

# Mayor chosen for Bloomberg Harvard program

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ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

HIGH POINT — Mayor Jay Wagner is taking part in an executive training program designed to tackle complex municipal challenges, which he said he hopes will open new opportunities for the city.

As one of 38 mayors selected for the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative class of 2021-22, Wagner, along with City Manager Tasha Logan Ford and Assistant City Manager Greg Ferguson, will take part in an intensive education and networking program over the next year.

Michael Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and a former three-term mayor of New York, collaborated with Harvard University to create the initiative in 2017. It features courses taught by faculty from the Harvard Kennedy and Business schools, along with experts from Bloomberg Philanthropies. The Kennedy school deals with public policy, government

and development.

The program started with a three-day gathering of the mayors last month at Bloomberg headquarters in New York.

"It was mayors from all over the world. We had folks from Europe, Africa, South America, the Caribbean, the U.S.," Wagner said. "The faculty from Harvard was really, really good, very engaging. We did get to meet Michael Bloomberg. One thing that he has really committed to is the center at Harvard for the improvement of cities, so he's really devoted a lot of his time and his fortune to that."

The courses will cover the latest management and leadership practices, but he said the benefits to High Point should extend beyond this.

"One of the great things about this is that, not only do you get this skills training, but also because you're kind of part of the Bloomberg family, so to speak, our city will have more access to potential grants

through the philanthropy," said Wagner.

Another potential benefit to the city, he said, is access to technical assistance interns from the business school or school of government.

According to a news release from the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, the participating mayors have identified several key topics to address during the program, many of which stem from their efforts to help their cities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wagner said he, Logan Ford and Ferguson will choose an overarching theme to focus on during the training, such as promoting innovation within the organization or use of data to drive policy decisions.

Their participation, including tuition, accommodations, meals and airfare, is fully funded by the program, at no cost to the city.

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