say they are legally prevented from going after Rizzo's 401(k)-style retirement account or his annual \$116,629 pension, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Five former Bell City Council members were

convicted last March of fraud charges after being accused of enriching themselves with public funds.

Rizzo recently pleaded no contest to 69 counts and will likely be sentenced to no more than 10 to 12 years in prison. As part of the agreement, he will likely be ordered to pay up to \$3.2 million back to the city.

Because Rizzo was an appointed city official, not elected, state law says he can keep his pension.

— The Associated Press

Manager

FROM PAGE 3

in Manhattan Beach, not just job-wise but life-wise. I don't think Dave was one of those people," the former official said.

"You never see him out at events, really. In some places that works, and in some places, it doesn't. I don't think it works in Manhattan Beach."

Although the council has held several closed-session evaluations of Carmany, he has never been publicly reprimanded.

According to published reports, Carmany, who has worked in city government for more than 30 years, was fired from the city of Pacifica in 2003 and later filed a lawsuit against the city officials for the termination. He took the top post in the city of Seal Beach in 2007.

Carmany took the reins of Manhattan Beach in January 2011, a year after his predecessor, Geoff Dolan, left the city under a dark cloud with little explanation from the council.

At the time, the council was facing pressure from residents to address rising public pension costs and public safety labor contracts, and was floored by Carmany's negotiation of a two-tier pension system for police officers in Seal Beach.

"Dave came in at a time when things needed to be stabilized," the official said.

"He stabilized them. He didn't have strong ties to the community. He could look at things from a different style. ... Once those hot-button issues are gone, the 'fit' question comes in."

Carmany did not respond to requests for comment.

Carmany's contract calls for one year of salary — \$213,200 — and health insurance benefits as severance if his contract is terminated by the city without cause.

The City Council meeting regarding Carmany's contract begins at 10 a.m. Monday in the council chambers at City Hall, 1400 Highland Ave.

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|---|--|
| Ron Hasse President/Publisher 818-713-3863 ron.hasse@langnews.com | Michael A. Anastasi V.P. / Executive Editor 626-422-4305 michael.anastasi@langnews.com |
| Tom Kelly Chief Revenue Officer 818-713-3110 tom.kelly@langnews.com | Toni Sciacqua Managing Editor 310-543-6132 toni.sciacqua@langnews.com |
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| Gloria Arango V.P. Human Resources 562-499-1237 gloria.arango@langnews.com | Bill Van Lanningham Marketing Director 818-713-3501 bill.vanlanningham@langnews.com |
| Dan Scofield Chief Financial Officer 818-713-3562 dan.scofield@langnews.com | Joe Robidoux V.P. Audience & Circulation 626-544-6645 joe.robidoux@langnews.com |

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