



Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, August 19, 2025

6:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

Cocoa Beach City Hall
2 S Orlando Avenue
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931

WELCOME

Meeting re-broadcasts on: Spectrum - Channel 499 and
www.youtube.com/@CityofCocoaBeachFL
Meeting Video Archives: www.cityofcocoa beach.com

Packets: Packets are on the City's website (www.cityofcocoa beach.com)

Rules of Order: Robert's Rules of Order and the Florida Sunshine Law govern the conduct of our meetings.

Speaking Courtesy Rules:

- The Commission accepts relevant comments.
- A time limit of three minutes is imposed on each speaker. If speaking for a group, the Commission may grant an additional three minutes.
- Please direct comments and questions through the Mayor
- Complete speaker cards are required for each of the items you wish to address. Submit the card to the City Clerk prior to the introduction of the item. Speaker Cards are available in the entrance of the Commission Room and in the City Clerk's office prior to the meeting. The purpose of the card is to obtain the spelling of your name, contact information if follow-up is needed, and provide for efficient meeting administration.
- Upon being recognized by the Mayor, please approach the dais, state your name and address, and speak into the microphone.

Approval Of Order Of Business:

Note: Members of the public, Commission and Staff may remove items from the Consent Agendas, if they wish to discuss them. Requests for removal need to be made known to the City Commission under the Approval of the Order of Business, at the beginning of the meeting.

Appealing a Decision:

Any person desiring to appeal any decision made by the City Commission, with respect to any matter considered at such a meeting or hearing, will need a record of the proceedings and for such purposes must ensure that a verbatim record and transcript of the proceeding is made in a form acceptable for official court proceedings, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. It shall be the responsibility of the person desiring to appeal any decision to prepare a verbatim record and transcript at his/her own expense as the City does not provide one

American with Disabilities Act:

ATTN: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons needing special accommodations to participate in this proceeding shall, at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting, contact the Office of the City Clerk at (321) 868-3286; Florida Relay Service (800) 955-8771 (TDD); or (800) 955-8770 (Voice) or 711.

THANK YOU for participating in your Cocoa Beach City Government.

A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. Review, discuss and select candidates for interview for the City Manager position.

Recommended Candidates:

- Brown, Taylor
- Hein, Michael
- Kimball, Yvonne
- McGlothlin, Michael
- Poag, James
- Sherman, Suzanne
- Somers, Nathan
- Taylor, Mark

Representative: Colin Baenziger & Associates

Recommendation: Select Candidates for Interview

2. Set Date and Time for City Manager Candidate Interviews, Including Commission Meeting for Group Interviews.

Representative: Colin Baenziger & Associates

Recommendation: Set the date and time for August 29th

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

D. ADJOURNMENT

City of Cocoa Beach City Commission Agenda Item Summary

**DEPARTMENT MAKING
REQUEST/NAME:**

City Clerk /
Karin Grooms, City Clerk

MEETING DATE

August 19, 2025

REQUESTED MOTION/ACTION

Review, discuss and select candidates for interview for the City Manager position.
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- Sherman, Suzanne
- Somers, Nathan
- Taylor, Mark

Representative: Colin Baenziger & Associates
Recommendation: Select Candidates for Interview

IS THIS ITEM BUDGETED (IF APPLICABLE)?

N/a

BACKGROUND:

Colin Baenziger & Associates was selected to assist and search for the next City Manager for the City of Cocoa Beach. The has narrowed down the listing of potential candidates and requested the commission to path forward with candidates to include selection for interviews for August 28th and 29th.



Section 4

Taylor T. Brown

Cocoa Beach

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

Taylor Troth Brown

July 1, 2025

Cocoa Beach City Commission
2 S. Orlando Ave. P.O. Box 322430
Cocoa Beach, FL 32932-2430

Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners,

I've spent the last two decades working diligently in government at the federal, state and local levels, as well as in the private sector. Since 1997 I've been primarily engaged in local government issues, with an emphasis on City Management, City Planning and Economic Development. My years of experience provide a proven track record with management, budgeting, planning, relationship building, and intergovernmental coordination. I'm honest and ethical and approach the responsibilities entrusted to me with great professionalism. I possess the ability to multi-task, with limited financial resources, and can do so independently without sacrificing quality or service.

My personal approach to management has always been to lead by example. I treat all personnel as professionals who are entitled to my respect. I expect them to also treat one another in the same respectful manner. Setting such a professional atmosphere generally ensures that interactions with citizens will also be respectful. I view myself as a leader, a teacher, a coach, a mentor, but not a "boss." Mature professional people do not need to be bossed around; they need to be guided, supported, encouraged, recognized and appreciated. I believe strong, effective managers encourage creativity and innovation. Employees are a treasure trove of talent and ideas and should be valued as such. I recognize that they have as much to teach me as I have to teach them. In my opinion, knowledge is at its best when it's shared freely through collaboration with others.

On a day to day basis, I would describe my management style as being an informal, hands-on, team-oriented coaching style with an emphasis on constant improvement through professional development, along with a policy for maintaining both an open-door and an open-mind.

When it comes to establishing effective working relations with others, the key word is RESPECT! You can differ on opinions and approaches, but there must always be respect for the person you're dealing with. I feel it's important to be honest in your opinions and not to patronize people. Better to be truthful and respectfully disagree than to send mixed signals. I always try to see issues from the perspective of others.

On a personal note, I'm a bookworm with an insatiable appetite for learning and reading anything related to cities. An eternal optimist, I am always on the hunt for better, more efficient approaches to any and all tasks at hand. I believe the past should be honored, but the future should be relished. Oh, and life is short, so make it fun!

I hope with this letter, I've provided you with a glimpse of my personal values and professional qualifications for you to consider me as a candidate for the position of City Manager.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Taylor Brown

Taylor Troth Brown

SUMMARY

Over two decades of professional governmental experience at the federal, state, and local levels, with specialized training and expertise in the following fundamental managerial skill areas:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| * Economic Development | * Financial Budgeting | * Urban Redevelopment |
| * Grant Writing & Administration | * Customer Service | * Strategic Planning |
| * Intergovernmental Relations | * Team Building | * Problem Solving |
| * Interpersonal Communication | * Negotiation | * Succession Planning |

A visionary leader dedicated to continual improvement through collaboration and innovation, with a track record of outstanding fiscally-conservative financial management. Motivated by a genuine commitment to improving lives through public service; believes that a healthy community is one that strives to balance the competing needs of all its members, while simultaneously being a responsible steward of its divine natural environment.

RELEVANT LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Executive Director, Taylor County Development Authority, Perry, Florida 2023-2024

On August 30, 2023, at 7:45am, major Hurricane Idalia made landfall near Keaton Beach in Taylor County, Florida with maximum sustained winds of 125mph, devastating the entire County, including its county seat of Perry, before moving its way deeper into the surrounding counties of north Florida and south Georgia.

Three weeks later, on September 18, 2023, Taylor County's largest employer, Georgia Pacific announced that it was permanently closing its Foley Cellulose mill in Perry. This action would result in the loss of 525 direct jobs at the mill and approximately 1,500 additional related jobs locally. The Foley mill property represents 28% of Taylor County's entire property tax base.

The following morning, September 19, 2023, the Board of Directors of the Taylor County Development Authority (Economic Development Agency) held an emergency meeting during which I was asked to accept a new role as Executive Director of the Authority in order to help lead the community's initial response to these two devastating events. I agreed to serve in this capacity, at least in the short term, in order to help stabilize the community and the organization.

City Manager, City of Perry, Florida 2018-2023 **Pop: 7,067 Consumer Base: 26,283+ Budget: \$13M Employees: 85+ Size: 9.3 sq. miles**

Well known as the Tree Capital of the South, Perry is located in Taylor County, within the Big Bend region of North Florida. Taylor County (pop 22,277) is characterized by having a large land mass, most of which is either wildlife preserves or forested, together with a long unspoiled natural coastline on the Gulf of Mexico. The City of Perry is the only incorporated municipality within Taylor County, and serves as the County's seat of government as well as the primary center for education, healthcare, transportation, commerce and industry.

Although located in a rural region, Perry is very much a manufacturing city. Anchored by Georgia Pacific's Cellulose plant, the City serves as a hub for the forestry industry and the manufacturing of its related products. SuperPufft Snacks USA, headquartered in Perry, produces snack foods for retailers and national brands and has in recent years grown to be a major employer in the area. Defense contracting, metal fabrication, asphalt production and boat building are also among the mix of manufacturers operating locally.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Manager:

- Chief Executive Officer of a municipal government with 85+ employees and a \$13 million budget. Overall accountability for the following functional areas: Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Community Development, Police, Code Enforcement, Fire Rescue, and Public Works including: Water & Wastewater Utility, Storm Water, Natural Gas, Sanitation, Streets, Parks & Recreation, Community Center & Cemetery.
- Preparation and implementation of the annual operating and capital improvement budgets for the General Fund, Utilities Enterprise Funds, and Community Redevelopment Fund.
- Serve as Community Development Director, Zoning Administrator, Floodplain Manager, and Public Information Officer (PIO).

Significant Achievements:

- New development of a 344-unit apartment project. This is the largest housing development in Taylor County history and the first large-scale multi-family housing development built in over 30 years, aimed to solve an acute workforce housing shortage.
- Construction of a new state of the art \$14M municipal wastewater treatment plant.
- Other new developments including two medical centers, two banks, several restaurants, a hotel, a veterinary clinic, an elementary school, a community college and an assisted living facility to name just a few.
- Regained membership in the Florida League of Cities, thus allowing the city to join the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT), which immediately saved the city nearly \$100,000 annually in insurance premiums.
- Partnered with the Florida Gas Utility to institute a natural gas industrial user agreement which added approximately \$150,000 in new annual revenues for the next 30 years.
- Extended natural gas service lines to the Anderson Columbia asphalt plant, thereby adding a new large industrial customer and increasing gas utility revenues accordingly.
- Worked to support the start-up and extensive expansion of the Super-Pufft snack food factory, essentially doubling the manufacturing capacity of the plant, adding millions to the local property tax base and creating over 300 new jobs.
- Facilitated rezoning to allow the former Kmart building to be converted into an industrial warehouse and distribution center.
- Helped lead the community through the first world-wide pandemic in over a century.
- Re-development of severely dilapidated historical buildings on courthouse square.
- Developed a set of City Values to help guide local policy and decision making.
- Conducted a thorough review of existing ordinances, including updates, additions and purge of obsolete laws culminating in a total re-codification of the Code of Ordinances.

- Leased city-owned industrial property, generating \$80,000 in value-added renovations to the existing industrial buildings on site, creating monthly rent revenues and preserving underlying site/property as a prime site for future industrial economic development.
- Purchased electronic mapping software and GPS equipment to build a database and related maps of all city infrastructure, especially related to utilities. This made it possible to inventory the infrastructure, understand where it is located, determine its current condition, predict its expected lifespan and calculate when it will need to be replaced and at what approximate cost. This database enables informed decision-making when planning how future capital expenditures should be made most efficiently.
- Planned and budgeted for the purchase of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to replace the antiquated IT system and integrate various new software systems together.
- Instituted flexible work schedules for most staff member positions to increase efficiency, customer service levels, staff morale and retention.
- Overhauled approach to inmate labor, entered into new agreement with FDOC, allowing city staff members to be trained to supervise inmate work squads, saving city money. This change doubled the number of inmate squads, which has allowed for much better service for grounds maintenance at parks, cemetery and roadway right-of-ways.
- Developed a water facilities management/maintenance plan with Florida Rural Water.
- Implemented new garbage trucks able to be operated by a single worker instead of three.
- Established online bill payment option for city utility customers.
- Worked with FDOT for complete repaving of US Highways 19 & 98, including upgrades to the underground stormwater management system and replacement of all railroad tracks and crossings on the main rail line throughout the city.
- Several dilapidated structures demolished and sites cleaned, including multiple private residential houses, two gas stations and even some old city-owned structures.
- Six different brownfield sites identified, tested and remediated.

City Manager, City of Mary Esther, Florida**2016-2017****Pop: 4,289 Consumer Base: 27,585+ Budget: \$6M Employees: 45+ Size: 1.5 sq. miles**

Historically a recreational waterfront community, Mary Esther is situated along the Gulf of Mexico Coastline in Okaloosa County (pop 201,170), within Northwest Florida's panhandle region and is in the Central Time Zone.

The City of Mary Esther plays host to Hurlburt Field, a military installation of the United States Air Force and home to Headquarters Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), the 1st Special Operations Wing (1 SOW), the USAF Special Operations School (USAFSOS) and the Air Combat Command's (ACC) 505th Command and Control Wing. The installation is nearly 6,700 acres in size and employs 8,751 military personnel. Additionally, the base employs 1,813 civilian personnel, 3,472 private contractors, and houses 9,260 military family members. Together the total impact of the military installation's daily population is 23,296 and when added to the City's residential population, the resulting 27,585 people provides a healthy consumer base for Mary Esther's disproportionately large commercial district.

The City of Mary Esther is adjacent to the City of Fort Walton Beach and the two municipalities share many ties. Fort Walton Beach's Industrial Park is located along its border with Mary Esther, and the Santa Rosa Mall is located on the Mary Esther side of that same border, with both facilities serving the entire region.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Manager:

- Chief Executive Officer of a municipal government with 45+ employees and a \$6 million budget. Overall accountability for the following functional areas: Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Planning & Zoning, Police, Code Enforcement, Fire Rescue, and Public Works including: Water & Wastewater Utility, Storm Water, Sanitation, Streets, Parks & Recreation, Landscaping & Cemetery.
- Preparation and implementation of the annual operating and capital improvement budgets for the General Fund and Utilities Enterprise Fund.
- Serve as Land Development Administrator, Zoning Administrator, and Floodplain Manager, and Public Information Officer (PIO).
- Intergovernmental relations with U.S. Air Force representatives and other governments.

Significant Achievements:

- Navigated the hiring and orderly transition of a new Finance Director to replace the Finance Director who presented me with their letter of resignation as I walked into City Hall on the morning of my first day as City Manager.
- Proposed and presented an Annual Budget that was balanced without the need to divert capital from the City's Reserve Fund. The City had previously been unsustainably balancing its budget by drawing down reserves for approximately eight preceding years.
- Initiated update to the Capital Improvement Plan, and its inclusion in the annual budgeting process, neither of which had been done in several years.
- Oversaw the construction and opening of a new Hampton Inn Hotel, which included 91 guest rooms, conference rooms and other amenities within a four-story building.
- Negotiated an economic development proposal to construct 228 luxury apartments as an in-fill redevelopment at the Santa Rosa Mall as a catalyst to other redevelopment within this large and economically distressed commercial area.
- Completed a long needed sewer line repair which required the directional boring underneath of US Highway 98, without disrupting the 46,000 vehicles passing daily.
- Renewed lease of land on Eglin Air Force Base for the disposal of waste water effluent.
- Implemented much-needed repairs and renovations to the City's Waste Water Treatment Plant that effectively doubled its treatment capacity.
- Investigated other long-standing operational issues at the City's wastewater treatment plant, developed a plan to solve several systemic problems and to return the plant to a fully functional and financially efficient operation for the first time in many years.
- Formed a Personnel Committee consisting of staff members from all City Departments to address a long overdue update to the Personnel Manual and compensation package.

- Created a Grants Committee of four existing staff members to collaborate in the identification and pursuit of grant funding opportunities for all departments.
- Wrote and received an \$18,000 grant to update the Coastal Management Element of the Comprehensive Plan to comply with current State Law.

City Manager, City of Trenton, Florida**2010-2015****Pop:** 2,089 **Consumer Base:** 17,199 **Budget:** \$2.5M **Employees:** 25+ **Size:** 2.6 sq. miles

Historically a turn of the century railroad city, Trenton is located in North Central Florida in Gilchrist County (pop 17,199). Trenton serves as the Gilchrist County seat of government, and is also a hub for education, healthcare, commerce and industry. The City is part of the Alachua/Gilchrist MSA, with many ties to the greater Gainesville community located 25 miles to the east of Trenton.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Manager:

- Chief Executive Officer of a municipal government with overall accountability for the following functional areas: Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Planning & Zoning, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Police, Code Enforcement, Fire, Public Works including: Water & Wastewater, Storm Water, Sanitation, Streets, Parks & Recreation, Landscaping, Community Center & Cemetery.
- Preparation and implementation of the annual operating and capital improvement budgets for the General Fund, Utilities Enterprise Fund, and the CRA Fund.
- Serve as Executive Director of the Community Redevelopment Agency.
- Serve as Land Development Administrator, Zoning Administrator, Floodplain Manager, and Emergency Management Liaison.
- Serve as Public Information Officer, especially during times of emergency/crisis, including appearances on television and radio, interviews with print and digital media as well as preparation of press releases.

Significant Achievements:

- Built Reserve Fund from \$5,000 to \$1,300,000 (=7 months operating costs), during the Great Recession with a millage rate of 3.0, without any layoffs or reductions in services.
- Economic Development efforts produced job growth equivalent to over five percent of the City's population and saw the first new building built on Main Street in decades.
- Envisioned and implemented an aesthetic theme to the City. Developed Design Guide.
- Developed McDonald's/Family Dollar combination site, only second one in the USA.
- Developed Walmart Neighborhood Market, one of the first three to be built in Florida.
- Investigated long standing operational issues at the City's wastewater treatment plant, developed a plan to solve several systemic problems and return the plant to a fully functional and financially efficient operation for the first time in many years.
- Constructed a new Water Treatment Plant using CDBG grant funds.

- Received a “perfect” (No Findings) Audit Report for FY13. This had not been achieved previously by the City in any recent history. We repeated it again for FY14.
- Repaired strained relationship between the City and Gilchrist County, then renegotiated our inter-local agreements for Animal Control and Fire Service, both in the City’s favor.
- Partnered with County Administration, Sheriff’s Office, County Clerk of Court, and all County Constitutional Officers to develop a centralized Public Records Storage Facility.
- Condensed over 40 years of public records in accordance with Florida State standards.
- Renovated approximately 80% of all City-owned buildings.
- Made City’s first purchase of brand new vehicles in over 2 decades and paid in cash.
- Completely revamped the Trenton Police Department.
 - Moved into a newly renovated building adjacent to City Hall.
 - Replaced the entire fleet of Police Cars.
 - Upgraded the Police report writing software and enabled the use of in-car laptops.
- Launched the City’s Annual Quilt Festival into its own 501c3 organization, leading to Trenton becoming the home base for the Florida Quilt Trail and Quilt Museum.
- Settled outstanding FEMA grant financial issues remaining from the 2004/05 hurricanes.
- Completely overhauled Utilities Billing system, added ability to accept online payments.
- Reduced average age of City’s computer terminals from 7 years to 1.5 years.
- Recommended the City withdraw from Nature Coast Regional Water Authority.
- Suspecting malfeasance, in mid-2012, I recommended the City withdraw from North Florida Broadband Authority. Less than two years later, the Authority was defunct.
- List of Grants received for the City of Trenton:
 - 2 FRDAP grants for parks & recreation enhancements.
 - SRWMD “River” Grant for wastewater lift station rehabilitation.
 - FDEP Brownfield clean-up grant for old Colt’s Gas Station.
 - 2 Community Development Block Grants (\$650,000 each)
 - 3 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants.
 - 5 FDLE grants for purchases of police equipment.
 - Firehouse Subs Foundation grant for vehicle extrication equipment.
 - Workforce Training grant for professional development of all staff members.

Planning Director & Zoning Administrator, Gilchrist County, Florida **2007-2010**
Pop: 17,199 **Consumer Base:** 17,199 **Budget:** \$369K **Employees:** 5+ **Size:** 355 sq. miles

Gilchrist County is located in the heart of the Pure Water Wilderness of North Central Florida. With the historic Suwannee River forming its entire eastern boundary and the crystal-clear waters of the Santa Fe River forming its northern boundary, Gilchrist County’s 355 square miles are nestled amongst the highest concentration of natural springs in the world. These pristine natural water resources make most of Gilchrist County an environmentally sensitive area and add an additional layer of complexity to land use policy and decision making.

Duties and Responsibilities as Planning Director & Zoning Administrator:

- Administration of Planning & Development Division; staff supervision.
- Serve as County Zoning Administrator & Floodplain Manager.
- Interpret and keep current the County Comprehensive Plan & Land Development Code.
- Oversight of Development Review Process, Current & Long Range Planning.

Significant Achievements:

- Conducted an extensive public process to update the Countywide Vision, including all municipalities, School Board, Chamber of Commerce, County Planning Commission, Agricultural Extension Office, Florida Dept. of Transportation, & the Forestry Industry.
- Streamlined the Development Review permitting process from 3 months to 3 weeks for the vast majority of development applications.
- Instituted a complete overhaul of the record keeping system to store all property records according to parcel identification number rather than by action type. This allowed all information pertaining to any given parcel to be easily retrieved in a single file folder showing all actions that had been taken in respect to the parcel over its entire history.
- Enhanced the use of information technology by requiring the digitization of all records including graphics, and implemented the use of online forms and permit applications.
- Personally oversaw the development review process of several large and very controversial and environmentally-sensitive development proposals including:
 - Oak Tree Landing Airport "Fly-In" Residential/Mixed-Use Community.
 - Required a Major Comprehensive Plan Amendment creating a new land use designation of "Rural Florida Destination Village."
 - The 816 acre development included an airport & paved runway, a village center consisting of 75,000 sq. ft. of commercial space along with 75,000 sq. ft. of lodging, a church, a theatre, a fine arts school, 650 residential units, an 18-hole golf course, driving range, clubhouse, fitness and tennis center, vineyard & winery, agricultural support buildings, equestrian center & stables, and pedestrian, equestrian and golf cart trail systems.
 - Blue Springs Natural Spring Water Bottling Facility.
 - 2 Industrial Forestry Products Mulching Mills.
 - Piedmont Farms Rotational Commercial Dairy.

Planner, Arlington County, Virginia**2001-2002****Pop:** 229,302 **Consumer Base:** 749,000 **Budget:** \$212K **Employees:** 6+ **Size:** 26 sq. miles

Although technically a county, Arlington functions more as the second-largest principal city of the Washington, DC metropolitan area. If it were incorporated as a municipality, its population of 229,302 would make it the fourth-largest city in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Due to the County's location along the southern banks of the Potomac River and its close proximity to downtown Washington, D.C., Arlington is headquarters to many departments and agencies of the federal government of the United States, including the Department of Defense at the Pentagon, Drug Enforcement Administration, Transportation Security Administration, and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency among others. It is also home to the Ronald Reagan

Washington National Airport. The many federal agencies, government contractors, and related service industries contribute to Arlington's stable economy. It is the highest-income county in the United States by median family income. Arlington is also the location of national memorials and museums, including Arlington National Cemetery and its Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Pentagon Memorial, the Iwo Jima Marine Corps War Memorial, and the Air Force Memorial.

Duties and Responsibilities as Planner:

- Intergovernmental Coordination of Redevelopment Review Process.
- Negotiation of complex land use development agreements between developers and elected officials, and coordination with various governmental staff, Federal and State agencies, U.S. Military, railroad companies, Subway Transit Authority (WMATA), utility companies, Airport Authority, neighborhood associations, homeowner associations, and special interest groups.
- Advised Elected County Board on planning and zoning policy issues as needed.

Significant Achievements:

- Participated in the comprehensive planning of the Columbia Pike Initiative, a large-scale revitalization plan of a three-mile long corridor spanning the County.
- Arlington is a recognized leader in the practice of Transit-Oriented-Development (TOD). I worked on several TOD redevelopment projects along the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro rail corridor. During this time, Arlington was awarded the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement for "Overall Excellence in Smart Growth" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Overall Excellence Award is the highest national honor bestowed by the EPA, and this was the first time it was ever awarded.
- Participated on staff level task force considering enhanced homeland security through planning in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

Community & Economic Development Planner, Town of Warrenton, VA 1999-2001
Pop: 9,907 **Consumer Base:** 67,207 **Budget:** \$449K **Employees:** 5+ **Size:** 4.5 sq. miles

Dating from the 1700's, Warrenton is an historic gem of a town located in Virginia's Piedmont region. Already steeped in American and Virginian history, its geographic location in between the Civil War capital cities of Washington and Richmond forced it to play an important role during that period of conflict. The Town is proud of its history and has gone to great lengths to both preserve and leverage it. It's entire Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For nearly a century, Warrenton has been home to the Virginia Gold Cup Steeplechasing Classic, a countryside horse race which now draws over 50,000 spectators annually. Warrenton serves as the county seat for Fauquier County (Pop. 67,207), as well as its educational, cultural and commercial center. In modern times, the town's geographic location has again proven to be militarily strategic. Nestled as it is in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the area is exceptionally well suited to sending and receiving radio signals across vast distances. As such, in 1951, the U.S. government established the Warrenton Training Center, a classified Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) communications and signals intelligence facility and underground relocation bunker that serves U.S. continuity of government operations.

purposes, used by various federal departments and agencies, including the CIA, National Security Agency (NSA), and the Departments of Defense and State.

Duties and Responsibilities as Community & Economic Development Planner:

- Development Review.
- Project management.
- Tourism marketing (Steeplechase Horse Racing, Civil War & Heritage tours, Vineyards/Wineries, mountain adventures, hot air ballooning, fall foliage.)
- Executed grant writing and administration.
- Promoted Municipally-owned Office/Industrial Park.
- Supervised zoning inspectors, administrative and technical staff.
- Provided staff support to the Planning Commission, Architectural Review Board (Historic District), and Board of Zoning Appeals, as well as to the Town Council, as needed.

Significant Achievements:

- Supervised replacement of all sidewalks along historic Main Street with brick pavers.
- Quadrupled the size of the Warrenton Farmer's Market, through branding, logo development and marketing plan.
- Assisted in the establishment of the Mosby Museum at the historic Brentmoor Estate and secured grant funding for its preliminary site design and development.
- Participated in the conceptualization, planning and site selection for the development of the Warrenton Aquatic Recreation Facility (WARF) and a new Warrenton Police Station.
- Spearheaded building recovery efforts after the region experienced a severe outbreak of tornados and the Town endured a major hailstorm that occurred on September 24, 2001.
- Established Historic Preservation Reference Library, open to the public at Town Hall.
- Coordinated participation in a regional information kiosk program with Fairfax County.
- Implemented ability to access and complete some permitting processes via the internet.
- Completely overhauled the Town's Website.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Real Estate Broker, Bosshardt Realty Services, Inc., Gainesville, FL 2005-2007

Real Estate Broker, Long & Foster Realtors®, Georgetown, Washington, DC 2003-2005

Assisted clients in the buying, marketing, selling, leasing, investing, exchange and development of property in the Washington, DC and Gainesville, FL metropolitan areas.

Graduate\Research Assistant, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 1999-2000

Administration of USAID grant for U.S./Russian Urban Planning Professorial Exchange. Coordinated efforts between the World Bank, the Woodrow Wilson Center, St. Petersburg (Russia) State University & the University of Maryland's School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation.

Legislative Assistant, Arizona Legislature, House of Representatives, Phoenix, AZ 1996-1997

Served as a legislative liaison between various State government officials, lobbyists, the media and the general public. Worked as dais staff on the House Floor during Legislative Sessions.

EDUCATION

University of Maryland, College Park, MD Master of Community Planning Program

Completed one year of a two-year Master's program in Community Planning.

Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ Interdisciplinary Bachelor's Degree

Urban Planning & Communication, Magna Cum Laude Overall GPA: 3.63 Major GPA: 4.0
Regents Leadership Scholar

Elected by a population of over 55,000 students to serve as one of 22 Student Government Senators.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA)
- Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC)
- North Florida Economic Development Partnership
 - Graduate of the North Florida Economic Development Academy (EDA)
- American Planning Association, Florida Chapter
- Florida League of Cities

Candidate Introduction

Taylor Brown

EDUCATION

Bachelor's Degree, Urban Planning & Communication, Arizona State University
Master of Community Planning Program, University of Maryland (completed one year)

EXPERIENCE

Executive Director, Taylor County Development Authority, FL	2023 – 2024
City Manager, City of Perry, FL	2018 – 2023
City Manager, City of Mary Esther, FL	2016 – 2017
City Manager, City of Trenton, FL	2010 – 2015
Director of Planning & Zoning, Gilchrist County, FL	2007 – 2010
Real Estate Broker, Bosshardt Realty, Gainesville, FL	2005 – 2008
Real Estate Broker, Long & Foster Realtors, Washington, DC	2003 – 2005
Urban Planner, Arlington County, VA	2001 – 2002
Community & Economic Development Planner, Town of Warrenton, VA	1999 – 2001
Graduate/Research Assistant, University of Maryland, College Park, MD	1999 – 2000
Legislative Assistant, Arizona House of Representatives, Phoenix, AZ	1996 – 1997

BACKGROUND

Perry, Florida, is a historic rural city in North Florida's Big Bend region. As the county seat of Taylor County (population ~21,000), Perry is the regional hub for government, healthcare, education, commerce, and public safety. The city has approximately 7,000 residents and covers 9.3 square miles. Its proximity to the Gulf Coast and historical reliance on forestry, manufacturing, and agriculture uniquely position it within the regional economy.

As City Manager, I oversaw all municipal operations, directly supervising the Administration and Community Development departments, as well as four key department heads: Police Chief, Fire Chief, Finance Director, and Public Works Director. The City employed between 85-100 full-time staff across multiple departments. The General Fund budget was approximately \$7 million and the Utilities Enterprise Fund around \$6 million, for a total operating budget of about \$13 million.

KEY CHALLENGES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Aging Water & Sewer Infrastructure: Decades of deferred maintenance had left Perry's utility systems vulnerable. Previous practices had diverted utility revenues to subsidize the General Fund, leaving infrastructure underfunded. In recent years, we reversed this trend with major capital investments: a \$14 million Wastewater Treatment Plant, a rehabilitated water tower, a modernized master lift station, and a complete overhaul of

- the Water Treatment Plant. Remaining lift stations are undergoing phased rehabilitation.
2. **Economic Development:** As part of a State-designated Rural Area of Economic Opportunity, Perry faced uphill battles in growing its economy. Major events, including the closure of its largest employer (Georgia-Pacific) and damage from three hurricanes in one year, tested our resilience. Despite these setbacks, we maintained economic momentum and supported local business continuity.
 3. **Inadequate Housing Supply:** Growth in manufacturing and other sectors outpaced housing availability. We supported a 344-unit multifamily development—the largest in city and county history. With Phase One now complete and occupied, this project signals long-awaited progress.

GENERAL PHILOSOPHY & MANAGEMENT STYLE

Having served in both large and small municipalities, I've found my calling in smaller cities where the sense of community is strongest. Cocoa Beach represents the ideal: a tight-knit community with small-town charm and direct access to the broader amenities of Central Florida.

Professionally, I am drawn to Cocoa Beach because its values align with my own. Honesty and integrity are foundational to my character and work. I will only represent a city committed to transparent and accountable government. My career has been driven by the desire to serve and strengthen communities. I understand that effective government depends on collaboration among skilled, dedicated professionals who bring their own unique strengths to the table.

I am especially attracted to Cocoa Beach's commitment to enhancing quality over quantity. As a built-out city entering its redevelopment phase, it offers the kind of planning and policy challenges I find professionally fulfilling. My experience in land use, community development, and strategic planning equips me to guide Cocoa Beach through this next chapter.

My management style is informal, hands-on, and team-oriented. I lead by example, respect all employees as professionals, and cultivate a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. I am a coach at heart and believe that strong teams drive great outcomes. I maintain an open door and an open mind.

I believe my staff would describe me as upbeat, fair, solutions-focused, and thoughtful—perhaps occasionally lost in thought as I consider big-picture strategy. Elected officials I've worked with would likely say I'm analytical, honest, diligent, and highly organized. They know me to be someone who delivers, speaks the truth with respect, and always follows through.

One of my greatest strengths is relationship-building. My dual academic background in urban planning and communication has served me well throughout my career. Strong communication underpins everything I do—from resolving personnel issues to building public trust to engaging citizens.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

I align departmental goals with strategic plans and use key performance indicators to track outcomes—including service response times, permit processing, budget adherence, and project milestones. Clean audits, satisfied residents, and consistent progress on priorities all indicate success. I also benchmark against peer cities to identify best practices.

INNOVATION

I helped pioneer Florida's first long-term, fixed-price, pre-paid natural gas futures contract with a large industrial user, in coordination with Florida Gas Utility and a Wall Street financial firm. This innovation generates \$150,000 annually in new revenue for 30 years—a model of strategic thinking and intergovernmental collaboration.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

My proudest professional achievement is my record of restoring financial health in all three cities I have managed. In each case, I inherited an organization with depleted reserves and deferred infrastructure. Through disciplined budgeting, long-term planning, and cultural change around fiscal responsibility, I led each city to stability. We acquired new equipment, improved infrastructure, and rebuilt robust reserve funds.

APPROACH TO PERSONNEL

Early in my career, I viewed regulations as black-and-white. Over time, I learned to weigh intent and context alongside rules. I focus on achieving compliance rather than rigid enforcement.

Terminations are difficult but sometimes necessary. I have handled high-profile dismissals with calm, fairness, and respect—always reinforcing accountability. I believe people terminate themselves through their actions; I simply communicate that reality. Even in such moments, I maintain dignity and professionalism. Many former employees have expressed appreciation for how they were treated.

KEY CHALLENGES FACING COCOA BEACH

1. Economic Conditions: As inflation and supply chain issues strain local budgets, Cocoa Beach will need to steward resources carefully. With state pressure for property tax relief and less federal funding, diversifying revenues without raising taxes is key.
2. Community Character & Economic Development: Balancing tourism with local quality

Taylor Brown

of life is crucial. Cocoa Beach is not just a destination but a beloved home for many. Redevelopment should respect and enhance community character.

3. Public Trust in Government: Public confidence is essential. Transparency, communication, and responsiveness will rebuild trust and foster civic engagement.
4. Environmental Stewardship: Cocoa Beach's ecological setting demands daily commitment to sustainability. All other goals hinge on environmental protection.
5. Downtown Revitalization: Continued investment in downtown is vital. Focus areas include CRA implementation, walkability, accessibility, and parking.
6. Executive Stability: City Manager turnover erodes morale and momentum. Cocoa Beach needs a long-term, stable leader who builds relationships and fosters consistency. I offer both the experience and the long-term commitment to fulfill that role.

FIRST SIX MONTHS PLAN

- Meet with the interim City Manager.
- Meet each department head and staff, tour facilities.
- Meet each elected official individually to understand goals, expectations, and concerns.
- Review City Charter, Codes, Strategic Plan, CRA Plan, CIP, Employee Manual, Comp Plan, Annual Reports, Budgets, and Water Quality Report.
- Analyze financial position and future needs.
- Review recent commission minutes and local blogs/social media.
- Visit businesses, attend HOA meetings and community events.
- Shadow field staff to learn operations firsthand.
- Establish relationships with local media and open two-way communication.

MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

I believe in building rapport with the media before it's urgently needed. I favor written press releases to ensure accuracy and proactively provide community stories to fill slow news cycles. Social media is a powerful tool for transparency and public engagement, and I fully support its use across departments.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

I am confident no one would contact Cocoa Beach to disparage my reputation, nor do I have anything in my background that would bring embarrassment to myself or the City.

In my free time, I enjoy reading, fishing, motorcycle riding, swimming, biking, hiking, kayaking, traveling, cooking, gardening, and home improvement.

Taylor Brown

Six Adjectives I Would Use To Describe Myself:		
Passionate	Confident	Proactive
Inspirational	Ethical	Humble

REASON FOR DEPARTING MOST RECENT POSITION

I chose to leave my role as City Manager in Perry, Florida, after reflecting on the evolving dynamics of the organization. While proud of the progress made—including infrastructure improvements, fiscal reform, and community partnerships—I found that the direction of the governing body no longer aligned with my professional values regarding strategic leadership and long-term planning.

My departure was respectful and constructive. I remain proud of my contributions and am now seeking a city like Cocoa Beach that shares my values of professionalism, collaboration, and vision.

MOST RECENT SALARY

Approximately \$135,000

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
TAYLOR TROTH BROWN**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Taylor County, FL	No Records Found
Okaloosa County, FL	No Records Found
Gilchrist County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Taylor County, FL	No Records Found
Okaloosa County, FL	No Records Found
Gilchrist County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle	
Florida	No Records Found

Credit	Excellent
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Personal Bankruptcy	No Records Found
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Sex Offender Registry	Not Listed
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Education	Confirmed
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Employment	Confirmed
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Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found
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**Background Check Summary for
TAYLOR TROTH BROWN**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
TAYLOR TROTH BROWN
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Taylor Brown.

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ☒ No ☐ *See attached sheet
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or similar offense?
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / Linked In, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
*See attached sheet
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes ☐ No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
None.

Attested to: _____


Signature of Applicant

Background Check Summary for TAYLOR TROTH BROWN Personal Disclosure Explanation

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire-Taylor Brown-Page 2

Question # 3 Explanation: Thirty years ago, I declared Chapter 7 personal bankruptcy. My financial troubles stemmed from unusual circumstances beginning in May of 1995. I was living, working, and attending college in southeastern Louisiana when my community of Metairie (New Orleans) fell victim to what was, at that time, the costliest flood in U.S. history (eclipsed only by Hurricane Katrina 10 years later.) The May 1995 Louisiana Flood as it became known, (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_1995_Louisiana_flood), ultimately took nearly everything I had away from me, including my apartment, my job, my student status, my health, and eventually, even my good credit rating. The flood caused a crash in our local economy, leading to the loss of my job in automobile sales. With the loss of my job, I also lost my employer-provided health insurance. This could not have happened at a worse time for me, as I had contracted some sort of virus, which doctors could only contribute to microbes I must have come into contact with through the very dirty flood waters. I soon became deathly ill and was bedridden for a full month.

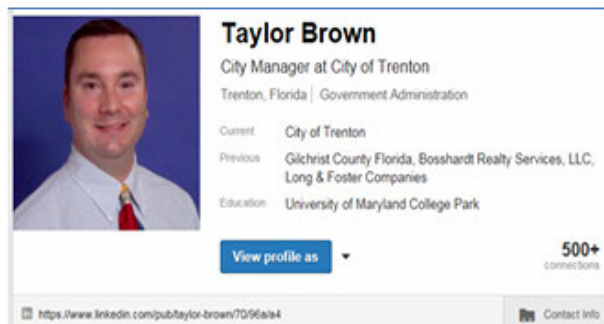
Eventually, I did recover to my normal healthy self, but not before the medical bills had piled high. I was obligated to pay the full amount of these bills since I had lost my job and health insurance just prior to becoming so ill. This month-long illness also caused me to have to drop out of school. Although I tried to salvage the semester in school that I was also already obligated to pay for, having missed over a month of classes proved more than I could recover from academically. Unemployed, and out of school, I was no longer able to afford an apartment of my own. I was forced to stay with friends while I continued to look for work. However, the flood had put the local economy into shambles. At the same time, Harrah's Casino, one of the largest employers in the area went bankrupt, putting several thousand people out of work overnight. Just as the need for jobs was skyrocketing, the supply of jobs was plummeting. I realized the impossibility of the situation, and decided to move out of Louisiana to seek greener pastures elsewhere. A day spent at the public library educated me about the booming economy existing in Arizona's Sonoran Desert. A few days later, I moved to Phoenix, Arizona with every hope of rebuilding my life. Although things in Arizona were much better economically than they had been in Louisiana, the financial difficulties I had brought with me were still too much to bear. I was advancing cash on one credit card to continue to stay current with payments due on others. The spiral effect of interest build-up eventually caught up with me, and by the end of 1996, I was bankrupt.

My previous debts were discharged in the Federal Bankruptcy Court, Arizona District in March of 1997. I am happy to say that for me, bankruptcy has proven to be the fresh start that the bankruptcy laws were intended to provide. In Arizona, I was able to return to college and finish my undergraduate degree at Arizona State University. I continued my education at the graduate level at the University of Maryland, and have been gainfully employed in a professional capacity ever since. Although it was a very difficult time in my life, my personal experience surviving the May 1995 Louisiana Flood taught me many valuable life lessons that I carry with me today. I'm certain that there is a direct link between this challenging life experience and my current professional interests, talents, and expertise in the areas of finance, emergency preparedness & management, as well as storm water & floodplain management.

Question # 8 Explanation: I'm on Facebook and Linked-In.



<https://www.facebook.com/downtowntaylorbrown>



<https://www.linkedin.com/pub/taylor-brown/70/96a/a4>

Section 4

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes

Taylor Brown

Tracy Taylor – Police Chief, City of Trenton, FL 352-535-7089, 352-463-4010

Mr. Brown hired Mr. Taylor as the Police Chief in February of 2014. Mr. Taylor previously worked for the County Sheriff department. They worked together until 2015.

When Mr. Brown hired Mr. Taylor, he explained that the department needed to be revamped and have a complete overhaul. He was very truthful, which was much appreciated. Because Mr. Taylor knew what he was walking into he had an opportunity to decide the best course of action. Residents have expressed appreciation for the improvements which only happened because Mr. Brown provided the right direction. The transition was relatively smooth for Mr. Taylor.

On a scale from one to five, Mr. Brown's performance rates a five. He was constantly on the go but found time to touch base with all his employees. He held meetings on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month to receive feedback on what was happening in all the departments. He did a great job.

Mr. Brown was available any time that Mr. Taylor needed to speak with him; he even answered the phone at 2 a.m. He was always responsive and made time for meetings, which was especially appreciated when a situation occurred that required his expertise.

When hiring staff, Mr. Brown sat on the panel with the Directors. He wanted to hear from the applicants and have an opportunity to ask questions. The atmosphere was positive, and the staff members all worked well together. Mr. Brown always made good hires.

Trenton has a population of 1,900 residents and they did not have a McDonalds, department store, or a Family Dollar. Mr. Brown brought these businesses to Trenton. They were built in an area with brick buildings and Mr. Brown made sure that their structures were comprised of brick to match the neighborhood, which was aesthetically pleasing. His planning and development skills are amazing and have improved the look of the city. He has brought in a significant number of jobs and boosted the economy.

Mr. Brown maintained operations to a high standard, and he was also innovative. He took pictures of other cities and towns to see what might work in Trenton. He showed these pictures at meetings to help the employees catch a vision for what was possible for their community.

A resident complained that signs were worn and weathered at one intersection. Mr. Brown met personally with this individual. After new signs were installed, he made a return trip to make sure the resident was satisfied. He regularly spoke to residents and drove around Trenton to see how things looked.

With one exception, Mr. Brown kept the staff very well informed. When he was negotiating with Walmart their agreement called for confidentiality, and he respected the terms. He did mention that a business was thinking about coming in and the staff enjoyed guessing which business it

Reference Notes

Taylor Brown

might be. The meetings were serious, but he interjected humor. Staff members felt comfortable in expressing their ideas and concerns because nothing they said would be used against them.

Mr. Brown was straight forward on every issue. He instructed the Directors to address residents' concerns. He was not the Public Works Director and cannot change out a pipe. He did not micromanage staff, he was a leader who rallied the employees. The environment in Trenton was team oriented and almost had a family feel under his leadership.

When Mr. Brown was first hired the city did not have two nickels to rub together. He spent money wisely and established a reserve. He was very timely in accomplishing tasks and meeting deadlines.

When Mr. Taylor worked for the Sheriff's department the running joke in the County was that they might have to tow Trenton's police cars back to the station because they were so old and in disrepair. During his tenure they purchased new vehicles for the first time in the history of the police department. They also purchased some equipment and newer cars from a department that was closing.

The former Police Chief was not performing well. Mr. Brown gave him an opportunity to improve but was unsuccessful and separation was necessary. The next Police Chief cleaned up the department to some extent but left due to medical reasons. Mr. Taylor was then hired. Prior to his arrival the City had many lawsuits against the police department claiming that officers were aggressive and acting outside of the law. Mr. Brown instructed Mr. Taylor to deal with and alleviate the complaints. From 2014 until Mr. Brown left in 2015 they received only one complaint, and it was from an attorney whose income decreased because he no longer received calls from residents who want to sue the police department.

Mr. Brown has not been involved in anything personally or professionally controversial. A few individuals in the community do not like Mr. Brown, which is the nature of the business. Everyone that Mr. Taylor has spoken with liked him and the majority of business owners spoke highly of him.

If Mr. Taylor were the Mayor or Commissioner he would hire Mr. Brown because he is a great manager. The manager who followed Mr. Brown walked into a community that was in good shape and had an excellent staff.

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Smart,
- Honest,
- Professional,
- Business savvy,
- Personable, and
- Work ethic.

Reference Notes Taylor Brown

Strengths: Organization, touches base with staff, wore many hats, brought many businesses to Trenton, very flexible, gets along with pretty much everyone.

Weaknesses: He communicated well with the Commissioners most of the time. Occasionally they learned information at a public meeting that they would have preferred to know before the meeting. However, this weakness is very minor.

Kristy Anderson – Former Emergency Management Director, Taylor County, FL, 850-843-4834

Ms. Anderson was the Emergency Management Director for Taylor County for eight years prior to moving to the same position in Jefferson County in 2024. She worked closely with Mr. Brown while he was City Manager for the City of Perry between 2018 and 2023. As City Manager, he genuinely sought to make the City a better place to live and work. She has never heard anyone say anything negative about him.

While Ms. Anderson did not work in the same office as Mr. Brown, they bounced ideas off of each other. He made good decisions and had strong relationships with partners in the City and in the region. He valued collaboration with others and did not jump the gun on big ideas. He took his time and followed through with the appropriate amount of research and background work before coming to a decision.

Mr. Brown is an out-front leader. They weathered several major storms together including Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Irma, among others. He was always cool and collected during these times of crisis. He came to her office as the City representative and let her staff know what his city functions would be during the storm, and how they were prepared, including the water treatment plant and the road department. He led his City appropriately and knows how to solve problems.

Mr. Brown has a strong communication style. He is always polite and kind and is well spoken. Ms. Anderson is not aware of anything controversial in his conduct and would recommend him as a City Manager elsewhere.

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Professional,
- Tactful,
- Kind,
- Mature,
- Prompt,
- Well spoken, and
- Honest.

Reference Notes Taylor Brown

Strengths: Excellent at giving presentations. He sincerely wanted to make Perry better and the downtown area more presentable to the public.

Weaknesses: Mr. Brown is always so kind to everyone with whom he meets. Sometimes, when there is a confrontation with someone who disagrees with him, not everyone is kind or thinks and acts like he does. He can struggle to get his point across and could stand up for himself a little more.

Alan Hall – Former Mayor, City of Perry, FL, 850-843-3418

Mr. Hall was formerly a City Councilmember from 2014 to 2018 and was recently elected as Mayor when they hired Mr. Brown as City Manager in 2018. Mr. Hall was still in office when Mr. Brown left his position in 2022. Mr. Brown was an excellent Manager for the City of Perry.

Mr. Brown always made time for others. He was friendly and approachable with the public. He worked well with everyone. He spoke with various organizations within the community, not just at the City Council meetings. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience and was a blessing to the community. He did not always make everyone happy, but he was always fair and by the book. He did not operate by the “good ol’ boy” system.

Mr. Brown was fiscally conservative. He made sure their money was spent responsibly. He was respectful to the taxpayers. He was forward thinking and he recognized the importance of building the foundation first.

Mr. Brown prepared the City for growth by setting up the proper procedures ahead of time. He did not leave any stones unturned that could cause them problems in the end. He established a good foundation and infrastructure and kept the City grounded instead of just jumping ahead. He made sure they had a solid plan before moving forward. This helped the City easily navigate through any obstacles that came up in the process.

Mr. Brown handles himself well. He is level-headed and professional in stressful situations. Mr. Hall never saw him get frustrated with anyone. He always held it together. He can adapt to the people and to the situation in how he needed to teach or take charge. He is adaptable and a strong leader. He knows when to step back and let others try their best, when to step forward and offer an encouraging or helpful hand, and when to step up and do it himself.

There is nothing in Mr. Brown’s conduct that could be considered embarrassing to a future employer. While he left the City Manager position, he still lives within the borders of the City of Perry and is still a respected member of the community. Mr. Hall recommends him as a City Manager.

Reference Notes Taylor Brown

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Organized,
- Compassionate,
- Level-headed,
- Easy going,
- Visionary, and
- Gets along well with everyone.

Strengths: Creates a solid path forward and prepares for the future.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Shirley Hampton – City Councilmember, City of Perry, FL, 850-672-3543

Ms. Hampton was on the City Council who hired Mr. Brown in 2018. She has been a council member since 2012. He was an excellent City Manager for the City. Ms. Hampton would give him a rating of 4.5 out of 5 stars. They never had any problems with him, and he always made sure everyone was treated fairly. He called out racist behavior and created an equal opportunity environment for everyone within the City.

Mr. Brown led by example. He balanced the City's budgets, and while he had to raise rates, which Ms. Hampton was initially against, it turned out very well, and it was the correct decision. He made himself available to everyone and made people feel like they belonged.

Mr. Brown is an excellent communicator. He knows how to talk with someone to make them feel good about their contributions. When it came to new employees, he seemed to know exactly what to do and say. He was not a City Manager who could be pushed around.

Mr. Brown is a go-getter. He presented all the options to the Council. If he found something that could be a good thing for the City, he brought it up as an option. He expected people to do their job and would let them know if they were doing something wrong or not living up to his expectations. He did not play favorites or buy into the small-town nepotism that you so frequently see in small-town government. He did not care who you were related to. Color did not matter to him.

Mr. Brown decided to leave his position as City Manager when a new City Councilmember came on who refused to work with him. That same councilmember also caused five other leaders in the community to leave their positions as well. Mr. Brown did not leave them in a lurch though. He stayed until they were able to find someone else to replace him. He left on good terms and is still a valuable member of the community. Ms. Hampton highly recommends Mr. Brown as City or County Manager elsewhere.

Reference Notes Taylor Brown

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Transparent,
- Out-front leadership style,
- Inclusive,
- Go-getter,
- Fair, and
- Available.

Strengths: Excellent communicator, builds morale, not a pushover.

Weaknesses: Sometimes Mr. Brown had so much going on, and with a new, particularly unpleasant councilmember coming on board, it seemed like he always had something negative to say. But he brought it back down, and Ms. Hampton does not hold it against him.

Craig Ruede – Commissioner, City of Trenton, FL 352-317-5750, 352-463-4939

Mr. Ruede met Mr. Brown in 2010. He was elected to the Commission, and they worked on a more personal level until Mr. Brown's departure in December of 2015.

When Mr. Ruede was first hired Mr. Brown took the time to explain things to him to a level that he could understand. When issues occurred, he explained the pros and cons of each option, so the Commission was aware of the consequences of each decision.

Mr. Brown was a phenomenal manager who turned the city around. He was the best thing to ever happen to Trenton. When he was hired the city finances were in the red. When he left six years later in 2016, they had a six-month cushion. He was a very valuable asset.

Mr. Brown made good decisions both when hiring personnel and for the community in general. He was innovative and had high expectations of staff. He was involved in the community and volunteers with the community food bank. He became a board member at the food bank's request. He provided guidance and recognized the value they provide to the community.

When an item was not as important Mr. Brown called the Commissioners. When something major happened, he asked them to stop by the office to talk in person. If a meeting was not possible they spoke on the phone. He made sure they did not learn about issues from other sources.

During Commission meetings Mr. Brown was very articulate and detail oriented. He explained the situation in its entirety. He showed a high level of customer service. He was timely in

Reference Notes

Taylor Brown

completing tasks when he controlled the schedule, and he informed the Commission of the reason for any delays. He was generally early or on time with assignments.

The Commission was looking to implement a fire assessment, which has been long and tedious because some Board members are opposed to the idea. Mr. Brown led them through the process and received their approval because it was the right decision for the city in the long term.

Certain businesses wanted to install flashing neon signs. Mr. Brown did an amazing presentation showing the history of signs. The information was detailed and very informative. He explained why he did not want these signs in the community, and they were voted down.

The fire assessment and the opening of the first liquor store were controversial. Mr. Ruede is not aware of anything in Mr. Brown's background that would concern an employer. Some Commissioners did not make the best decisions, and they prevented Mr. Brown from moving the City forward because they held the majority vote. Mr. Brown had hoped that the election might change the dynamics of the Commission, but it did not, and he resigned. He is not one to collect a paycheck while doing nothing because his hands are tied. He wants to do what is right. Some of the Commissioners were very upset because he accomplished so many incredible things. Trenton was in debt, and they now have a surplus.

Mr. Ruede would hire Mr. Brown and did not want to lose him. He is the best Manager that Mr. Ruede has seen. He is a phenomenal person and would make any city proud. He was an asset in Trenton and will be an asset wherever he goes.

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Very articulate,
- Timely,
- Very positive,
- Innovative,
- Very polite,
- Visionary, and
- Very frugal with budget spending.

Strengths: Good people person, diligent, articulate.

Weaknesses: When others cannot see his vision or the right direction for the community he can show frustration, but this trait is not a negative to Mr. Ruede.

Reference Notes

Taylor Brown

Paul Metts – Business Owner, City of Trenton, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Metts was the CEO at the University of Florida's teaching hospital. He was the Deputy Secretary of Health for the State of Florida. When he retired he wanted to create an economic engine for a small community near Gainesville, so he bought an old turn of the century building in Trenton. His wife set up a shop, café, museum, and several other small businesses to draw people to Trenton. Mr. Brown was the third City Manager that they have worked with since purchasing the building and he has been a terrific supporter.

They set up a non-profit organization for an annual festival that draws 8,000 tourists to the town. Mr. Brown was very active in supporting the festival and trying to create a brand for Trenton as an arts and crafts center. He was very effective at bringing people in. He provided financial support, attended the board meetings, and actively managed everything that must happen to make the festival work.

Ms. Watson was the Director of the Chamber and left for a better paying position. Mr. Brown had the foresight to recruit her back as she was a very proactive Director and a longtime resident. He made good decisions for the community, and it prospered under his leadership.

Mr. Brown was innovative and a change agent while having a strong adherence to the rules. He was always available to residents with questions or concerns. He was creative in finding solutions to problems. He was well grounded. He was friendly in board meetings and interacted well with stake holders. His interpersonal skills seemed fine.

Mr. Metts wanted to hang banners on major roads to advertise the festival, but the power lines could not hold the weight. Mr. Brown found a solution and the banners increased attendance by 1,000 individuals.

Mr. Brown had a fantastic year in 2014. He brought in McDonalds, Dollar General, and Walmart. He had several successes and received almost no raise whatsoever. Mr. Metts wrote a letter to the editor at that time stating that he would rather see new Commissioners elected rather than Mr. Brown leave for a lack of support, which the local newspaper was happy to publish. Employees who work in an outstanding manner should be rewarded, and a monetary increase is a form of appreciation. Even a 10% increase was very little compared to what Mr. Brown accomplished for Trenton.

Nothing controversial relating to Mr. Brown has been reported in the newspapers. Most of the Board members have a positive opinion of him and he seemed to have the support of the community at large.

Mr. Metts would absolutely hire Mr. Brown. He is a good manager who can handle a town larger than Trenton. His background in planning is an asset. He has a good vision of what he is trying to accomplish.

Reference Notes Taylor Brown

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Visionary,
- Proactive,
- Cooperative, and
- Friendly.

Strengths: Created a vision to help Trenton move forward. Recruited talented employees. Visible in the community.

Weaknesses: As manager he did not have the latitude to change rules that are ineffective. He must enforce the existing rules. He leaned more towards adherence to the rules than objective judgment regarding the efficacy of the rules.

Randy Rutter – Commissioner, Trenton, FL 352-221-2458, 352-486-5222

Mr. Rutter was on the City Commission when Mr. Brown was hired in 2010. Mr. Brown did a very good job overall. He excelled in some areas and was average in other areas. He excels at planning and managing projects.

Mr. Rutter asked to be informed when things came up and for the most part Mr. Brown obliged. He was hired to run the city, and Mr. Rutter gives him the leeway to do the job though some Commissioners wanted to have a more hands-on approach.

Overall Mr. Brown communicates well but during meetings he was hard to understand even when he leaned up to the microphone. Mr. Rutter has trouble hearing, which may be a factor, but he felt that Mr. Brown does not have a strong voice. However, when they spoke on the phone he could hear Mr. Brown just fine. He is very intelligent and communicates well.

Mr. Brown went above and beyond to find the best person for each open position. He spent a number of years building a strong team and, in the process, had to let some employees go. He extended the probationary period if he was unsure that a new hire was right for the position. He spent much time vetting applicants. He made good decisions for the community in general.

Mr. Brown maintained the organization at a high-performance level. He excelled at trying to be part of the community by attending various community functions. He worked well with the public and interacted with many customers, some who walked in without an appointment. The only complaint that Mr. Rutter received was from someone whose water was shut off because he did not pay the bill. Mr. Brown goes beyond what is reasonable to keep residents' water on, but bills must be paid to continue receiving service.

Reference Notes

Taylor Brown

Mr. Brown's job was to solve problems. He led a significant project to rebuild the water and sewer system. He laid out a plan and obtained grants for the lift stations. He planned water lines and meter replacements. He presented different options for the Commissioners to review. The project is still in process, but he managed it well during his tenure.

In terms of financial skills Mr. Brown was very good. He always came in under budget and increased the reserves every year. He drove the financial recovery for the community. The Commissioners made decisions on projects, but he drastically cut costs.

When Mr. Brown encountered a new situation he read up on the subject to become an expert. He kept several books in his office. He was a County Planner before he was hired in Trenton. He made good decisions for the community.

Firing the Police Chief was controversial because allegations of illegal activity were involved and the decision was challenged, but the Commissioners supported Mr. Brown. Nothing in his personal life is controversial.

Working for five bosses is extremely difficult and Trenton is the first community that Mr. Brown managed so he was still in the learning process. He did the job and even when some were not happy with his decisions, he moved the city forward.

One Commissioner did not run for reelection but stated that Mr. Brown is not timely enough. In response, the other Commissioners tried to explain that the scope of work in combination with the small staff makes it impossible to move projects along any faster. When these criticisms were expressed Mr. Brown asked for a review so that he could see where he needed to improve. Mr. Rutter gave him an above-average review.

The Mayor was overly critical of Mr. Brown, but the Commission was very happy with his performance as Manager. Mr. Brown felt it was an uphill battle with the Mayor and resigned. The majority of the elected officials hated to lose him.

Mr. Rutter hired Mr. Brown once and would hire him again. He was happy with Mr. Brown's performance and wishes him the best.

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Dedicated,
- Driven,
- Quick learner, and
- Intelligent.

Reference Notes Taylor Brown

Strengths: Planning, hiring personnel, visible in the community.

Weaknesses: Trenton is a small town. Mr. Brown expected much of the staff but because they were paid a little over minimum wage, turnover is high. If he were managing a location where employees are paid a higher salary, he might be able to attract the caliber of staff that he wants.

Pat Watson – Assistant to the City Manager, Trenton, FL 352-494-9913, 352-463-4000

Ms. Watson has known Mr. Brown since 2010. She has worked both with and for him. Ms. Watson was the Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce and interacted with him as the Manager. She eventually left the Chamber and came to work for Mr. Brown as his assistant.

Mr. Brown is one of the most detailed, organized men that Ms. Watson has ever worked for. He knows his job and understands city management. He understands planning and is very focused. He is a smart, intelligent man.

Mr. Brown works well with the staff. He spent a great deal of time reviewing the applications and interviewing applicants to select the right person for the job. His decisions in general are good and he communicates well.

Because Trenton is a small community Mr. Brown understood the importance of keeping things the same while moving the city forward. He was innovative, a change agent, and he maintained operations at a high-performance level.

The Commission represents the community, but they do not hold many community activities. Mr. Brown was involved in the high school and middle school activities. He worked very well with the public. Residents had a high opinion of him and were willing to work with him.

Their communications were generally in-person as they worked in the same office. When Ms. Watson was the Director of the Chamber they used email to communicate. Email was also the primary communication tool when they served on the Festival Board.

Mr. Brown was a leader who rallies employees around the vision of the Commission. One project he led was the construction of restrooms in a park in a lower-income section of town. Despite the controversy, he managed to get the project off the ground and moving forward.

Mr. Brown was customer-service oriented and he solved problems. Trenton is in great shape financially. The City was broke when he was hired and by the time he resigned, they had 2.5 million dollars in reserve. For the most part he was very timely in completing tasks.

Ms. Watson does not know of any incident in Mr. Brown's background that would embarrass an employer. One of the Commissioners did not see eye to eye with Mr. Brown. This Commissioner

Reference Notes Taylor Brown

is new to government and expects everything to happen immediately, which is not possible. The other Commissioners respected Mr. Brown and followed his lead.

Ms. Watson would hire Mr. Brown. He is a good manager. One of the best decisions she made was to work for him even though going from an Executive Director position to an Assistant was a step back in her career. She loved working with him because he is organized and detailed. Everyone knows where they stand with him. He is a pleasure to work with.

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Intelligent,
- Organized,
- Compassionate,
- Responsible,
- Fair, and
- Good manager.

Strengths: Understands city management and planning, focused, organized, detailed, and intelligent.

Weaknesses: At times he is so focused on one thing that drawing his attention to another subject is difficult.

Richard Powell – Former Auditor, Powell & Jones, Trenton, FL 386-365-4906, 386-755-4200

Mr. Powell has known Mr. Brown since 2010. Mr. Powell conducted the annual audit for the City of Trenton.

Trenton is a small city with limited revenues though it is still a full-service city that provides water, sewer, police, and fire services to residents. Mr. Brown managed the budget very well and increased their reserves. During his tenure they were compliant with the law, grants, and procedures and their audits had few findings.

In 2014 there was a misunderstanding about who they were supposed to contact for information, but Mr. Brown himself was always responsive. He should be commended for the work that he did in Trenton. He had a good grasp of the budget and dealt with many significant issues. He seemed to run a tight ship and was always professional.

One issue with the audit in 2014 was that information supporting payment to a person hired for casual labor was not available. Mr. Brown explained the situation to Mr. Powell's satisfaction and the only reason that he even recalled the incident is because it was so recent. Mr. Powell is

**Reference Notes
Taylor Brown**

not aware of any allegations or issues related to Mr. Brown nor does he know anyone who would disagree with the statements in this reference.

Mr. Brown is a good city manager in the right situation. Trenton has had several managers over the years, and Mr. Brown managed the finances better than any other managers that Mr. Powell can recall.

Words or phrases used to describe Taylor Brown:

- Straight forward,
- Confident,
- Analytical,
- Clean appearance,
- Business like, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Balanced the budget well.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Amanda Jenkins & Lynelle Klein
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CB&A Internet Research

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tallahassee.com
November 14, 2023

As clock ticks for closure of Perry mill, supporters hoping for a Hail Mary

For a group of workers and businesses tied to a Perry mill, hope has become a waiting game as talk about their economic future goes on behind closed doors. Bob Cate, a former plant manager at the Foley Cellulose Mill, said Monday its closure was big news last week during “Dissolving Pulp Day” at the London Pulp Week Symposium 2023. The mill is one of seven in the world capable of extracting cellulose – the basic structural component of plants' cell walls – from pine and dissolving it into a chemical used to manufacture electronics and as a food additive. Mill owner Georgia-Pacific, however, announced in September it would close the facility by the end of November. Cate was among a group of retired mill executives and workers who immediately formed a Citizens Action Task Force to find a buyer.

Since its construction in 1954, the plant has provided 2,000 direct and indirect jobs, which also account for about a quarter of Taylor County’s economic output. Environmentalists have longed blamed the mill for decades of pollution in the Fenholloway River, which carries the wastewater produced by dissolving cellulose into the Gulf of Mexico. The Florida Legislature designated the Fenholloway an “industrial river” in 1954 to allow the discharge of industrial and chemical waste and effluent to entice Procter & Gamble to build the mill in 1954. The current task force, backed by the Taylor County Economic Development Authority, sent Cate to London to find a buyer for the mill among executives at the symposium, including some Cate had known as a colleague and competitor during his 44-year career. “I can tell you that there’s already outreach being made to Georgia Pacific,” Cate told the Tallahassee Democrat Monday after briefing task force and the development authority about the eight meetings he held with executives in London over two days. Georgia-Pacific spokesperson Scott Mixon said the company had sent several representatives to the week-long conference but any discussions about the sale of the mill would be kept confidential for business reasons.

Former executives say Perry mill had been profitable

Cate said he went to London to find people with the money and expertise needed to keep the mill operating and connect them to Georgia-Pacific: “You heard a lot of stuff in the industry press. A lot of myths and rumors. Let’s talk, here are the facts.” The bottom line in Cate’s sales pitch is that he and a dozen former mill executives believe it was profitable for six of its seven decades. They see no reason why it can’t be a money-maker again. “Six of them want to continue to move forward and needed more information from the state of Florida,” Cate said.

Laura DiBella, CEO of the Enterprise Florida state agency, which becomes the Department of Commerce after this month, outlined a package that included grants, tax incentives, job training programs, and infrastructure improvements the state could provide to “sweeten the deal,” Cate explained. An Enterprise Florida representative did not comment directly on any discussions that DiBella participated in but did confirm the economic development agency has had talks with potential buyers who expressed interest. “A formal incentive package isn’t something that

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happens until a prospective company starts proposing firm details,” spokesperson Rose Hebert said.

Most workers laid off, 'transitional support' offered

Meantime, Mixon said the closure is proceeding, with most of the plant’s 525 workers having been laid off. “We will continue to work with local community and state agencies to provide additional transitional support to employees,” Mixon said. Georgia-Pacific has said it will leave the plant in “a sellable condition” and talk only to Enterprise Florida about the plant’s future. But that leaves the laid-off workers and much of North Florida out of any negotiations. “I’m not saying that there isn’t more to be known,” said **Taylor Brown**, who heads the Taylor County Economic Development Authority. “I’m not on the inside. Georgia-Pacific is a private company, so they don’t have to tell anybody what they’re up to or what can ultimately come.”

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Florida Times-Union, The (Jacksonville, FL)
October 29, 2023

Perry's future uncertain as Georgia Pacific makes plans to leave town

Author/Byline: James Call

The November closing of the Foley Cellulose Mill in Perry will wreak economic havoc across the Big Bend and will cost Florida nearly 2,000 jobs and \$9.9 million in state and local taxes, according to University of Florida economists. A report from the UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Science describes the paper mill along the Fenholloway River as the main economic driver for a county where one in five residents live below the poverty line. The Foley paper mill provides Taylor County workers a payroll of \$77 million, and offers starting pay for most jobs that is nearly twice the state median income of \$35,216. IFAS calculated the Foley mill accounts for more than 12% of county jobs with 525 positions at the plant and another 500 jobs such as loggers and truckers directly dependent on it. It also produces another \$377 million in spending in Taylor County, population 21,283, more than the combined profit of Florida's three National Football League teams. It will take years for Perry to recover from Hurricane Idalia, mill closure Georgia-Pacific announced it would shutter the paper mill along the Fenholloway River in September, two weeks after Hurricane Idalia pummeled Perry with 125 mph winds. The Atlanta-based corporation said the "strategic decision" to close the plant had nothing to do with the hurricane and committed to a safe and orderly shutdown.

Local and state officials were blindsided by the announcement and a month later Perry is watching the main driver of its economy slowly withdraw from the community. "The loggers have already started laying off people," said Dawn Perez this week. She is the executive director of the Taylor County Chamber of Commerce. Perez expects it will take years for the county to recover from the one – two punch of Idalia and the Georgia Pacific announcement. "The trickledown effect hasn't even really begun yet. It's going to take years to see the damage this has done," said Perez.

The 69-year-old facility extracts cellulose fiber from wood used in paper products under brands such as Quilted Northern, Angel Soft, Brawny, Dixie, Sparkle and Vanity Fair. IFAS calculates the Georgia Pacific decision to leave the Big Bend will ripple across the state and depress spending statewide by \$571 million with the loss of another 1,879 jobs.

Lawmakers try to help as 28% of community tax base evaporates

Congressman Neil Dunn, R-Panama City, immediately after the announcement called on Georgia Pacific to help displaced workers by extending health benefits, pay and severance for at least six months after the closure. Dunn said the company's response to his demands was vague and callous.

Rep. Jason Shoaf, R-Port St. Joe, predicts it will be devastating to the community when the shutdown is complete. He told the Tallahassee Democrat he has been in contact with a host of different companies that want to hire workers with highly specialized skills but said his goal is to

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try and find "good paying jobs that would allow them to stay in Perry and not leave the state or community." When the St. Joe Company closed the papermill in Shoaf's hometown in 1999 he said many workers started new careers as plumbers, electricians, and charter boat captains, while others moved away. "And then there was the group that just could not, for one reason or another, find a job," said Shoaf. "Those folks really were hit the hardest ... what keeps me up at night is they aren't going to be able to find a job," said Shoaf. Shoaf said he is working with trade school and technical colleges to help workers "if they choose to skill up."

Gov. Ron DeSantis' office did not respond to a request for comment on the IFAS study.

Taylor Brown is executive director of the Taylor County Development Authority and said Georgia Pacific accounts for 28% of the community's tax base. If the company has any plans to help during the transition, **Brown** said "it is keeping it close to its chest." **Brown** was hired three days after the Georgia Pacific announcement and said the community is still reeling from the news.

Locals are unsure if Georgia Pacific intends to sell the plant, whether they should work to find a buyer, think of how to repurpose the plant, or find another use for the forested land that surrounds Perry. "(Eventually) landowners are going to start looking at what's the highest and best use of those lands. And that could spur different kinds of development," said **Brown**.

Perry: From Tree Capital of the South to chip capital?

While Taylor County, which currently bills itself as the Tree Capital of the South, wonders whether it will be forced to find a new identity, Super-Pufft Snacks USA Inc. announced it has invested more than \$60 million in a state-of-the art facility in Perry and will begin making Utz potato chips. Originally a Canadian popcorn company, Super-Pufft set up a factory in Perry in 2017 and has grown to be the largest producer of private label chips and snacks in North America. Super-Pufft supplies restaurants and supermarket chains with their private brands. A co-marketing agreement with Utz to make and distribute the iconic brand will make SuperPufft, Taylor County's largest private employer. The company said its Taylor County workforce will number 330 and projects it will have a \$603 million impact on the regional economy.

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Perry News-Herald
September 29-30, 2023

‘Four-pronged community response’ to mill closure

As local governments, organizations and citizen volunteers rally to respond to the impending closure of the GP Foley Cellulose mill, who will handle the various pieces of the still-evolving puzzle to secure Taylor County’s financial future? According to newly-hired Taylor County Development Authority (TCDA) Interim Director **Taylor Brown**, the list of tasks has been organized roughly into a four-pronged community response. **Brown** addressed the Taylor County Commission during a special meeting held Thursday, Sept. 21, and attempted to outline each of the objectives, as well as who would lead those efforts. The four main goals of the response, according to **Brown**, include:

- Immediate basic needs and long-term needs of the affected workers;
- Preservation of the industrial employment base;
- Stewardship of the Georgia-Pacific mill property and the environmental concerns resulting from the closure; and
- A long-term economic development plan to diversify the local economy.

Immediate Human Needs

“The first (prong) would be the immediate human need, as well as longerterm needs of the affected workers, not just at the mill, but contracting companies,” **Brown** said. “There will be other layoffs simply because the economy is going to shrink because of this closure.” According to **Brown**, those issues include: unemployment payments, severance packages, extension of healthcare benefits, job fairs, job searches, education and re-training assistance, establishment of new or expansion of existing food banks and meeting mental health needs. “Maybe even other essential needs like assistance with utility bills or housing,” **Brown** said (see related story). He added that he talked with Tax Collector Mark Wiggins about the possibility of tax deferments to delay the due date for property taxes. “There are precedents at the state level, where at times they have allowed people to pay their property taxes later than normal as a form of assistance,” **Brown** said. “They (state) have even transferred money to county governments and then come collect after revenues come in.” **Brown** said there are already local and state organizations that handle many of these needs, but there is a need to coordinate between them all, so people know about available services. However, the commission appeared to balk at **Brown**’s suggestion that County Administrator LaWanda Pemberton run point on coordinating the effort, with several commissioners stating that Pemberton had “enough on her plate” overseeing the county government. After a brief discussion, Pemberton said she would search for an organization or agency that would be able to create a centralized listing of available services for those in need. As for mental health needs, it was mentioned that Big Bend 221, which can be reached by dialing 211, can help those in need 24 hours a day to connect them with the resources they need.

Preservation of the Industrial Employment Base

“The second [prong] is the preservation of the local employment base,” **Brown** said. “First and foremost, we all want the mill to stay open. If GP can’t run it, maybe another company can come

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in and do so, but there are any number of reasons why that might not be possible. “If it’s determined that’s not possible, then the next best thing would be for something new to come in and fill that void,” he said. “What would be best for this region is if there was a focus made on getting replacement silviculture or forestry-support industries to come in here, because we do have an entire region whose economy is largely based on forestry products. “They don’t have to necessarily produce the same kind of product that GP was producing, but if we can at least have (a company) that continues to support that industry, then that is going to benefit the whole region and minimize the damage of the mill’s closure long-term,” he said. This effort is being led by the Citizens Action Task Force led by Michele Curtis, which includes numerous former mill employees and managers.

Stewardship of the Mill Property

“If Georgia Pacific isn’t going to run the mill, and if there isn’t someone else who is going to come in and run it right away, that means the mill is going to have to shut down,” **Brown** said. “I feel certain that the mill and GP have a plan to properly shut that down and keep certain systems up and running,” he said. “I assume this is also in their permits from [the Florida Department of Environmental Protection] and [the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency], but none of us have access to that yet. “We need to make sure the regulatory agencies on the state and federal level are aware that GeorgiaPacific is shutting down,” **Brown** said. “They’re the ones with the authority to go in there and make sure that a plan is in place and is being followed, but it’s us locals that are going end up getting the shaft if it doesn’t happen.” Pemberton suggested her staff could reach out to DEP and others in the state “to ensure that there is a plan.” “I certainly feel that is something we can work with our state partners to ensure,” Pemberton said. On Monday, GP’s Foley Mill Public Affairs Manager Scott Mixon told Perry Newspapers, “GeorgiaPacific will collaborate with all regulatory agencies during and after closure to ensure compliance with all environmental regulations.”

Long-term Economic Development Plan

According to **Brown**, the TCDA will be taking point on the fourth prong of the response, which is the development of a longterm county-wide economic development strategic plan to diversify the local economy. “I think we’ve all learned this week, if we didn’t know it before, that there’s some danger in being a company town,” **Brown** said. “That’s great if the company is doing well, but if the company falters or has difficult economic times, that throws the entire economy into turmoil. “We need to, as a community, decide what the future would hold and how can we support a local economy that is more diversified and also take a regional approach,” he said. “We also learned this week that it’s not just Perry or just Taylor County that’s involved, it’s multiple counties in this area. We’re all in this together.” Commissioner Pam Feagle said she wanted to see TCDA work to help local businesses expand their operations and produce more jobs. “Absolutely, that’s actually one of the foundations of an economic development program,” **Brown** said. He added that the county can “leverage” the impacts of Hurricane Idalia and the plant closure to secure support and funding from various agencies and organizations for the development of the economic development plan. Commissioner Thomas Demps urged **Brown** and the TCDA to poll local businesses to determine how many job openings already exist locally to meet the needs of those who have or will soon lose their existing jobs.

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Perry News-Herald
January 13-14, 2023

Related to ongoing negotiations with Super-Pufft
Brynes lobes accusations at Brown

City Councilman Bill Brynes lodged several complaints and criticisms at outgoing City Manager **Taylor Brown** at the city's Jan. 10 meeting, including unsubstantiated allegations **Brown** could be negotiating on behalf of the city with his future employer.

Brynes' comments came near the close of the two-hour meeting when he addressed the city's ongoing negotiations with Super-Pufft Snacks. **Brown** has been engaged in regular meetings with the local snack manufacturer attempting to resolve both billing and wastewater compliance issues before his final day with the City of Perry on Jan. 28. "Since the Sept. 30, 2021, audit presentation and the discovery of the mistake in the Super-Pufft billing for natural gas, there has been a lot of discussion attempting to determine the final resolution of the mistake," Brynes read from a prepared statement. "I have been told by city staff and one outside party about how complicated – elaborate spreadsheets, time-consuming and spreadsheets covering a whole desk -- it was taking to cover this, because they said they saw them," Brynes said. "I requested and received information from the finance department for city records. There has been a total \$990,815.63 in billing errors over a period of two years. Of this amount, \$549,941.97 should be collectable," Brynes continued. "The utility service agreement with Super-Pufft has a section stating that any corrections to billing statement or payments have one year to be made. For this reason, it appears \$440,873.66 will not be collected from Super-Pufft per the contract," Brynes stated. "These computations are not hard. You got a new bill, and you got an old bill. A third grader can take the difference and add that up And when they do, it comes to \$990,000," Brynes said. "Close enough," City Finance Director Penny Staffney commented. "There is nothing complicated," Brynes stated. "There is nothing complicated about it," Staffney agreed.

"And, the timing of the discovery of the error is extremely relevant to the clock ticking on the recouping (of the amount due), but there are a couple of other factors." "How much has been recouped?" Mayor Shirlie Hampton asked. "I don't know. Apparently none," Brynes replied. "Shirlie, you can't get that answer. You have no clue, and they are not going to tell you." "I've given him (**Brown**) the complete audit of the figure," Staffney said. "But, I can tell you on that \$440,000, when the time comes, they are going to tell you to read the contract," Brynes said. "That is very possible," Staffney agreed, adding, "There is some negotiating items that I am aware of, but I am not involved in them." "As far as I am aware, it is premature to write off that sum," City Attorney Ray Curtis said. "Correct," Staffney stated. "It is not premature to collect it," Councilwoman Diane Landry commented. "We need to be collecting it." "I do not disagree with that, but when you have a disagreement on any matter between two parties on what is owed, first the two parties have to agree on what the amount is, and then what the repayment structure looks like," Curtis stated. "Forget the water issue, the sewer and whatever that is. It has nothing to do with this. You negotiate one up or down and you negotiate the other up or down," Brynes stated. "Who is doing this negotiating?" Brynes asked. "Who has the authority to do that?"

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Staffney replied. "But, who is doing it?" Brynes asked. "It ain't me," Staffney commented. "As I understand it, **Taylor (Brown)** was running point on the discussion with Super-Pufft having to do with finalizing and getting consensus or agreement on what the arrearage number was and what the repayment structure should be," Curtis said. "Is he (**Brown**) qualified to do that?" Brynes asked. "Well, I don't know what you deem the appropriate qualification to be in order to hold that discussion or negotiation," Curtis responded. "Are you out there, Chester?" Brynes asked City Public Works Director Chester McAfee. "Only on the wastewater portion," McAfee replied. "Are you qualified to do that? Qualified now. Is your operator out there with you?" Brynes asked. "Yes. He goes with me," McAfee responded. "You got a man with a Class A operator's license. Apparently, he should be there, but you need an engineer too. You guys may think you are qualified, but you are not," Brynes stated. "I want to make sure my point is well taken. I am only addressing the \$440,000, and it is not written off or an actual loss at this point," Curtis clarified. "It may turn out to be, but it is not at this point." "If we drag our feet too long, it will be," Landry said.

"Mr. Brynes what do you suggest the council do about it?" Mayor Shirly Hampton asked. "To that end, since you are about to lose the city manager who has been running point on that, you may want to direct another staff member to pick up the torch and run with it, in regard to coming to a consensus to the number and attempting to negotiate a repayment," Curtis interjected. "Do you want to know what the public is asking and saying?" Brynes said. "They want to know if the man who is doing the negotiating for the city is going to work for SuperPufft. I don't know. He is not here. But I will ask him." "I don't know," Staffney replied. "I have asked him that, because I had heard that rumor, and it has been denied to me, but time will tell," Curtis responded. "But, he says no...that is not the case." "Right. He has denied it," Staffney added. **Brown**, who was not in attendance at the meeting due to illness, categorically denied the rumors when he was reached at home on Wednesday. "I have not been offered -- nor would I entertain any offer of employment -- from Super-Pufft or any other entity I was negotiating with on behalf of the city," **Brown** stated. "Who is qualified to negotiate with them?" Landry asked. "On the rest of this stuff? The sewer and FDEP and EPA and all that," Brynes said. "We were using that (wastewater permit violations) as leverage to get them to pay what they owe us. He (**Brown**) was negotiating. If he is not available, who should be negotiating?" Landry asked. "I would assume the interim (city manager)," Staffney answered. "There is not one single person that is going to have the skill set to negotiate effectively on each one of those issues -- nor will there be one from Super-Pufft," Curtis offered. "You are going to have a water guy, a sewer guy and the guy that handles gas. That would be the likely approach here. I assume Mr. **Brown** is not going in there free-wheeling, without consulting with his water or gas man first. Nor should he, nor should his successor," Curtis continued. "It should be more of a team."

"Do we even know what the problems are?" Brynes asked. "Yes," Staffney answered. "Do they (council members) know? Is this council aware of the problems with sewer and water and the EPA and DEP? Is this council aware of what the repercussions could be?" Brynes asked. "I know they are aware of it," McAfee responded. "**Taylor** briefed them several meetings ago. There is a protocol for the public works director. I have met with FDEP, EPA and met with Super-Pufft at the plant and sent them letters. Each step has a pyramid, and if you do not correct

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

it, it (the penalties) get worse.” “I was told they had cleaned it up at one time, but now it is worse than ever because they started dumping again,” Landry alleged. “I was out there Tuesday, and the (wastewater) numbers are way better. The numbers are looking better and coming closer to compliance,” McAfee reported. “They are still not there, but they have some time to get it in compliance.” “And all that time it is going into our groundwater,” Landry stated. “No ma’am, it is going to our wastewater plant,” McAfee replied. “Well, hopefully. But it is sitting out there now on the ground,” Landry stated. “Seeping into the ground... and that is going into the groundwater.” “Are we imposing fines for the wastewater not being where it needs to be?” Councilwoman Venita Woodfaulk asked. “They have not been billed,” Staffney replied. “We have a scorecard, I suppose.” “They have 14 days before a heavy fine, per violation, per day,” McAfee added. “Is the fine from us?” Landry asked. “Yes. From us. We will get fined for not imposing fines on them,” Staffney answered. “There is a matrix you have to follow,” McAfee added.

After the lengthy discussion, the council took no action. Earlier in the meeting, Brynes made several other comments regarding how the city is accounting for the Super-Pufft billing errors and collections. “Looking at the quarterly financial statements we just got for October through December, in there is \$188,000 collected for natural gas,” Brynes said. “If any past Super-Pufft money is in that number, you gotta take it out.” “Yes, the accrual has not been posted in there yet. That is all in the accruals,” Staffney replied. “The journal entries.” (In accounting terminology, “accruals” are revenues earned or expenses incurred that impact net income, although cash related to the transaction has not yet changed hands, such as: accounts payable, accounts receivable, accrued tax liabilities and accrued interest). “I thought they were paying on it?” Brynes asked. “Yes, I also have a question for the auditors to address how to post the receivables that are not on anything but paper,” Staffney added. “We have to keep what we are collecting from them in the past from what we are collecting now. Just a note or something,” Brynes added. “We have the accounts receivable adjustments until I reverse it out of this year,” Staffney replied. “I am talking about cash now – not accounts receivables – cash. And also, according to the charter, these (financial updates) are supposed to be discussed. The Sept. 30, 2022 financials should also be discussed. When is that going to happen?” Brynes asked. “We get all hung up on some of these things in that charter, but the majority of it goes to the wind. That is a fact and just the way it is,” Brynes added.

“Back to the financials, when is that going to happen?” “I did not understand your question,” Staffney said. “Discussion of the financial statements in this meeting,” Brynes answered. As of Sept. 30, 2022 and this quarter. We are behind. It is part of the charter. That is a charge to the city manager that he chooses to ignore, but it is supposed to be done.” “I’d be glad to do it, if someone tells me to,” Staffney stated. “If it is quarterly, it should be set,” Landry stated. “Sure, I’d be glad to do that. Just let me know that you want that done. I’ll give that,” Staffney said. “He just did,” Landry replied. “OK. He wants a quarterly review of the financial statements,” Staffney clarified. “For example, it was brought up about paving something recently, and the remark was made that we don’t have the money. The fact is you have \$1.7 million dollars to pave with, and if you don’t pave with it, you are going to spend it somewhere else,” Brynes concluded, before moving on with the next topic of discussion.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Perry News-Herald
January 13-14, 2023

City has 2 applications for city manager's post so far

With less than two weeks remaining before the Jan. 23 deadline, two individuals have submitted applications for the soonto-be vacant city manager position during the City of Perry's second round of advertising a "request for qualifications." In an Oct. 24, 2022 email to members of the Perry City Council and City of Perry department heads, current City Manager **Taylor Brown** provided three months of notice when submitting his letter of resignation effective Jan. 28, 2023. Although city staff has requested the council consider appointing an interim manager to cover the position after Jan. 28 until a permanent replacement can be hired, the council has declined to take action on those requests. Twelve applicants responded to the City of Perry's initial advertisement seeking to fill the vacancy, however in a split 3-2 vote at the city council's Oct. 25 meeting, a divided city council voted to reject all and re-advertise the position with one slight change to the job requirements. Council members Bill Brynes, Diane Landry and Ward Ketrings voted in favor of Brynes' motion to reject all applicants and re-advertise, while Councilwoman Venita Woodfaulk and Mayor Shirlie Hampton were opposed.

City Attorney Ray Curtis provided an update on the city manager search at the city's Jan. 10 meeting, stating two applications had been submitted thus far, with 13 days remaining before the cut-off date. "We had several submissions the last time as the deadline approached, so it is not to say that we will get to Jan. 23 and only have the same two," Curtis said. "But, keep an eye out on the folder you have access to, and let me know if you have any technical problems." Curtis pointed out **Brown's** last day with the city would be Jan. 28, adding, "You need to figure out what you are going to do about that." "There are certain things, by charter, the city manager is the one authorized to do, so if you do not have a designated city manager and we were to get into a situation where we need one, that could get difficult," Curtis warned. "I don't know if you want to announce a special meeting date to address that, or discuss it further tonight, but it is getting pretty close," Curtis added.

City Finance Director Penny Staffney pointed out the next city meeting is set for the day after the application deadline, adding that would leave only three days in which **Brown** could pass along any pertinent information to an interim appointment. "I think that the current city manager is going to cooperate with the new city manager, even after he resigns, to hand off information, documents and institutional wisdom. I will be really surprised if he does not do that," Curtis said. "We are meeting Jan. 24, but keep in mind that there is no way we are filling that position without making some type of interim appointment," Curtis added. "We meet on Jan. 24 to go over the applications we have," Hampton said. "Do you think we can interview them the following week?" Curtis reviewed the timeline of events that would traditionally follow the Jan. 23 closure date, including selecting finalists and setting up individual interviews. "I guess we have until Jan. 24, but I guess I am just a little worried about it," Hampton admitted. "Why?" Brynes asked. "I just am, Bill. That is all I want to say....I am," Hampton replied. The council ultimately opted not to take any action on the suggestion to appoint an interim city manager. City

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council members are not scheduled to meet again until Jan. 24 to discuss the applicants and potentially decide which will be interviewed.

In his resignation letter, **Brown** wrote, “While I sincerely appreciate the opportunity that has been afforded to me to help manage the daily business of the City of Perry over the last four years, I feel the time has come for me to pursue other endeavors.” “As such, I am submitting this letter of my intention to resign my position as Perry City Manager effective Jan. 28, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.” **Brown**’s letter stated. **Brown** declined to comment further on his reasons for stepping down.

At the city’s Dec. 13 meeting, Hampton suggested the council select its top four applicants and set up interviews. However, Brynes immediately made a motion to reject all applicants and re-start the process. “I will tell you my thinking. I’ve spent two or three hours on each of those applications, and I would reject them all and start over,” Brynes said. “I agree with that,” Landry stated. “In starting over, I think we need to make our requirements a little more restrictive than they are and possibly change the residency requirement.” “Yes,” Brynes agreed. When Hampton polled the remaining two council members, Woodfaulk responded with, “Nothing right now,” and Ketrington stated, “I don’t have anything right now.” Brynes made a motion to amend the advertisement to include new wording requiring the applicant live in Taylor County, but allowing the individuals to live outside the city “with the approval of the council.” That motion passed 4-1 with Woodfaulk opposed. The original advertisement stated in part: “The CAO/ City Manager must have their primary residence in Perry, FL within a reasonable period after employment.” Curtis stated the city would use the same system as before, allowing council members access to applications as they are submitted by way of an online link to a folder on a server in his office.

During that meeting, Hampton suggested asking **Brown** to stay on until his replacement is hired, however, **Brown** advised the council, “I am not available beyond Jan. 28. You will need to find an interim.” Ketrington asked if all those who applied by the original Nov. 30 deadline needed to re-apply. “If they want to re-apply, they can,” Curtis stated. “I will include in the letter that goes out to these candidates that the council opted to re-advertise with new language on minimum qualifications. They can re-apply if they want to.” On a motion by Brynes and 5-0 vote, the council set the application deadline for Jan. 23 at 5 p.m. The city is scheduled to meet at 4 p.m. on Jan. 24. **Brown** has served as city manager since late 2018, after being selected from a field of more than 14 applicants following a 4-1 vote of the city council at a July 27, 2018 meeting. **Brown** previously served as city manager of the City of Mary Esther (2016-17) and Trenton (2010-16), after working as a planning director and zoning administrator for Gilchrist County (2007-10). **Brown** also worked as a real estate broker from 2003-07, after serving as a planner for Arlington County, Va., (2001-02) and Community & Economic Development Planner for the Town of Warrenton, Va. (1999-2001).

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Taco Times
www.perrynewspapers.com
November 2, 2022

City owed \$1 million for gas

An out-of-place decimal point in a spreadsheet resulted in the City of Perry underbilling Super-Pufft Snacks approximately \$1 million for natural gas usage over the past two years. According to a two-year snapshot provided by City Finance Director Penny Staffney, the City of Perry accidentally underbilled the city's largest utility customer \$990,813 for natural gas from June 2020 to June 2022.

City Manager **Taylor Brown** provided an update on the situation at the city's Oct. 25 meeting, stating, "We've had some billing issues with them on water, sewer and gas, and we are working closely with them to try to work through those issues." **Brown** explained he temporarily suspended utility billing for the account most of the summer while investigating various issues, before recently presenting SuperPufft with a \$864,000 bill reflecting the correct rates for just those four months of service and some other unpaid charges. "We met with them a couple days ago, and they wired us \$130,000 that day," **Brown** said, adding that the two sides have a payment plan schedule designed to stay current on the regular billing and attempt to pay off the four months of gas bills by the end of the year. However, the two sides are still discussing how to handle the nearly \$1 million in underbilling dating back more than two years.

According to **Brown**, the decimal point being misplaced in the formula of an Excel spreadsheet was the result of an "honest human error" that caused the city to bill Super-Pufft 10% of the total due for gas usage since the company first located in Perry in 2018, reviving the shuttered Snyder's-Lance (Tom's) potato chip plant. "The underbilling started in the very beginning," Staffney said. "The result of a misunderstanding on the formula to invoice." Staffney said the billing error ended in May when she discovered "the lack of revenue problem." "A decimal place was the culprit," Staffney added. "They were being billed \$15,000 for gas when it should have been \$150,000," **Brown** said as an example, adding, "Having no baseline for them, as well as the large fluctuations in usage and the price of gas made it really hard to find the problem." In May 2022 – the month before the mistake was identified – Super-Pufft was billed \$7,579.95 for gas usage when the correct amount should have been \$75,799.48 – a difference of \$68,219.53.

"They have been understanding. We met with their CFO today and Tom Geoffrey with Florida Gas Utility (FGU) on a conference call," **Brown** stated. "I attended the FGU conference a week ago and got educated on what has been going on in the gas market." "The timing of this could not have been worse, because there has been an unprecedented perfect storm in the natural gas market over the past two years – especially this last year," **Brown** said. **Brown** said not only has the price of natural gas fluctuated wildly, but transportation costs have spiked as well, "causing some of the most expensive transportation costs in the nation." He provided a list of factors that have "combined to make the gas market very volatile" and prices to increase significantly. The COVID pandemic shuttered factories for a year, before that pent up demand and people returning

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to work put a tremendous amount of pressure on the supply side, **Brown** said, adding that the election of President Biden and his “very different energy policy than his predecessor may have spooked some producers” due to regulatory restrictions. “There has not been the normal amount of new drilling, putting a damper on the supply side,” **Brown** said, adding that the war in Ukraine, in which “Russia is using natural gas as a weapon against the West, crippling gas markets in Europe” has further strained the market. Domestic supply has been affected by the U.S. shipping natural gas to replace what Russia has restricted, “and that was before one of the pipelines was bombed.”

“Plus in our area of Florida, the way gas pipelines work, they are like toll roads. They have a capacity...so only so much gas can be piped through them at a time. It is a supply and demand scenario for transportation as well. Now it gets shipped to those willing to pay the highest price for shipping,” **Brown** explained. “At the same time, some of the critical infrastructure that serves our line needed maintenance unexpectedly, which took some lines out of service and exacerbated the problem,” he added. “At one point in the past year, natural gas was selling for \$3 per dekatherm (dKT) and the cost to transport that amount of gas to Florida cost \$7,” **Brown** said. “Normally it costs 10-15 cents. That shows you what a tremendously disruptive market we have been going through in the past year or so.” “For the last four months we have been billing SuperPufft at the proper amount, and their bills have gone up significantly. They have had to adjust as suddenly it is significantly more,” **Brown** said. “We have been working with Super-Pufft to make them understand, hopefully forgive our mistake and make good on the usage we did not bill them for and recognize that yes, they did use the gas, and it unfortunately was some of the most expensive gas in decades,” **Brown** added. “The sense I am getting from the company is that they do want to make the city whole. They understand they used it and value the relationship with the city. We mis-billed them, they owe us lots of money, and we would really would like for them to make good, because if they do not, that means other rate payers are subsidizing it and none of us like the optics or metrics of that,” **Brown** added. “They want to pay it, but are trying to figure out how much time they need to make payments, while at the same time having to pay gas bills every month that are multiple times higher than before in the midst of the gas market that is two or three times higher than what it would usually be,” he said. “So, if you think about it in that context, it is a big ask. It is a tall order. That is why it is taking some time,” **Brown** said.

“How much are we talking about total?” Councilman Ward Ketring asked. “Help me here,” **Brown** asked Staffney, “About \$800,000?” “The last four months is \$846,000 I believe,” she replied, explaining the amount is what the city recently billed Super-Pufft for the four-month period when billing was suspended to study the issue. “No, I am talking about the backlog, the prior amount,” **Brown** asked. “A little higher than that,” Staffney replied. “Let’s say \$800,000 to a million dollars over the course of three or four years. Three main years, as they were ramping up production and prices were fluctuating. We never had a baseline for them,” **Brown** said. “Have they made a proposal on how they may pay it back?” Councilwoman Diane Landry asked. “No, because we are also dealing with them on a number of other issues, including wastewater issues with a regulatory agency – DEP,” **Brown** replied. “I will say they are being very cooperative, and there has been a change in leadership. They are recognizing the way they run

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their wastewater pretreatment plant is integral to their entire production and just as important as anything else they are producing,” **Brown** said. **Brown** gave a number of reasons why the company may not be able to pay the total amount owed immediately, citing cash flow issues due to being a new company, customers who pay 60-90 days behind, adding new product lines, new machinery and “tens of millions in improvements and investment in new machinery to ramp up capacity.”

Brown stated he and Public Works Director Chester McAfee have been meeting with DEP officials concerning regulatory issues, explaining that Super-Pufft operates a wastewater pretreatment plant to treat waste before it enters the city system. “They become a subpermittee of our plant. We issue them an annual permit and become their regulatory agency. If they fall outside of certain parameters, there are enforcement actions we are supposed to take that can include fines and other actions, up to and including closing their production, disconnecting them and not allowing them to dump into our system,” **Brown** stated. “It has been a challenge to get them to recognize the importance of their pretreatment and understand the chemistry that goes on in our plant and not send us product with a high acidic content that kills off the good bacteria we have going in our plant. All of these issues are very complex and interrelated. “It is difficult to get people with training and experience necessary to make the calculations and monitor those things. It is a very complex subject matter and requires very specialized knowledge. The people working there have been trying to do their very best, but maybe did not have the experience necessary,” **Brown** added. “We test out there every single day, seven days per week. Every day a city staffer visits to take tests, and we have installed equipment that takes samples every single hour. “The light has come on with them. I am very encouraged that they are going to follow through to get to the bottom and fix it, as the owner does not like fines,” **Brown** said, adding that there are some fines “built up,” but how much leeway the city has to perhaps waive some of them “is yet to be determined.”

“We are meeting with DEP to see how much they will make us stick to fines. If we have some leniency, that may be something we can exercise as part of the bigger equation,” **Brown** said. “Quite frankly it has been a big, complex, perfect storm type of mess. It has been a challenge to try and figure out how to make it right, how to make everyone whole and get everyone back on track within the confines of the law and the permits. “But, I will say we are making progress. Their tests are improving, there is a willingness to meet and continue to pay. They sent a wire transfer today. They are adjusting to their new bigger bills, and they are keeping pace by making weekly payments moving forward,” **Brown** added. “Our goal by the end of the calendar year is to have all of these issues fixed, or at least a written game plan that everybody can see, is transparent, so everybody knows exactly how it happened, how we are fixing it and working together to get it right. That is what we all want....to just get it right,” **Brown** concluded. “Thanks for working with them,” Landry said.

Super-Pufft initially employed 40 people when it located in Perry in 2018, but has continued to grow and expand, investing millions in new construction, technology, equipment, food certifications and growing its local workforce to more than 300 employees – triple the number working at Snyder’s-Lance when it closed in 2017. The family-owned company is now one of

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North America's largest co-manufacturers of salty food snacks for some of the biggest names in the industry, prompting construction of a new 46,000 square foot warehouse at the main plant to accommodate the increased storage needed since the plant increased production on its kettle, potato chip and pellet/ extrusion lines. The company also purchased the former Kmart building and constructed eight new loading docks on the south side of the building to enhance its shipping and logistics system.

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Taylor Troth Brown
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Perry Newspapers
October 26, 2022

City Manager Taylor Brown resigns post

In a letter emailed out to members of the Perry City Council and City of Perry department heads on Monday, City Manager **Taylor Brown** submitted his letter of resignation, effective Jan. 28, 2023. “While I sincerely appreciate the opportunity that has been afforded to me to help manage the daily business of the City of Perry over the last four years, I feel the time has come for me to pursue other endeavors,” **Brown** wrote. “As such, I am submitting this letter of my intention to resign my position as Perry City Manager effective Jan. 28, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.” **Brown**’s letter states. Contacted Monday, **Brown** declined to comment further on his reasons for stepping down. **Brown**’s resignation comes less than two months after City Attorney Ray Curtis submitted his resignation on Aug. 29, citing a desire to spend more time with his newborn son.

The city council was scheduled to meet on Tuesday for the first time in more than a month after cancelling its regularly-scheduled second meeting in September last month due to “lack of agenda items.”

Brown has served as city manager since late 2018, after being selected from a field of more than 14 applicants following a 4-1 vote of the city council at a July 27, 2018 meeting. **Brown** previously served as city manager of the City of Mary Esther (2016-2017), after working as a planning director and zoning administrator for Gilchrist County (2007-10). **Brown** also worked as a real estate broker from 2003-07, after serving as a planner for Arlington County, Va., (2001-02) and Community & Economic Development Planner for the Town of Warrenton, Va (1999-2001).

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[CB&A Note: Shown below is the end of the article only. The beginning of the article was missing.]

Perry News-Herald
June 10-11, 2023

Crews determining if culvert can be repaired

“One of the problems we have had is the high cost of restraining the water. When we were doing the Hwy. 19 (sewer line repair) job a company stopped by that does work all over the state,” McAfee said. “I invited them to come take a look. Their specialty is stopping the flow of water wherever it may be. I got a quote for injecting a chemical polymer in each joint so we can work on the box out. It looks very promising,” he added. McAfee stated the plan was to schedule the project for the second week of June once school was out to avoid school traffic on Center Street. “This should not exceed \$124,000, which is way cheaper than the quote we got before,” McAfee said. “This is just Phase 1, which is to stop the water -- not the construction,” he added. “We are sending out bids to rebuild the box culvert and replace the pipe going into the creek, and then we will fill it and pave it so everyone can go back to walking,” McAfee added. “But, I do not know what the other prices will be for the box rebuild and pipe.” “We do think that from our prior estimates from contractors, stopping the water was the lion’s share of the costs, so coming up with this new technical approach at this price is a miracle really – a tremendous difference,”

City Manager **Taylor Brown** said. “Were we ever able to go back to the company that actually did the boo-boo and get them for some of the money?” City Council Venita Woodfaulk asked. “We looked at that possibility. It is very difficult to prove definitively and hold someone accountable this many years later,” **Brown** said. “That would seem to be a very uphill climb.” “Especially with the terrain like that and shifting water,” McAfee added. “Tonight we are asking you to approve this approach at this cost and to use ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds to pay for it,” **Brown** said. “This will get the road open and stop the water so everything beyond the headwall can be worked on,” McAfee said. “This will get traffic flowing again.” “And, we don’t believe excavation of the bridge or cutting the roadway will be necessary,” **Brown** added. A motion to move forward was approved by a 4-0 vote.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Taco Times
May 19, 2021

City returning to ‘normal’ after COVID

The Perry City Council is one step away from repealing its controversial mandatory face covering ordinance, and plans to replace it with a less binding resolution encouraging residents to follow CDC guidelines when it comes to wearing face masks and getting vaccinated. City Manager **Taylor Brown** also signaled the City of Perry will soon be “getting back to normal” with all day-to-day operations, including reopening the payment lobby at City Hall and preparing local “splash pads” to be open for youth by the time school lets out for summer.

After first agreeing to the idea at its April 13 meeting, the city council held a first reading and public hearing on an ordinance repealing the COVID-19 face covering ordinance on Tuesday, May 11. The first reading and first of two public hearings was to be held at the city’s April 27 meeting, but the item was not discussed due to a lack of a quorum, as only two of the five council members were in attendance at that meeting. At the city’s May 11 meeting, **Brown** clarified an executive order from Governor Ron DeSantis doing away with many emergency orders related to COVID did not affect the city’s face mask ordinance because it was not done in emergency session. **Brown** explained the new ordinance would repeal one passed last year requiring face masks be worn within the city limits. “I just hope we are doing the right thing,” Councilwoman Shirly Hampton said. “We had an uptick I think with 26 cases last week.” Hampton asked city staff to draft a resolution for consideration at the next meeting encouraging residents and visitors within the city to wear face masks, as well as to become vaccinated. “Would it be reaching too far if we ask them to become vaccinated also?” Hampton asked. “Would that be too much?” “That is a council decision. You would just be encouraging them,” **Brown** said. “We can’t make anyone do it. You can pretty much say anything you want to in there,” Mayor Alan Hall replied. “Please include that in there as well,” Hampton requested.

Near the end of the city’s most recent meeting, **Brown** stated that he had been fielding calls about re-opening the city’s splash pads, adding that city staff was in the process of testing the equipment and getting it ready. **Brown** said he had contacted the local health department, and was told it would be appropriate to open the city’s water play areas. “If you are ok with it, I’d like to get those up and running as soon as we get the chemicals balanced,” **Brown** said. “At least by the time school gets out.” In response to a question from Hampton, **Brown** agreed that the city would be re-opening the Loughridge Park Community Center as well. “Personally, I’m at the point where I think everything should be getting back to normal for the most part,” **Brown** said. “It is not just about COVID, but we have reopened the payment center and lobby, added a new window, secured the lobby so it does not connect to the rest of the building anymore, including a door with a combo lock, and all public visitors to City Hall will now go to the payment lobby,” **Brown** told the council.

According to **Brown**, the city will continue to have two payment collection windows, and has added a third window for members of the public to inquire about public works, garbage cans,

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planning and zoning questions or request to meet with administrative staff members. The outside side door (facing Jefferson Street) leading to the upstairs city finance and city manager offices will continue to be locked for general safety and security purposes, **Brown** said. “It is as much about general security than anything else. There are a lot of people doing crazy things these days, and local government people are targets,” **Brown** added. “There is a reason there is steel at your knees there (council desk) where you are sitting. Your public employees are sitting ducks in our offices. Even in my short tenure here, we have had viable threats and had to have law enforcement intervene in certain cases. Frankly, everyone was more comfortable with hardening our facility a little and not have a door open for coming and going. As you know our layout is not conducive to the public coming and going. “We do want to install something on that front door – like a doorbell, a buzzer or video camera system – so it gets a little easier in the future, but in the meantime this seems to be working out well so far,” **Brown** added. New plexiglass and signs limiting the number of people in the lobby are in place to protect city staff who have vulnerable medical conditions, **Brown** said, adding, “We are taking reasonable accommodations while still serving our residents.”

Brown added that masks will be provided and worn (upon request) on an individual case-by-case basis. “So, what about council meetings? Will we still wear face masks?” Hampton asked. “That is up to you all,” **Brown** replied. “I wear mine,” Hampton said. “I vote yes to that. But we have it now where people don’t wear them, so....” After a period of silence, Hampton added, “I’ll just wear mine.” “On one hand if you are going to consider a resolution and you are eliminating the mandate (by repealing the ordinance), but then again each person has their own opinion. Some have been vaccinated, and others have not, and some have had the virus and feel that they have the antibodies that protect them....it is your call as a board, but as far as from an administrative standpoint, I would like to return all the rest of city operations to what it was pre-COVID,” **Brown** replied. “I agree,” Hall stated. “City offices are about the only place that is not back to normal right now,” Councilman Ward Ketring said. “The courthouse is open, county offices, library, airport and county road department are all open.”

City Attorney Ray Curtis pointed out that the Taylor County court system is still conducting much of its business online using Zoom video conference software. **Brown** pointed out that many state offices are still operating remotely as well. “Don’t we have some responsibility to protect those who come in?” Hampton asked. “When I got calls from people, I let them know we were completing some renovations, and we had a few staff members with medical conditions that put them at greater risk so we were trying to protect them, most people understood. We are trying to respect privacy issues as well,” **Brown** said. “So far it is working well,” **Brown** added.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Perry News-Herald
May 14-15, 2021

City council split over spending reserves

In a split vote that highlighted a council divided over concerns about continuing to dip into dwindling cash reserves for non-budgeted items, the City of Perry recently voted to move forward with purchasing an estimated \$60,000 in replacement playground equipment at a local park. “All I can say is, ‘Lord help us,’” Mayor Alan Hall said following the city council’s 3-2 vote to pull an estimated \$60,000 from the city’s savings to fund two new pieces of playground equipment at Gerald B. Walker Park (formerly Jerkins Park) located on Warner Avenue. Hall and Councilman Mike Deming voted against the measure, pointing out that the City of Perry’s unrestricted cash reserves have steadily declined from \$16-17 million down to under \$6.5 million over the past 15 years and the city is now facing hundreds of thousands of dollars in unexpected costs associated with a pair of suspected sinkholes and other road repair issues.

Council members Shirlie Hampton, Venita Woodfaulk and Ward Ketrang voted in favor of pulling some \$58,000 from reserves to purchase and install the playground equipment. “When we do our budget and have trimmed everything we can and we don’t have a unanimous vote on that budget because we have to raise people’s stuff (taxes and utility rates) and our reserves are not there...it is a scary thing,” Hall stated. “We are going to have to, because our reserves continue to go down,” said Deming, who had previously joined Hampton and Woodfaulk in a 3-0 vote in favor of the expenditure at a prior meeting. “I pray that we will get the money from the rescue plan, and we can use pots of that money for lost revenue. I believe that will happen,” Hampton said, referring to the recently-passed federal stimulus plan referred to as the “American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.” “I sure hope so,” Hall said.

Hampton placed the item on the agenda at the city’s recent April 13 meeting, pushing the council to move ahead with the purchase “piggy-backing” off of a state contract bid, despite the fact that the estimated cost had risen from \$36,000 to \$58,000. City Finance Director Penny Staffney reported that the cost of installation and freight brought the total to \$58,097.74. Hampton supported going with another “much cheaper” quote with a company that offered some warranty and did not charge freight costs. “What I want is to get something out there for the children. They just need some playground equipment,” Hampton said. “I did call that finance director from Jacksonville Beach – which was the only Florida reference that company gave me – and he said they did not bid it out. It was three quotes, it was a cheaper playground set and quite frankly they lied about the delivery time. In hindsight he regrets doing business with them,” Staffney reported. “That is why you go with a company that has been around for decades.”

When Hampton asked about the cost of installation for the recommended bid, Staffney replied the company would charge \$17,000, not including the city’s cost of pouring some concrete and doing some mulching. “Is there any way we can authorize overtime to offset the \$17,000 installation cost?” Hampton asked. “We don’t want to install playground equipment and take on the liability,” **Brown** advised. “It would void the warranty if they could say we did one thing

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wrong,” Hall said. “It is the big reason playground equipment is so expensive,” **Brown** said. “I may have missed the discussion, but are we still talking about using reserve funds? Deming asked. “Because I would rather roll this into the next budget year and try to find the money when we do the next budget because I think this is a misuse of reserve funds.” “That is what I brought up at the last meeting. I am not against the playground equipment, but being less than six months from the end of the year and looking at the Center Street hole, the Folsom Street hole, spring hole – all non-budgeted items already – I would love to see us build it into the budget or see where we are when we are making the budget?” Hall said. “What did you all decide at the previous meeting?” Deming asked. “That they had already approved it, but it was just a matter of finding the right equipment,” Hall replied. “In the newspaper article a couple weeks back, they referenced that we used to have \$16-17 million, and now we are down to \$4-5 million. That is a lot of money. We just can’t keep using these reserve funds on things we want,” Deming said. “What if we use the reserve funds and then pay it back?” Ketring asked. “We haven’t been paying it back. That is the problem,” Hall said. “We never pay it back,” Deming added. “I don’t want us to get into that habit. Why not give it another month or so and get it in the budget somehow, some way and realize that is a commitment we are going to make. “I am really worried. We know what we face come budget time each year, and we know we have three big things that are undone to add to it. What are we going to cut when there is no more cutting to do?” Hall asked.

Hampton asked City Manager **Taylor Brown** if he had heard any update in federal stimulus funds that could be coming to the city. “I have not heard anything officially nor been given any notice by any higher level government entity about it as of yet,” **Brown** said. “So you all are saying you are changing your mind about the playground equipment?” Hampton asked. “I’ve never changed my mind,” Hall replied. “I am not saying that either,” Deming added. “So our children have to wait until October to get playground equipment?” Hampton asked. “There are six other parks that have playground equipment,” Hall said. “I don’t want to spend a dime on playground equipment right now.” “What kind of shape is it in now?” Ketring asked, expressing surprise to learn that the equipment had been removed. “I thought they were just taking pieces down,” Ketring added, before asking, “So why can’t we just put reserve funds back when we use them?” “Because we never do,” Deming replied. Hampton pointed out the city’s last official action was a 3-0 vote (with Deming, Hampton and Woodfaulk in favor) to purchase the equipment. “And two meetings before that we voted not to do anything until after budget time,” Hall replied. Staffney explained that if the equipment was ordered “tomorrow,” it would ship out in four weeks and then the company would have to line up a crew to install it. “Everyone is running behind. We would be pushing to get it in July, but the other company lied and were just telling us what we wanted to hear,” she added. “So we don’t need to vote on this?” Hall asked.

After some additional discussion, the council decided a vote would be needed to expend the estimated \$60,000 in funds for new equipment because the previous vote was to “move forward and “bring back a proposal.” **Brown** explained that the council never actually authorized a purchase “of this level” and staff would need a vote indicating council approval even though the city does not have to go out for bid due to piggy-backing on a state contract bid. After a motion to purchase by Hampton, Deming asked that the motion include how it would be funded. “We

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have lots of funds, but they have budgeted things assigned to them and none have a surplus, other than what is in savings. We can take it from the street department and do that much less paving or whatever,” Staffney said. “I just think we waited so long to get this replaced. It has been an issue for a while....years,” Woodfaulk said. “It has been over two years,” Hampton said, adding, “Just take it from reserves.” “The motion is to pay for it out of reserves,” Hall said, before calling for a roll call vote. Woodfaulk seconded Hampton’s motion, which passed 3-2 with Hall and Deming voting against.

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Perry News-Herald
April 29-30, 2022

City puts Super-Pufft ‘on notice’

The City of Perry is putting one of its largest employers and utility customers “on notice” that it must “tighten up” when it comes to unpaid bills and do a better job of addressing ongoing complaints from neighboring residents and the general public. Local manufacturer Super-Pufft Snacks was at the center of several complaints aired during Wednesday night’s city council meeting, including the fact the company is “consistently late” paying its city utility bill and currently has an account balance in excess of \$189,000. “They need to quit sponsoring race cars, pay their bills and clean up their act,” Mayor Alan Hall stated near the end of the meeting. “That will be my message when I meet with them on Tuesday next week,” City Manager **Taylor Brown** replied.

Those comments came after two local residents became the latest to raise noise, odor and property damage complaints with the council, followed by Councilman Ward Ketring pointing out that SuperPufft sponsored the secondplace finisher in Saturday’s NASCAR Xfinity Series race at Talladega while owing the city close to \$200,000 for utility usage. “Something else that bugged me a little is I started getting texts and social media posts about they (Super-Pufft) are a sponsor for a NASCAR race car,” Ketring commented. “I do not know how much that costs but...” In an April 12 announcement, Richard Childress Racing announced Jeffrey Earnhardt – grandson of seven-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Dale Earnhardt and nephew of Dale Earnhardt Jr. – would drive the legendary No. 3 car in the NASCAR Xfinity Series race at Talladega Superspeedway. Super-Pufft was announced as one of the new partners and had its logo featured on the rear quarter panel of the #3 car that placed second Saturday. In the past, the city council has fielded complaints from several neighboring residents who have reported offensive smells and loud noises associated with the local manufacturer, while others have appeared at city council meetings to request assistance after fencing has been repeatedly damaged by large delivery trucks turning around on private property after being mistakenly directed to small residential city streets by GPS instead of the plant’s main Hwy. 19 entrance.

At the city’s most recent April 27 meeting, Debra McGrew and sister Tammy Pridgeon shared several complaints, including: “the smell is out of this world” and “huge trucks coming through Church Street tearing down wires and fence.” “The police chief has numerous reports from residents, and I witnessed a truck running over a fence and just keep going,” McGrew said. “It is ongoing. I worked there for 17 years when it was Tom’s. We never had these complaints or problems. They have a noise problem that wakes you out of a dead sleep at 2-3 a.m. with some horrific banging....but no one ever called me back,” McGrew added. “We have children and people who work in the neighborhood. Something has to be done with SuperPufft,” McGrew stated.

Pridgeon told the council she has a child with severe anxiety who is “afraid to sleep in his room because he thinks something is coming through his window.” “I have recorded it at 2 a.m. and 4-

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5 a.m. and Saturday and Sunday. The refrigerated trucks sitting there all night, and it sounds like they are right in the yard all night and all weekend. They keep coming through the neighborhood, and I am afraid they are going to hit someone's child," Pridgeon stated. Both women described loud banging they attributed to delivery truck tailgates slamming shut after dumping loads of potatoes. "We have been having a lot of complaints with Super-Pufft we have been addressing lately," Hall said. "We are aware of a number of issues, and each time we are made aware of an issue we reach out and try to deal with the company as best as we can," **Brown** responded. "The smell and the wastewater issue is something we are working on with them. The trucks we have worked on in the past with the police chief. I have a meeting set up with the owner next Tuesday morning to address a number of issues. I will bring all these up," **Brown** stated. "You don't have to hear about it. You can come see for yourself," Pridgeon said, inviting the council to "come park in my yard" at her 406 W. Church Street address.

In response to a number of complaints over the past several months, Ketrington took to social media on the morning of April 27, sharing a photo of garbage surrounding an overflowing waste container at a former local motel currently owned by a company that provides contract workers to SuperPufft. "At today's 5:30 p.m. city council meeting, I'm taking this into the hands of the city council. This has been allowed to go on way too long and the normal channels of handling this eyesore and public health issue don't seem to be working. Please feel free to join us at the meeting this afternoon," Ketrington posted on his Facebook page. After the meeting, Ketrington posted another photo of the cleaned-up property and a new wooden fence, stating, "I'm happy to report that the hotel has made great strides today to clean the place up. I would like to take credit, however it was city staff that had the process already in motion."

City Code Enforcement Officer Bobby Counce commented he met "three guys from Super-Pufft there this morning" who "had a plan to start clean up." "This morning I planned to talk about the garbage issue at the hotel, but it looks like it is finally getting handled. I appreciate everyone who worked on that," Ketrington said at Wednesday's meeting. More than a week earlier (April 19), city officials issued a code enforcement violation to the owner (Super-Pufft President Mahmoud Amrouch) of the former Rodeway Inn located at 2238 Hwy. 19 South and scheduled a hearing before a special magistrate on May 2.

"Another Super-Pufft issue I wanted to ask about was the utility bills," Ketrington said. "Are they still where they were?" "I think you are referring to the fact that Super-Pufft generally runs....they pay late. Pretty consistently late, which a lot of businesses do, but they probably do so more than many others," **Brown** responded. "We have tried to be understanding with them over the past several years because they were a start-up company, trying to get plant up and running and they are a major employer. So, if we hold their feet to the fire, and we shut their water or gas off, it shuts their business down, they send employees home and it has a ripple effect," **Brown** explained. "I had to make an administrative decision to try and work with them – just like we do for other businesses and homeowners as well – when someone gets in trouble individually we sit down with them and work out a payment plan," **Brown** stated. "Super-Pufft has always eventually paid, and they have always paid rather hefty late fees as well. They are sitting at \$189,000 right now. That is their total balance. Typically about a third of that is current,

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a third is last month's and a third is the month before that," **Brown** said. **Brown** explained that the most recent bill brought the amount owed to \$226,000 before the city received a \$41,000 payment on April 11. However, new monthly usage charges and a \$4,139 late fee brought the total amount due back up to \$189,000. "Generally, they have been running a balance of \$175,000 to \$225,000," **Brown** informed the council "It is the equivalent of two to three months of usage, some of which is past due, plus late fees," he added. "So, they pretty much stay behind?" Ketring asked. "I would guess they have probably paid \$60-70,000 in late fees over the past year," **Brown** replied.

"I did meet with one of the owners three weeks ago and let them know about this situation – as well as several other issues brought up tonight and a couple more that have not been talked about tonight, but staff has been dealing with for a while," **Brown** said. "I told them that they need to tighten up and that I would be meeting with the main owner next Tuesday, and put them on notice that we are going to reduce the issues to writing, including what needs to be done, with dates and consequences if those dates are not met," **Brown** stated. "As Ms. McGrew may have said earlier – they seem to feel that because they are big and a major employer that they can do whatever they want and there is no consequences. And, I let them know in very frank terms the last time we met that is not the case," **Brown** said.

Lori Daniels-Messick asked if the company was still receiving a tax abatement and was told that it was from the county and not the city. She suggested the city approach the county about rescinding the tax incentive. "The city does not have any leverage like that," City Attorney Ray Curtis explained. The statute does not have any mandatory triggers. If the county puts conditions in the ordinance they adopted related to Super-Pufft, they could revisit that at any time they wanted and enforce it if there were any breach." After confirming the scheduled meeting with Super-Pufft Tuesday next week, Woodfaulk told **Brown**, "They need to know that this is it. This is it. There is no more playing. There are consequences behind it."

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Progress 2020 A guide to Perry and Taylor County
2020

City of Perry is developing long-term plans, vision

Now in his second year as city manager, **Taylor Brown** continues to facilitate the city council's development of a vision, as well as implementing a long-term plan for the City of Perry. **Brown** started his first year by speaking to (and listening to) local groups in the community and laying out a list of "values" for local community leaders and council members to prioritize. That effort continued in March as he introduced a list of "community values" and asked each city council member to identify and bring back their top priorities. "Embarking on this journey to determine our Perry community values will give us a deeper understanding of our community and help our future decision making," **Brown** said.

In addition to the effort to develop a list of community values, the City of Perry has undertaken or completed a number of other major projects in the past year. City staff has implemented a new online bill payment option now available for utility customers at [www. cityofperry.net](http://www.cityofperry.net). The City of Perry also recently purchased a new garbage truck equipped with an arm that enables workers to pick up customer's garbage containers. The city is also in the process of consolidating a number of different bank accounts, reviewing and updating its policies, reviewing and recodifying the City's Code of Ordinances, which includes updating, adding to or purging obsolete or conflicting laws, as well as hiring a firm to complete the process and provide online access. Other efforts include providing more transparency through online records and upgrading code enforcement efforts.

The city recently completed construction of the city's newest and largest wastewater treatment plant, a \$15 million project funded through a combination of loans and grants to be repaid using the City of Perry's portion of revenues from the local one-cent sales tax. The city is also currently seeking bids to upgrade its Water Well #3, which provides potable water for the city. The bids will be opened March 30. This will be the first in a multi-phase series of projects scheduled over the next five to eight years to upgrade the city's water supply, **Brown** said. Phase #2 will replace the water filters in what officials call Perry's "new" Water Plant, which was built in 1993. Phase #3 will include digging a new water well at a site yet to be determined. Finally, Phase #4 will be the construction of a new water plant to replace Perry's "old" Water Plant, which was constructed in the 1950s. "These major infrastructure projects are building the city's capacity for expansion. These are not particularly glamorous projects, but they are super necessary. The benefits down the road will come when the tax base increases, and that's when you can build the fun things -- recreation and parks -- amenities the community would like to see in the future," **Brown** said.

One of the other key undertakings scheduled for later this year, **Brown** said, is updating the city's comprehensive plan. "This plan sets out what the community wants to be some day. Where do we see Perry, as a community in the future? The comprehensive plans sets that out. When we have an idea of what we want to be, when it's a simple exercise of planning -- where we are

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today and what we want to be in the future,” **Brown** said. But, the key to building the plan will be getting input from residents, those who live in the city and those who live in the county. “This is your community and it’s my community now as well. Perry and Taylor County – we are one community. We are one community and we need to speak with one unified voice,” **Brown** added.”

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Perry News-Herald
July 27, 2018

Taylor Brown is top pick for city manager

With a 4-1 vote Tuesday, the Perry City Council selected **Taylor Troth Brown** as its choice to be the next city manager, authorizing Mayor David Sullivan and City Attorney Ray Curtis to initiate contract talks. “I would like to thank everyone who applied. It is remarkable we got down to two qualified applicants and we are blessed to have so many people who want to work here. It’s a great place to work. I am happy with that process and I’m ready to decide tonight,” Councilman Mike Deming said.

“I agree with everything you (Deming) said. I had a few concerns going into it with those two. But after my one-on-one with them and between that and the public interviews, I was satisfied with my concerns. I’m very satisfied with the applicants. I think they are fine men and will continue to do great and wonderful things. I do have one I will be supporting. I think they are both qualified, but one is even more qualified,” Councilman Alan Hall said. “I went back over everything today and even listened to the recording, and have my mind made up,” Councilwoman Shirly Hampton said.

“I would say the same thing. My mind is made up,” Councilwoman Venita Woodfaulk said. “We have got to get moving. The clock’s ticking. We’ve got employees we don’t want to let down, we’ve got citizens we don’t want to let down,” Deming said.

Following these opening comments, Deming then made a motion to offer the job to **Brown**. Hall offered a second. “Before we vote, I would like to say this -- when I spoke with the other candidate, Darren Fancher, I asked him what was the least amount he would take to come here and he said nothing less than \$120,000. For that reason, I am voting for Mr. **Brown**,” Hampton said. During the roll call vote, Woodfaulk was the only council member to vote against the motion, a move she explained later during the meeting. “I think I need to go on the record to explain why I said no to that person. My reason -- he has the credentials. Everything lined up where it needs to line up. To me, I feel like reference letters don’t lie. You have the newspaper in a meeting telling what’s going on. I have a co-worker from Trenton who was in the meeting. I feel like, to me personally, he is not a good fit for Taylor County. When you’re talking with person and the blame is always on another person and you still don’t have a reason why this actually happened. It is just not a good fit for me, and that’s why I voted that way,” Woodfaulk said.

Woodfaulk’s referenced a report out of Trenton, where **Brown** previously served as city manager. The incident occurred in the fall of 2014 during a council meeting in which members offered **Brown** a pay raise of one percent. Woodfaulk has previously referenced newspaper accounts of the meeting, which she said reported **Brown** having a “tantrum” and “walking out” of the meeting. **Brown** addressed the incident during his public interview with the council last Saturday, stating, “It wasn’t my finest moment.” **Brown** said he was “taken off guard” when the

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(Trenton) mayor offered him a “less than” one percent raise. “The newspaper described it as a tantrum. It wasn’t really. My feelings were hurt. It hurt my feelings greatly. I don’t think they fully realized (the amount) they were (or were not) offering. I explained that when I give someone a one percent raise, it’s to send a message that they need to do better. I asked if they were trying to send a message. I asked for a vote of confidence and all five confirmed me. It was a very different scenario than what was reported in the paper,” **Brown** said. He added that he did not storm out of the meeting or quit; “I worked for them for r them for two more years.”

On Thursday, City Manager Bob Brown stated he had reached out to **(Taylor) Brown** to let him know the council had selected him as its top candidate. “He was pleased and excited. The next step is the mayor and the city attorney will sit down with him to discuss an (employment) package,” (Bob) Brown said.

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Northwest Florida Daily News (Fort Walton Beach, FL)
August 22, 2017

Mary Esther council ousts city manager

Author/Byline: TONY JUDNICH

Mayor Chris Stein was enjoying his long-planned vacation at Disney World on Monday evening when he received a startling text from City Manager **Taylor Brown**. **Brown** stated that he had just been fired by the City Council, which had met without Stein for a budget workshop Monday. "I called him immediately," Stein said Tuesday. "I said, 'I'm getting ready to go on Dumbo. This has got to be a joke.' He said, 'This is no joke.' "

Councilman Jim Kitchens Jr. on Tuesday said he made the motion to fire **Brown**, who had been on the job for a little more than nine months. His motion was seconded by Councilman Danny Bennett. Mayor Pro Tem Charlotte McKamy, who was running the meeting in place of Stein, also voted to fire **Brown**. Councilmen Bernie Oder and Ron Stearns voted against the termination. The council also decided to postpone the budget workshop until 5:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Kitchens said his decision to seek **Brown's** termination was based on a combination of issues. For example, he said **Brown** did not return residents' phone calls, was absent from City Hall too often and seemed to work for the mayor rather than the council. Kitchens also said **Brown** failed to bring the city's department heads to budget meetings to discuss the new budget, and declined looking into Bennett's suggestion on how to cut \$60,000 from the spending plan. "Everything got rolled into one, and I made the motion" to fire **Brown**, Kitchens said.

Bennett, McKamy and **Brown** could not immediately be reached for comment Tuesday. Stein, who doesn't have a vote on the council, said he was "flabbergasted" about **Brown's** firing. "If I knew they wanted to fire him, I would have went to the meeting," Stein said. "I thought it would be just an ordinary budget meeting where they would try to balance the budget."

Stein said Bennett and Kitchens "weren't happy at all" after the council's Aug. 7 budget workshop, when a majority of the council approved controversial moves to help balance next year's budget. In late July, Stein had said the city had to figure out how to deal with a \$500,000 shortfall in its fiscal 2018 general fund. To help balance the budget, Stein and **Brown** favored deleting a few new vehicles and reducing the law enforcement services provided by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office rather than raising property taxes or closing the Mary Esther Public Library. The council voted 3-2 on Aug. 7 to decrease the Sheriff's Office services from the "enhanced" level — which basically provides one extra deputy who works solely for Mary Esther — to the basic level in place for unincorporated areas. That move is expected to save the city \$394,000. The library, meanwhile, could have almost \$384,000 in expenses in next year's budget.

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Bennett and Kitchens, who Stein has said "are friends with the sheriff," cast the two "no" votes Aug. 7 against cutting Sheriff's Office services. "It was a tough decision, but it was the right decision," Stein said Tuesday. "We still have Sheriff's Office services and we didn't have to close the library. It might take a bit longer (for deputies to respond) on non-emergency calls, but we get the same priority as the county (on emergency calls), and that service is great throughout the county." Kitchens disagreed. "The only thing (**Brown** and Stein) wanted to cut was the Sheriff's Office" budget, he said Tuesday. Before the Aug. 7 decision, Kitchens had questioned the need for the library and said the Sheriff's Office enhanced services were needed to better protect residents and businesses. And Bennett had said cutting law enforcement is not what residents want in this day and age.

As it stands now, the city must trim an additional \$120,000 to balance the budget without a property tax increase, Stein said. That might be done by deleting the purchases of one or two new vehicles and removing \$75,000 that was tentatively set aside for a full-time city planner, he said. Those issues will be up for discussion at Wednesday's workshop.

Mary Esther City Clerk Dana Williams said **Brown** started working as city manager early last November after having worked as the city manager of Trenton near Gainesville for the previous six years. His salary in Mary Esther was about \$83,000, she said. Stein said **Brown** had moved to Mary Esther with his family.

Williams is now serving as acting city manager. She will stay in that role until the council appoints a new acting city manager or hires another city manager. "We'll talk about this on Wednesday," Stein said. He noted that the city's first public budget hearing is Sept. 7. "Firing (**Brown**) is definitely not helping matters" as far as the city's new budget is concerned, the mayor said.

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Northwest Florida Daily News (Fort Walton Beach, FL)
July 28, 2017

Mary Esther dilemma: Raise taxes, cut law enforcement or close library?

Author/Byline: TONY JUDNICH

Boosting the millage rate, reducing law enforcement services or closing the local library are the city's three main options to balance its fiscal 2018 budget, Mayor Chris Stein said Thursday. "We have a half-a-million (dollar) shortfall in our General Fund budget, and we have to do something to fix it," said Stein, who has served as mayor of Mary Esther since April 2016. "We can nickel and dime the budget (to balance it). We only have a \$3 million budget." The new fiscal year starts Oct. 1. Stein said the city's money problems stem largely from years of poor financial planning. "We've been overestimating our revenues" such as property tax and state-shared revenues "and have been pulling money out of our reserves," said Stein, who added that the city's expenses have not really changed much. The city had roughly \$5 million in reserves about six years ago, but now has only about \$1.2 million, he said. Of the current amount, \$650,000 is in restricted reserves, meaning it can be used only for dire emergencies, such as paying for post-hurricane cleanups. "We have to build the reserves back up to about \$2.5 million," Stein said. "We're in a high danger area in terms of hurricanes. It wouldn't make sense to pull more money out of reserves." He also said that during the Great Recession, the city reduced the millage rate for fiscal 2009 to 2.69 mills (or \$269 per \$100,000 of taxable value) from the previous year's rate of 3.01 mills. The rate stayed above 2.6 mills until fiscal 2016, and currently is set at 3.88. "We kept it at 2.6 for too long," Stein said.

Options

He said City Manager **Taylor Brown**, who started late last year, is now trying to end the reliance on reserves. At last Monday's budget workshop, **Brown** and the City Council discussed various ways to help balance next year's budget. One way would be to increase the millage rate, Stein said. "If we bring it to 5.03, we could get about \$306,000 more income," he said. "That's politically dangerous, but it's an option."

Another option, he said, would be to decrease the level of law enforcement services that the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office provides to Mary Esther, which has about 3,800 residents. Next year's public safety budget currently is projected to total a little more than \$1.5 million. "We pay the same amount of tax money as the unincorporated areas for basic Sheriff's Office services, but also an extra \$395,000 for 'enhanced' law enforcement, which basically provides one extra deputy who works solely for Mary Esther," Stein said. "In our 2-square-mile area, he's supposed to be there all the time. But there's talk that we don't need that. We have a very low crime rate, and we might not need the instant response of a law enforcement officer." Each year since at least fiscal 2007, most of the calls for service in Mary Esther have been medical, according to city information. Stein said while response times likely would be slower in the basic service scenario, the city would save money.

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Another option to help balance the budget is to close the Mary Esther Public Library, which could have almost \$384,000 in expenses in next year's budget. But talk at Monday's meeting about possibly closing the library has caused a public uproar, Stein said. For example, the library staff posted a message on the library's Facebook page Wednesday that urged patrons to tell **Brown** and each council member that closing the facility "is not an option." Stein opposes closing the library. "We don't have a pool, tennis courts, ball field, a Fort Walton Landing or anything of any value," he said. "The only thing we have is the library. If we get rid of that, we might as well become unincorporated and let the county worry about our financial problems."

Stein, who does not have a vote on the council, said he and **Brown** favor using basic rather than "enhanced" law enforcement services and deleting a few new vehicles to balance the new budget without raising taxes. "The problem is, the council has two members who are friends with the sheriff," Stein said, referring to Councilmen Jim Kitchens Jr. and Danny Bennett.

Other views

Kitchens said a Mary Esther resident who attended Monday's workshop was the person who suggested closing the library. Regardless, Kitchens is fighting "tooth and nail" against any reduction in law enforcement services. "You need somebody (from the S.O.) here 24 hours a day in case something happens," he said. "We have six banks and multiple other businesses here."

Kitchens also said it takes seven employees to run the library, and seven for City Hall. "It doesn't matter if the library is open or closed or has reduced hours," he said. "Everyone (from each city department) is going to have to tighten their belts. How many people actually use the library?"

Bennett noted that the council has a ways to go before finalizing the budget. "You're always looking at cutting things," he said. But some city leaders "are trying to cut law enforcement, and that's not what citizens want in this day and age. No one wants to lose any jobs, and I definitely don't want to lose any (law enforcement) protections."

The council's next budget workshop is set for 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 7. Its first budget hearing is scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7, and the second and final hearing is set for 5:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 18. The meetings will be at City Hall at 195 Christobal Road N.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Gilchrist County Journal
November 18, 2015

Trenton City Manager resigns
By Carrie A. Mizell

Taylor Brown will step down from his position as Trenton City Manager at the end of this year. **Brown** submitted his letter of resignation to the Trenton City Commissioners over the weekend. “I simply feel that I have accomplished as much as I can for the City of Trenton, under its current political leadership, and that perhaps the best interests of the City would be served by a fresh face in the City Manager’s Office,” **Brown** stated.

In an e-mail he sent out to City of Trenton staff on Monday, **Brown** said he would not have been able to accomplish much of anything if it weren’t for all of the city staff. “You do all the real work, and you do it quite well,” **Brown** said. “I can’t tell you enough how much I appreciate each and every one of you. It has been a pleasure to work alongside of you over these past 5 1/2 years as we muddled our way through the great recession and a constant stream of everyday challenges. We’ve had our ups and downs, and it often felt like for every two steps forward, something would force us one step back. Even so, we managed to move the City forward by working together and being supportive of each other. I think it is fair to say that the staff working here today is very different than the staff I encountered on my first day in early 2010.”

Brown said he plans to take some time to consider his options after he leaves the city manager’s job. For now, **Brown** and his family will continue living in the City of Trenton.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gilchrist County Journal
September 3, 2015

City Commission agrees to millage reduction

By John M. Ayers

The Trenton City Commission held a budget workshop on Tuesday, Aug. 25 to discuss the 2015-16 General Fund budget. The City of Trenton is currently operating at a 3.1 millage rate. The five member commission listened as City Manager **Taylor Brown** gave some details about the rural community and the current state of the municipality. **Brown** then directed the Council's attention to a budget handout of the 2015-16 Trenton Fire Department. In fiscal year 2013-14 the Trenton Fire budget was \$79,116. In fiscal year 2014-15 the budget increased to \$103,077. The fiscal budget at this point in time is \$95,616 with an actual adjusted projected budget of \$108,088 for the remainder of this year. In 2015-16 the Trenton Fire Department budget is projected to be \$115,525. The city manager directed the council's attention to the three options that are identified in the budget worksheet. Option 1 gives the fire department a budget of \$115,525 with an additional \$12,448 in fire assessment funds. Options 2 identifies a budget of \$139,453 with additional revenues of \$36,375 from the approved fire assessment. Option 3 includes a budget of \$175,829 with revenues of \$72,751.

Trenton Fire Chief Keith Turner addressed the council to give details of the plans he and City Manager **Taylor Brown** had discussed for the fire department in the next fiscal year. The Trenton Fire Department is planning to step up their recruiting of volunteers and get more local people involved in the department's daily activities. Chief Turner explained the fire station will need two computers to allow the new volunteers to get training and certification faster on-line through the fire college. The fire chief will be working with local businesses to expand the recruiting of the department. "I wish you would choose Option 3 to allow this volunteer department to pay fire fighters for their shift time they spend in the department doing things that must be done," Chief Turner explained.

"I believe we need to give relief to the taxpayers in the City of Trenton," Mayor Glen Thigpen explained. The City of Trenton has been good to the Trenton Fire Department in recent years. The Fire Department has received budget increases annually to purchase equipment and other department needs. Mayor Thigpen proposed a millage rate of 2 mills for the 2015-16

Commissioner Randy Rutter proposed 2.2 mills with Option 1 involving the Fire Special Assessment. "I would like to see a blend of the fire assessment with a reduced millage rate, Rutter explained. Commissioner Everritt Heaton recommended the budget to be based on 2 mills with Option 1 for the Fire Assessment. Commissioner Craig Ruede explained he would like the City of Trenton to approve Option 3 for the Fire Assessment. "I think we should go all out and do full fire service in the City of Trenton," Ruede explained.

Mayor Thigpen asked the council for a verbal commitment of what they would like to see the city manager prepare a budget and bring back to the Commission in the next meeting. Randy

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Rutter specified 2 mills with Option 1. Everitt Heaton wants 2 mills with Option 1. Marcia Hellams expressed 2 mills with Option 1. Craig Ruede stated he wanted to adopt 2.5 mills with Option 3 for the Fire Service budget.

Commissioner Rutter made a motion to direct the city manager to prepare a budget based on 2 mills with Option 1 revenues for the Fire Service. Commissioner Heaton gave a second to the motion. The board voted 4-1 in favor of the motion. Commissioner Ruede voted no on the motion.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Gainsville Sun, The (FL)
June 2, 2015

Fire guts Masonic lodge in Trenton; suspect arrested

Author: Cindy Swirko

The Masonic lodge in Trenton was destroyed by fire and a suspected arsonist arrested Monday after he was seen taking pictures or video of the blaze, according to City Manager **Taylor Brown**.

Charged was Jonathan Harrell, who told police he had taken steps to become a Mason but quit the process when he was arrested on unrelated charges. A resident called 911 to report the fire about 4:19 a.m. at the lodge at 125 NE 2nd Ave. Trenton police arrived and saw what appeared to be white spray paint of the Masonic logo, stars and the words “truth not light of false” and “The Vigilant.” The Trenton officer photographed the graffiti before it was destroyed by the fire, **Brown** said in a press release.

Firefighters arrived and said they found the lodge fully engulfed in flames but worked to keep it from spreading to neighboring buildings. Officers said they spotted Harrell, who was wanted for another crime, photographing the fire amid a crowd of onlookers. Fire investigators determined the blaze had been set in the front hallway with flammable liquids. Harrell was later tracked down and interviewed. **Brown** said Harrell admitted to starting the fire.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gilchrist County Journal
April 2, 2015

City gives Cherry's Seafood OK on outdoor dining

By Cindy Jo Ayers

Jeff Cherry, owner of Cherry's Seafood and Steaks in Trenton, came before the City of Trenton Board of Adjustment to present plans for an outdoor dining room located next to the restaurant at the Board of Adjustment meeting held on March 24. The plan was approved by the Trenton City Commission, acting as the Board of Adjustment. The addition to the restaurant, which is located in downtown Trenton in the former Post Office building, calls for ten tables and a bar area with a maximum occupancy of 51 people. This additional outdoor area will have covered patio seating as well as bathrooms all located on the south side of the current building. The area will be completely fenced with a 6 foot tall perimeter privacy fence. The city commissioners reminded Cherry of the hours that the city has put in place for operation of an outdoor dining/bar area within the city limits of Trenton which are set at this time as 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. If there is any live band or music being played it would have to be stopped by 9 p.m. on weeknights and 11 p.m. on weekends. Cherry thanked the commissioners and everyone who worked to make this outdoor dining room a possibility in Trenton. City Manager **Taylor Brown** said, "I think it's an asset to the community."

The special exception petition for Cherry's Seafood and Steaks outdoor dining area passed unanimously. The Commissioners also held a Fire Assessment Workshop during the latter part of their regular meeting to discuss the possibility of moving forward with a fire assessment. Several of the commissioners felt that they did not have enough data to move forward on implementing the fire assessment due to a lack of data from the city staff. They asked several times what the new assessment was to be used for and requested a plan of replacement of equipment and trucks before they moved forward with the plans for a new fire assessment. The assessment fee of \$80 for every household in town was tossed around and several commissioners expressed concern that people who have never paid any type tax on their homes would not be happy to realize that they were now going to have a yearly fire assessment to pay.

Commissioner Randy Rutter expressed his concern that the city needs to put a high priority on water and sewer repairs and upgrades that are needed within the city. The city commissioners all agreed that volunteers that make up the Trenton Fire Department are doing a great job. Commissioner Everritt Heaton expressed his concerns that it is becoming harder and harder to recruit volunteer firemen due to all the training that is required now. City staff was directed to put the fire special assessment on the agenda as an action item for the April 28th meeting. During that meeting a vote could be taken to move forward with the Fire Special Assessment or to drop the idea. The City Commission have only one meeting scheduled for the month of April. It will be held on April 28, starting at 5:30 p.m.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cedar Key News
30 March 2015

QUILT FESTIVAL A SUCCESS
by DIANE CLIFTON

Starting with a cool overcast morning, and concluding in a bright sunny afternoon, the Eighth Annual Trenton's Suwannee Valley Quilt Festival, March 21, 2015, was bigger and better than ever before. Featuring 79 craft and food merchants, 20 quilt groups and numerous demonstrations, festival visitors enjoyed a special spring outdoor treat on Main Street.

New this year were special exhibits in the Florida Quilt Museum and new quilt display stands, built by students at Trenton High School, that allowed for up close inspection of quilting magic. Live entertainment (by Dave and Friends and the Suwannee River Sweethearts at the Depot, Pete Enroe near the Journal office, and John Orlando at City Hall), children's rides, classic tractors and cars, food and dancing, all added to the enjoyment. Casually sauntering up and down Main Street, visitors experienced a relaxing atmosphere full of amazing color and quilting excellence. Also adding to the festival experience this year were more colorful quilt blocks. At the heart of the Florida Quilt Trail, Trenton is proud to now showcase twelve quilt blocks painted by artist Janet Moses and Trenton's own Kathy Sausen.

Debbie Destin, owner of Destin's Dance Studio, talked to visitors from England and Australia who remarked on the Maypole Dance they witnessed at the festival, an event they had not seen in many years. Antique and craft sellers commented that shoppers this year seemed to be looking for different things from those who visited last year, and that sales were good.

Local restaurants, such as Hobo's, Cherry's and the Suwannee Rose Cafe, had waiting lines at the peak lunch hour, but were well prepared to serve guests. Servers at all of the local eateries hustled throughout the day to provide festival visitors with their offerings supplemented by nine festival food providers. Jeff Cherry, owner of Cherry's Seafood and Steaks on Main Street, commented, "I met a lot of good people-both from the festival staff and the new customers who came in today. This was my first year so I learned a lot about what to expect. I plan to become more involved in the festival next year."

Event executive director Pat Watson, and Trenton city manager, **Taylor Brown**, both commented that the festival ran very smoothly this year. As always visitor, merchant and quilters' suggestions will be considered in making improvements for next year's festival. Festival founder and quilt coordinator Stephanie Metts was very happy to see growing community support. "The Festival would not be possible without the many volunteers who generously give so many hours," she said. She observed that more help would be needed as the Festival continues to grow. Stephanie, who worked very hard to overcome serious injuries sustained last year, was once again fully engaged in the festival.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

This year's festival was sponsored by the City of Trenton, Gilchrist County's Tourist Development Council, the Suwannee Valley Quilt Shoppe, Ameris Bank, Drummond Bank, Capital City Bank, Sleep Inn & Comfort Inn Hotels, plus other businesses and individuals located in the tri-county area.

The Ninth Annual Trenton's Suwannee Valley Quilt Festival, Florida's only outdoor quilt show and sale, will be held Saturday, March 19, 2016 in the picturesque town of Trenton, Florida. Located in north central Florida just 20 miles west of Gainesville, Trenton will be festooned with quilts flying from shops, businesses and government buildings up and down Main Street and beyond.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Taylor T. Brown** is listed below.]
February 20, 2014

North Central Florida
Regional Planning Council
Meeting Minutes

Chair Nobles welcomed and introduced Allen Cherry, County Coordinator for Madison County, Timothy Bennett, City Manager for the City of Madison, **Taylor Brown**, City Manager for the City of Trenton, John Mayberry, Assistant City Manager for the City of Archer, Stew Lilker from the Columbia County Observer, Ann Marshall, wife of Council staff Tony Marshall and Marge Wirth, mother of Council staff Jean Strong.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jasper News, The (FL)
February 13, 2014

DEO pilot program underway in White Springs-Community partners join in

Author/Byline: Joyce Marie Taylor

On Saturday, Feb. 1, a host of city, county and state representatives turned out for the first public meeting of the Competitive Florida Partnership pilot program in White Springs. The town was selected as one of only four communities in the state to participate in the first year of the Competitive Florida Partnership Program in conjunction with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). The other three rural communities participating in the pilot program are the city of Port St. Joe, the city of Newberry, and Desoto County.

The Feb. 1 meeting inside Nelly Bly's Kitchen at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park was filled with introductions, presentations and idea-sharing, as well as a tour of the town's historic district and other sites within White Springs that are ripe for potential growth and development. "This is all about partnering for economic and community development," White Springs Mayor Helen Miller explained. Miller served as moderator and began by asking all in attendance to identify who they were, where they were from, and their connection to White Springs.

The state of Florida was represented by Julie A. Dennis, Community Program Manager, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Division of Community Development, along with Matt Preston, Sherri Martin and Valerie Jenkins, all from the DEO. From White Springs were Councilwoman Tonja Brown, Councilman Rhett Bullard, Administrative Assistant Anita Rivers, Town Manager Bob Farley and Police Chief Ken Brookins. Ivan Udell, who was born and raised in White Springs, was also in attendance. Udell explained he used to be an educator in Hamilton and Suwannee counties, but that he was called back to active duty with the U.S. Army in 2002. "I work at the Pentagon and I'm here to do anything I can to help," said Udell.

Steve Dopp from the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council was also in attendance, as well as Suwannee County District 4 Commissioner Phil Oxendine and **Taylor Brown**, the city manager of Trenton, who came to observe and learn. Others from Hamilton County included Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Coalition Executive Director Grace McDonald, Economic Development Authority Director Susan Ramsey, County Coordinator Louie Goodin and District 4 County Commissioner Randy Ogburn, who said he was born and raised in White Springs and has had a timber business for the last 30 years.

George Glover, town manager of Jennings was also on hand, along with Engineer Joe Mittauer (Mittauer & Associates), Edwin McCook, land manager for Suwannee River Water Management District, who explained he is an active member of the Suwannee Bicycle Association (SBA) and the Florida Trail Association, both headquartered in White Springs. The University of Florida was represented by Martin Gold, Director of the UF School of Architecture, and representing Florida State University Institute of Government was Diane Scholz. Sharon Shea, president of

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

SBA, explained that White Springs is an excellent town for eco-tourism, “but we need certain things,” she said, “like bedding, lodging and restaurants.” “As you can see, we have partners, not just in town and in the county, but tri-county up to Gainesville and Jacksonville, and actually outside the state, as well,” said Miller.

The purpose of the meeting was for all involved to better understand the project and to finalize the scope of the effort. After the introductions, the program was turned over to Julie Dennis, who explained what the Competitive Florida program was about. “This is a pilot initiative for us,” said Dennis. “White Springs has been enthusiastic about being one of our four guinea pigs in this effort. We want to work with you to better shape this initiative. The goal here is to create a technical assistance program that works for local governments.” Dennis went on to say that after working with White Springs community members, “Your enthusiasm is extremely contagious and it’s really fun to be here working with such passionate people.”

The presentation Dennis gave was informative and educational and it held everyone’s interest for hours, as she spoke about ways to bolster the economy and create jobs by garnering community interest and bringing in private investors. Grant monies from state and federal agencies, she explained, are available for some projects, but for a community to succeed they need to be proactive in bringing businesses and investors into their town.

Miller detailed past economic development efforts, a current self-assessment review, and a look at future prospects for the town of White Springs. After everyone devoured a delicious barbecue chicken lunch and raved about it afterward, it was time to discuss the building of a local team to put the pilot program in motion.

Later in the afternoon, those who wanted to were invited to join the mayor in a tour of the historic downtown area of White Springs, beginning with the tourism center that the town recently took over from the state park system to manage. Studio artist Wendy Jacobs is managing the center, which is in the process of being redecorated to fulfill the vision the town has for its function in the community. Then it was off to the Adams Country Store, the SBA and a walk around the block to view other historic sites before checking out the old library building, the old Carver School, and several other sites in and around the town, including the Interstate 75/CR 136 interchange.

Dennis said they have until June 30 to complete their community case study for White Springs. “Our work with White Springs extends beyond that,” Dennis assured everyone. Much work is yet to be done from now until June and will encompass meetings with all the community partners, as well as joint meetings with the other three pilot communities in the state.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gilchrist County Journal
January 10, 2013

Site plan for \$1.7 million project approved

By Carrie A. Mizell

On a recommendation from Trenton City Manager **Taylor Brown** and staff, the municipality's Planning and Zoning Board voted unanimously to approve a site plan for construction of a Family Dollar™ and McDonald's™ in downtown Trenton.

JJ Lamberson, of Twin Rivers Capital LLC, appeared before the Trenton officials on Tuesday, Jan. 8 seeking approval of Site Plan 13-01, which calls for a 10,924 square foot duplex-style commercial building on two parcels of land that together comprise an entire city block. The block, which boasts Trenton's historic May House, is formed by Wade Avenue (State Road 26) on the south, NE First Avenue on the north, NE First Street on the west and NE Second Street on the east. The \$1.7 million project will be constructed on property that is already designated Commercial space, and is currently used as the law offices of Ted Burt and Mark Feather. The application proposed demolition of the 3,231 square foot May House, which has stood in downtown Trenton since 1922.

"Staff has reviewed this development proposal in relation to these standards and has concluded that the application generally meets or exceeds the requirements of the Land Development Regulations and the Comprehensive Plan," **Brown** stated. "There are however several aspects of the development proposal that require special attention and/or action by the Board." **Brown** explained that parking could be an issue. The City's Land Development Regulations require a total of 61 parking spaces for the proposed development. The applicant requested a waiver of eight of these 61 parking spaces primarily due to lack of space on the development site itself and additionally seeks approval to construct 11 of the required spaces as on-street parallel parking spaces within the City's right-of-way adjacent to the development site. "As the two uses are co-located in one development site, there is an opportunity for shared parking," **Brown** pointed out. "Thus, a reduction in the total number of required parking spaces for the overall development is a reasonable request and a common practice with developments of this type."

In exchange for the City's consideration of allowing 11 of the remaining required parking spaces to be constructed within the City's right-of-way as on-street parallel parking, the applicant agreed to develop these parking spaces in a manner that replicates the streetscaping that the City's Community Redevelopment Agency previously developed on NE First Street. This streetscaping will occur along the entire length of the property's northern and eastern boundaries, which face the Trenton United Methodist Church and First Baptist Church, and will include parking spaces that are paved with brick, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, lamp posts and landscaping including street trees.

Brown pointed out that city staff spent a great deal of time considering the ingress and egress of the proposed development, particularly in reference to automobile traffic entering and exiting the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

site from State Road 26. “Public safety is of paramount importance,” **Brown** stated. “For this reason, staff has given careful consideration to the design and layout of the proposal.”

Additionally, city staff sought and received input from the applicant’s engineering firm, CPH of Tampa, the city’s engineering firm, Mills Engineering Company of Chiefland, as well as from the Florida Department of Transportation. CPH of Tampa conducted a traffic engineering field study of the subject property’s location and captured data related to traffic counts, flows and distributions. After careful analysis, it was determined that the roads currently servicing the property are adequate and a turn lane off State Road 26 into the development will not be required.

Over the last year, city staff has worked closely with the applicant to conceptualize an architectural rendering that is sensitive to the historical context of the property’s location, while at the same time recognizing the development’s need for a fully-functional, modern commercial facility capable of achieving financial success.

JJ Lamberson, who owns Twin Rivers Capital, LLC, a Charleston, South Carolina based development company, explained that a McDonald’s™ and Family Dollar™ facility like the one proposed for Trenton was recently built in Branford and has been very successful. The exterior of the Trenton facility will be made of alternating brick and stone of various colors and textures, including contrasting bricks. “These are utilized to lessen the scale of the building and increase its harmony with surrounding property uses,” **Brown** stated. “A major accomplishment of the building’s design is that all four sides of the building will be constructed with masonry products of high quality, not just the front elevation of the structure as is so commonly the case these days.” Lamberson explained that local subcontractors will be hired for construction of the facility, which will provide local jobs for several months, in addition to the 60 jobs that will be available at McDonald’s™ and Family Dollar™.

As for city services, **Brown** indicated that the increase in water, sewer and solid waste needs for such a large facility can currently be met by the city with no problem. The applicant will include construction of a sub-surface water management system engineered to contain storm water runoff, so the development is not expected to adversely impact public drainage systems. Several Trenton residents attended the planning and zoning board meeting to speak out against the development, citing a negative impact to neighboring homes. “I think you’re starting something that will be the downfall of this town,” one woman, who lives on Second Avenue said. A number of people spoke in favor of the project and the jobs, tax revenue and business it would bring to the Town of Trenton. “I’ve been on the council for eight years,” said Mayor Glen Thigpen. “We’ve been trying to revitalize the downtown area with new businesses for a long time. I think this project being so close to downtown will be an advantage, and it may stem economic development in downtown Trenton, near the traffic light.”

Discussion continued for nearly two hours before the planning and zoning board members voted unanimously in favor of the project, on a motion from Tim Kinsey and a second by Arlene Wilks

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Columbia County Observer
July, 26, 2012

North Florida Broadband Authority: Two cities say "no mas." Refuse free tower space to NFBA

By Stew Lilker

Wireless broadband represented by a plug.

The North Florida Broadband Authority, an Obama stimulus program that has been racked by charges of waste, fraud, and abuse; has gone through multiple engineering firms, law firms, lawyers, accounting firms and accountants; has performed at least three rate studies; has a partner that has also received a Rural Utility Service (RUS) loan; is and has been under investigation by the Office of the Inspector General of the Dept. of Commerce; has a \$200k plus anointed prima donna general manager with zero communication industry experience; a project manager who has had badges of fraud pinned on him by a Federal Judge; (there is more); is a year behind schedule in deploying its \$30 million wireless broadband network; and has a reputation that precedes itself. This secretive organization recently came before two small Florida Cities to ask for free tower space so it and its partner, Main Street Broadband, could make money, while at the same time competing against private industry.

Recently, the small Florida cities of Starke and Trenton joined Taylor and Bradford Counties, and the city of Perry in rejecting the North Florida Broadband Authority (NFBA). The NFBA retinue traveled to Starke and Trenton under the cover of darkness to present the NFBA program and ask for free tower space. Neither the NFBA, nor the NFEDP/FSU's (North Florida Economic Development Partnership/Florida State University) Hendry reveal to the general public or media the dates and times of their presentations beforehand. The \$80k a year NFBA Board Clerk, along with the NFBA Board's Vice Chair, Cedar Key's Pat O'Neal, have claimed time and again that nobody tells them where and when these presentations will occur. General Manager Sucara, who has been known to suffer from stage fright, did not show up at either Starke or Trenton. The NFBA's Project Manager, Donny Lort and the NFBA's Chairman, Tommy Langford of Gilchrist County, made the presentation at Starke. GM Sucara was scheduled to be there, but never made it. At Trenton, Mr. Lort, Mr. Langford and the NFEDP/FSU's Hendry made the presentations. FSU's Hendry claims to do the NFEDP's work free of charge.

The American people pay \$10,000 a month to Mr. Hendry for his services as part of the NFBA grant. This money is funneled through the North Florida Economic Development Partnership directly into the coffers of Florida State University. Additionally, the NFEDP is supported by numerous member counties in north central Florida. That money is also channeled into FSU.

Starke and Trenton: They did their homework

Starke City Hall

The NFBA came before both Starke and Trenton and asked for free tower space. This space was going to be subleased to its partner, Main Street Broadband for nothing, or so the NFBA

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

claimed. As the presentation opened in Starke, NFBA Board Chair Langford told the City, "One thing that makes ours [the NFBA network] unique is a lot of your providers are fiber-optic and it's very expensive to lay it and service it. Ours is wireless, so it's very more economical and we can send a signal without having to have right-of-way issues and laying cable and all that kind of stuff." As Mr. Langford addressed the City Commission, the NFBA was finalizing a request for bids for fiber, which eventually came in at \$4.5 million dollars. This was not part of the original grant application nor was it mentioned during the presentation.

City Attorney Terrance Brown complained that he just received the lease that afternoon. He asked, "I notice you value the use of the tower at \$2250 per month. Are you willing to pay the city \$2250 a month for the tower space?" The NFBA's Lort: That \$2250 was valued by the federal government through a study. So that's what the federal government credits us towards our match. That's not what you would pay in this area. As a matter of fact, some of our leases are around \$1700 on commercial towers. Attorney Brown: The City finds itself in a financial position where they just can't give away things anymore. Are you willing to lease it for a fair market value? As Mr. Lort stumbled, Mr. Langford jumped in: That's something we would have to present to the board. You know – what our options would be and how valuable it would be. In other words, would the return be beneficial to us.

Attorney Brown: I did notice that you had a provision in there where you could turn around and sublease access to the tower to your last mile provider. But whatever they paid you, you would keep 100% of the profits from that. Mr. Lort claimed that any money derived from subleasing belonged to the NFBA.

Trenton: Problems with the concept and the lease

Trenton Mayor Glen Thigpen asked the NFBA Trenton team of Mr. Lort, Mr. Hendry and Mr. Langford: Are we providing for a commercial business to come in and make money off the city of Trenton? NFBA Chairman Langford invited Trenton to join the NFBA: I understand your point. We have a tower here; we're allowing commercial industry to come here and do business on this tower. Mr. Lort explained the disadvantage of not having high speed internet. He told the Trenton City Commission: Businesses may leave because they don't have high-speed Internet here... A lot of houses don't get bought because they don't have high speed internet. NFEDP/FSU's Hendry joined the chorus: I go around this country, literally around the world and try to recruit business and industry to come to north central Florida. One of the first questions I get is, what's your telecommunications infrastructure? Mayor Thigpen told the NFBA team that Trenton already has high speed internet service: One of the reasons I moved into town was high-speed Internet and that was 10 years ago. I'm missing the idea that our residents in Trenton have not had high-speed Internet, because we have. NFBA's Langford: You may have Internet service, but what kind of service? Mayor Thigpen told him, "I think our residents have high-speed Internet as a rule." Mr. Lort shot back, "I challenge you with that... I mean the federal government defines high-speed as 768. That's dial-up speed." Mayor Thigpen told Mr. Lort: I know the difference between the speeds.

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Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Trenton is served by AT&T. Trenton's residents can stream video and watch movies if their pocket books are agreeable. After being repeatedly interrupted by Mr. Lort, the Mayor said, "We're not here to oppose you, but we have revenues and we have infrastructure that belongs to the citizens of our town. We don't want to see the revenues go away. We don't want to see the infrastructure used if it's not going to truly benefit those people and have some return on investment."

Main Street Broadband

Trenton City Manager **Taylor Brown** filled Mr. Lort and Mr. Hendry in on the history of Main Street Broadband and the NFBA. He told them that Main Street Broadband did come before the Trenton City Commission [a couple of years ago] and they tried to rent the City water tower knowing that the NFBA was coming: We hesitated to jump on board, because we didn't want to do anything that might negate the authority using our in-kind asset. We did that as a courtesy and in hindsight, we did that at our own peril financially, because they went down the street to Fanning Springs and signed a lease with them. Fanning Springs collects \$510 a month from Main Street Broadband for being on their water tower. So that's \$6000 a year of lost revenue had we not first been looking after your interests. So keep that in mind... And as some of our commissioners have noted... AT&T already provides us pretty good service.

The Lease

As in Starke, Trenton received the NFBA lease at the last minute. Again, there was a question regarding the term of the lease. Was the NFBA asking for a 20 or 50 year term? City Manager **Brown** said the NFBA asked for "a 50 year commitment with four additional automatic renewals for successive 50 year renewal terms. That's a total of 250 years." City Manager **Brown** said that contrary to Mr. Hendry's earlier remarks that the lease was revenue neutral, it was not. "Your lease specifically states that the lessee may elect to sublease the portion of the premises to the last mile provider and the proceeds from any such sublease shall belong solely to the lessee [the NFBA]. Mr. Lort said the NFBA sent the wrong lease.

After some conversation Mayor Thigpen weighed in, "I am extremely concerned about leasing to someone, who has the ability to then sublease to a last mile provider. It goes back to my original concern that we're using the assets of the citizens of Trenton to service a commercial business." City Manager **Brown** closed out the conversation with the NFBA. "Well, it's incredibly frustrating to me to review a 27 page lease with all kinds of legalese, that's very strongly written towards one side, only to then have them say -- that's not the one we're supposed to be looking at now." Like Starke, Trenton turned the lease over to their attorney for his evaluation and recommendation.

Epilogue

Brief conversations this week with representatives from both Starke and Trenton revealed that the NFBA issue has not been rescheduled and that it is not expected to be rescheduled anytime soon in either city. At 12:30 pm today, the NFEDP/FSU's Hendry told the attendees at an NFEDP meeting, "There is a lot of misinformation being spread about the NFBA."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gainesville Sun, The (FL)
November 17, 2009

Gilchrist gives approval to aviation community

Author: Anthony Clark

It will have 624 homes, a runway for small planes and a golf course.

Gilchrist County commissioners unanimously approved an aviation community of up to 624 homes, a 5,000-foot runway for residents to land small planes and an 18-hole golf course of more than 815 acres. Oak Tree Landing is proposed as a high-end second-home community that would offer maximum tax revenues to the county since most of the homes would not be homesteaded. It overlaps Gilchrist and Alachua counties between Newberry and High Springs with a bulk of the development in Gilchrist.

The development initially faced opposition concerning urban sprawl from Gilchrist County planning staff and the state Department of Community Affairs after Fort Lauderdale-based Stiles Corporation brought it to the county two years ago. The property is in a rural agricultural area far from city infrastructure such as water and sewer. Over the past year and a half, Stiles revised its plans to address many of the concerns. During that time, the county also underwent a series of public meetings to discuss how to direct future growth, out of which came a proposal for a comprehensive land-use plan designation called a Rural Florida Destination Village that sets rules for how Oak Tree Landing and similar proposals would be developed. The revised Oak Tree development and comp plan designation call for central water and sewer, preserves 70 percent of the property for open air uses such as recreation or agriculture, will cluster a majority of the homes within walking distance of a town square of commercial uses, with 20,000 to 100,000 square feet being commercial. Most of the residences are clustered in the northwest of the property around an airstrip that once housed Rudy's Airpark. About 160 acres are on the Alachua County side and will include part of the golf course and six estate homes allowed within the existing agricultural zoning of one home per five acres.

Gilchrist County Planning Director **Taylor Brown** said Alachua County planners expressed concern about traffic on County Road 232, with about 80 percent of vehicle trips expected to go to the closer cities in Alachua. **Brown** said the developers would be faced with paying proportionate fair share for road improvements once the development stage begins. Some residents at Monday's meeting expressed concerns about safety on a curve in the road nearby, including a firefighter who said there have been fatal wrecks there.

Of 13 residents to speak Monday, seven were in favor of the project and six were against it or expressed concerns. Those in favor touted the need for jobs and tax revenues, saying it was a quality development. Project Manager Cary Goldbert estimated the development would directly employ 150 people. Concerns included a lack of guarantees, also cited by the DCA, that the homes would be second homes that wouldn't be more of a tax burden than a tax benefit. Stacey Hart said her home is at the end of the runway and she is concerned about noise, especially from

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

6- to 10-seat jets that would be allowed to land while she is teaching kids horseback riding. She said she was also concerned about her property's value. "Who wants to live at the end of a runway?"

Commissioners approved comp plan amendments that create the designation and approved the Oak Tree project. The amendments will not be official, however, until an overdue evaluation of the county comp plan is approved by the DCA, according to County Attorney John McPherson. He said the DCA can either set the amendments aside until the evaluation is approved, or will more likely require the commission to re-adopt the amendments.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gainesville Sun, The (FL)
July 15, 2009

Wal-Mart loses bid to build new store

Author/Byline: Anthony Clark

The company wanted to build a Supercenter on Northwest 34th Street. Wal-Mart was shot down in its fourth attempt in six years to build a new Supercenter in northwest Gainesville to replace the store on Northwest 13th Street. The latest attempt was on a 35-acre site in the 5800 block of Northwest 34th Street off U.S. 441, where the retail giant was proposing a 186,000-square-foot store, an attached garden center and two retail outparcels. Gainesville's Development Review Board, an appointed citizens advisory board, voted 4-3 Thursday to deny the application, saying it didn't comply with the city's comprehensive plan for "mixed use 2" land use. Asked whether Wal-Mart would try to submit new plans for the site, spokeswoman Cindi Marsiglio said, "We're evaluating our options."

If Wal-Mart still wants to build on the site, it must now begin the application process anew. At issue was whether the store was close enough to the road, and whether the design was pedestrian-friendly and connected with the adjacent Northwood neighborhood. At a May 14 hearing, board members asked Wal-Mart to address those issues and return in July. Wal-Mart came back with a plan that added sidewalks and gazebos. City planning staff recommended approval of the application - with some conditions, including that a two-way drive be replaced with a green park. Wal-Mart also proposed two outparcels close to the road. Planning staff said it was up to the review board as to whether that met setback requirements for the store. Three board members who voted against the plan did not return calls Tuesday afternoon.

On May 14, board Chairman Joshua Shatkin and Vice Chairman **Taylor Brown** expressed concerns about the setback. **Brown** said that building up to the road and eliminating outparcels would add parking and provide a buffer between the store and residential areas, according to minutes of the meeting. City Planning Manager Ralph Hilliard said in April that the question was whether there were enough outparcels built along the street frontage for the plan to comply, and it was his opinion that it did. Board member Clay Sweger voted Thursday to approve the plan. "In my opinion, the project had met the zoning regulations and the code criteria," he said. "This is not whether or not you support Wal-Mart as a business. The role of the Development Review Board is strictly limited to compliance to the code and comp plan," Sweger said. Sweger said he believes the board members who voted against the plan, although disagreeing, also were considering its adherence to land-use rules. City economic development director Erik Bredfeldt said, "They did some of the things they were asked to do and asked to look at, but in the final analysis I don't think it rose to the level the board was comfortable with." "The general sense is they were hoping the petitioner would have been a little more creative in their design of the site," he said.

Wal-Mart opened a Supercenter off Waldo Road last year with the same land-use zoning. There was little discussion about the appropriateness of that development in an east Gainesville area

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

with little new commercial development. City Commissioner Scherwin Henry, whose district covers both locations, spoke in favor of Wal-Mart's latest plan, saying it would provide needed jobs for the residents of his district. "In my short tenure as city commissioner, we have opportunities that come before us and it seems as though we will talk ourselves out of taking advantage of opportunities instead of looking at ways to make it work," he said by phone Tuesday.

Henry also said there is an anti-Wal-Mart sentiment at play. "There's this underlying feeling of not wanting Wal-Mart to take over the city. As a commissioner, it bothers me, because there's not much private development in my district. Wal-Mart built that store (in east Gainesville) and has been a good corporate partner to the community."

John Hudson, who owns a home in the nearby neighborhood, often represents property owners in the development process and spoke against this plan. "I'm not an anti-Wal-Mart individual, but I am anti-big box if the big box developer doesn't want to comply with Gainesville codes and land development regulations," Hudson said. He said he also was glad that rejecting plans for the Supercenter would keep Wal-Mart alive in the old Gainesville Mall area. "I sure don't want that one to go dark because that would just kill the 13th Street activity area," Hudson said.

Henry said Wal-Mart does not own the building on 13th Street and the building doesn't meet Wal-Mart's current store model.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gainesville Sun, The (FL)
March 6, 2008

An aviation community is being proposed on land straddling the Alachua and Gilchrist County line.

Author/Byline: NATHAN CRABBE

An aviation community proposed at the Alachua and Gilchrist county line would include 624 residences built around a runway, allowing residents to fly small planes to their second homes. But Gilchrist County Planning Director **Taylor Brown** is recommending against a comprehensive plan change that would allow the project. The project would put Gilchrist County's largest-ever single development in a rural area far from infrastructure and emergency services, he said. "It would essentially be creating a new town," he said.

Oak Tree Landing is planned on 815 acres across from Watson Farm on County Road 232, between High Springs and Newberry. Called an aviation or fly-in community, the project would include aviation facilities, an 18-hole golf course and a commercial development with small businesses. The developer is seeking a comprehensive amendment and other land-use changes in Gilchrist County to allow 594 residences on the more than 650 acres that fall within that county. The county's planning commission is scheduled to consider the proposal March 24. Alachua County is expected in the next two months to separately consider a plan for the remaining 161 acres, which would include 30 homes, seven holes of the golf course and most of a driving range. Project manager Cary Goldberg said the project would boost property tax revenues and provide businesses such as a grocery and gas station in an area where few exist. He said the development will cater to those wealthy enough to own small planes that can cost at least \$1 million. "We're trying to create a high-end, luxury, highly amenitized community," he said. "It will probably cater more to the second-home lifestyle." The property already includes a closed airstrip called Rudy's Airpark along the Alachua and Gilchrist county line, which Goldberg said the Federal Aviation Administration has already approved to be paved. The runway would be moved within Gilchrist for the project and taxiways would be built to allow residents to drive planes directly to their homes. Homes would be built with hangars in the back that blend with the structure and could be used for purposes other than storing planes, Goldberg said.

There are more than 40 aviation communities in Florida, said David Edwards, a real estate broker who specializes in selling aviation property. One of the most well-known is Jumbolair Aviation Estates near Ocala, which includes actor John Travolta among its residents. Edwards said the communities allow pilots the convenience of flying directly home and save them the cost of paying for an airport hangar. "In Florida, particularly because of the weather, it's quite an attractive proposition for pilots," he said. Edwards said the Gilchrist County area has a handful of small communities based around airstrips, but nothing to the scale of the Oak Tree project. The project would fall just under the 625-residence threshold for being a development of regional impact, which is a large-scale development needing state approval.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Brown said he's concerned that Gilchrist County last updated its comprehensive plan about a decade ago and is just starting to go through the process again. He said he would rather have the community first go through the update, rather than see individual changes approved that could set a precedent. "This is not the type of development that you can undo once you start it," he said.

Alachua County is separately considering its portion of the plan. Principal planner Steve Lachnicht said the county will consider the cumulative traffic caused by the entire project but otherwise view it as a separate plan. "On the Alachua County side, it's a 30-lot project and that's what we're looking at," he said. The project would not require land-use changes, so it would not require the approval of the planning commission or County Commission. Lachnicht said the county would be able to comment on any Gilchrist County compromise plan changes before they receive final state approval.

Given **Brown's** recommendation against the change, Goldberg said he isn't sure whether the project will move forward as planned or changes will be made. He said the project would include a donated site for a fire station and would be second homes that don't need schools, so he disputed a characterization of the development as a new city. "That is a word that makes it seem like you're putting this metropolis out there," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Taylor Troth Brown
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Winchester Star, The (VA)
May 1, 2002

Law aimed at helping county workers find affordable homes

Author: HEATHER GREENFIELD

With the average Arlington County home costing \$263,000, the price tag is often beyond the reach of county government workers. That could change under a pilot program to give county workers grants to help with closing costs. "The county has taken what I think is a creative step to try to resolve that issue," said Gov. Mark R. Warner, who came to Arlington on Tuesday for a ceremonial signing of the Live Where You Work bill.

The details are still to be determined, but the idea is to start July 1 and give about two dozen county employees or school teachers up to \$2,600 toward closing costs. One potential recipient was at the ceremony: an employee who commutes about 40 miles to his job in Arlington from Fauquier County.

Urban planner **Taylor Brown** and his wife used to walk to their jobs in Fauquier, and would like to find housing in Arlington where they can walk to work, shopping and the Metro subway, but **Brown** said they are experiencing "sticker shock." "The price of a town house in walking distance to a Metro is a half million dollars," **Brown** said. "We're both county employees. We can't afford that. This is a step in the right direction."

County Board Chairman Christopher Zimmerman acknowledged the \$60,000 pilot plan will not reverse the housing crunch caused by short supply and high demand. "It will be a start," Zimmerman said. "It's not a solution to the problem, it's just one tool." Officials hope the grants improve recruitment and retention of employees.

Fairfax County and Alexandria have expressed interest in creating a similar employee benefit, but Arlington got Del. Robert Brink, D-Arlington, to sponsor legislation for just the county because a broader program would be too controversial among legislators.

Former Gov. Jim Gilmore vetoed the legislation in 2000 because he was concerned that if all 6,000 Arlington employees received the maximum benefit, it would be too much of a tax burden.

Completed by: Shannon Farr
 Colin Baenziger & Associates



Section 5

Michael C. Hein

Cocoa Beach

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

July 27, 2025

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my interest in the position of City Manager for the City of Cocoa Beach. This opportunity excites me both personally and professionally. With over 30 years of public service experience, I bring a depth of leadership, innovation, and proven results that I believe align well with the City's current and future needs.

Throughout my career, I have served communities of varying sizes, from small towns to large urban centers. While at the City of Tucson, AZ—one of the largest municipalities in the region—I oversaw a \$1.2 billion budget and a workforce of 5,600 employees. My experience spans nearly all facets of municipal management, including collective bargaining, intergovernmental relations, disaster response, capital project oversight, community revitalization, and long-term financial planning. I have consistently been recognized for competency, creativity, and a steady, results-oriented leadership style.

The role of City Manager demands more than operational knowledge—it requires vision, diplomacy, and an unwavering commitment to public service. Cocoa Beach stands out to me as a community of engaged citizens who value civil discourse and share a collective focus on quality of life for future generations. I've long held the belief that our work in government should leave communities better than we found them, and I sense that ethos is woven into Cocoa Beach's identity.

Over the years, I've developed a reputation for finding elegant solutions to complex challenges. I understand that even the best-laid plans can be disrupted by day-to-day demands, and I've helped organizations remain mission-focused despite competing pressures. As City Manager, I see it as my responsibility to help elected officials, staff, and the public stay aligned on long-term priorities while navigating short-term concerns with clarity and purpose.

Equally important is the investment in an organization's greatest asset—its people. The City's frontline employees are the face of local government, and I am committed to supporting a motivated, well-trained, and empowered workforce. While public-facing duties like chamber events and civic meetings are essential to relationship-building and brand stewardship, I also believe in being an accessible and supportive leader to internal teams.

Section 5

Personally, I am approachable, collaborative, and driven by curiosity. I believe in the power of respectful dialogue and inclusive leadership. I would be honored to bring my experience and energy to Cocoa Beach, a city that offers natural beauty, a strong community identity, and an organization that aligns with my values and leadership philosophy.

I welcome the opportunity to further discuss how I can support your vision for the city and contribute meaningfully as your next City Manager. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Hein', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Hein

Michael C. Hein, ICMA-CM

PUBLIC-SECTOR LEADER



Management executive with more than 30 years' experience strengthening and growing public-sector organizations. Successful track record of developing and executing **multi-year strategic plans** requiring extensive collaboration and consensus building. Highly skilled at navigating disparate stakeholder landscapes and identifying **innovative, integrated solutions**. Expertise in planning, financing and construction of **major capital projects**. Ability to nurture communities' natural strengths and diversity while significantly elevating quality of life. Enthusiastic mentor and talent cultivator who **fosters leadership and career growth** in others. Extensive appreciation of the human spirit and the art of active listening.

EDUCATION

MASTERS PUBLIC ADMIN

University Arizona - Tuscon
1991

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & POLICY ANALYSIS and POLITICAL SCIENCE

University of Wisconsin -
Stevens Point
1988

CONTINUING ED

HARVARD UNIVERSITY JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Senior executive program for
state and local government
leaders
2001

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CITY MANAGER

City of Groveland | 2017 - present

Overall operations responsibility for one of the fastest-growing communities in Central Florida.

- Drove city rebranding initiative to better reflect community's commitment to environmental stewardship and managed growth.
- Led efforts to attract 4M+ square feet of commercial and industrial development and thousands of new jobs.
- Spearheaded effort to persuade Florida Department of Transportation to fully fund unplanned major transportation infrastructure project.
- Oversaw development of Master Utility Plan, Master Park Plan, complete revision of Future Land Use Plan, Comprehensive Plan and new form-based Development Code, all leading to the adoption of a new 10-year Strategic Plan.
- Successfully negotiated new Consumptive Use Permit providing for the assurance of water supplies to support future growth while eliminating need for \$4.5M capital investment.
- Received more than \$100M in grants and aid for capital facilities.

ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER

City of Longboat Key, FL | 2015 - 2017

Supported Town Manager with day-to-day operations and long-range strategic planning of barrier island community. Developed, enhanced and sustained relationships with key partners. Managed interdepartmental efforts addressing community concerns. Represented the town in negotiations with partners and resolved conflicts within the organization.

- Championed \$13M beach renourishment project, wrapping ahead of schedule and under budget.
- Served as liaison with environmental community and implemented new ordinances to support protected nesting turtles and shore birds.
- Deeply involved in \$50M project to relocate underground utilities and provide new fiber optic network financed through special assessment bonds.
- Coordinated efforts of Commission-appointed committee to review and recommend changes to town charter.
- Partnered with Fire Chief to address aging facilities and develop recommendations for remodeling and new construction.
- Facilitated strategic planning sessions with employees and initiated programs and policies to enhance work environment.
- Developed and coordinated approach to public outreach and communication for capital improvement projects.

M. HEIN P/2

DIRECTOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Pima County, AZ | 2009 - 2015

Coordinated and directed the planning, organization, control and implementation of local emergency management activities involving preparedness, mitigation and recovery. Served as liaison with federal, state and local agencies, fire districts, law enforcement and regional partners. Worked extensively with community stakeholders to ensure engagement in public service projects.

- Oversaw design and construction of \$36M new emergency operations center.
- Facilitated intergovernmental agreements with more than 50 agencies including two native nations.
- Drafted governance for \$63M regional wireless public safety interoperability system.
- Developed and fostered relationships with key federal and state agencies and private-sector partners to collocate during emergencies and share resources and common operating procedures.
- Coordinated emergency operations centers in the immediate aftermath of the attempted assassination of Congresswoman Giffords.
- Nationally recognized for initiating "whole community" approach by integrating faith-based communities in preparedness models.

CITY MANAGER

City of Tucson, AZ | 2005-2009

Served as city's Chief Operating Officer reporting to the Mayor and Council. Responsible for the administration of full-service municipality with a workforce of over 5,600 FTEs and a budget of \$1.25B.

- Successfully led efforts to secure \$500M in state appropriation for extension of Tax Increment Financing District.
- Negotiated transfer of library system to Pima County, saving \$10M annually.
- Developed 10-year financial sustainability program to define core services and investment levels to support employee compensation.
- Reorganized planning and development services to streamline reviews and expedite permitting process while extending hours of operation.
- Required senior staff to participate in community service opportunities and utilize public transit to gain proper perspective.

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Pima County, AZ | 2003-2005

Responsible for the coordination and administration of county's economic and community development programs. Departments included Community Resources, the Stadium District, Community Services, Office of Tourism, and the Office of Neighborhood Reinvestment, Housing and Faith-Based Initiatives.

- Provided approximately \$3 million/year in grants to outside agencies.
- Reorganized departments supporting social services and community development.
- Negotiated leases with Major League Baseball for spring training.
- Led efforts to consolidate outside agencies involved in economic development under one umbrella organization.

M. HEIN P/3

TOWN MANAGER

Town of Marana, AZ | 1998 - 2003

Under the policy direction of the Town Council, responsible for town administration, including supervision of all departments, functions and offices.

- Oversaw economic development and annexation efforts, which doubled the size of the community and tax base.
- Negotiated with State Land, U.S. Fish & Wildlife and developers to create a wildlife preserve, allowing for development of a Ritz Carlton resort.
- Obtained funding from Pima County to construct bank protection for Santa Cruz River, permitting the development of large area of community

Other positions held:

ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER | 1997 - 1998

Worked closely with retiring town manager to ensure a smooth transition.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

City of Nogales, AZ | 1994 - 1997

Served in capacity of city manager/city clerk in the U.S.-Mexico border community, where a part-time Mayor retained title of "Administrator." Responsible for the overall operations of full-service city government.

- Successfully transferred operation and maintenance of an international sewage treatment plant to the federal government.
- Involved in the drafting of the original Immigration Reform Act.
- Led organization through a peso devaluation that resulted in the reduction of general revenue by 33%, while maintaining services.

Other positions held:

FINANCE DIRECTOR | 1993 - 1994

Appointed by mayor and council to serve in interim capacity. Coordinated completion of annual audits, financial statements and comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). Responsible for day-to-day functions, including purchasing, payroll, and IT.

Planning & Zoning Director | 1993 - 1994

Appointed by Mayor and Council to direct planning activities. Enforced and interpreted zoning and development codes. Coordinated activities of Boards and Commissions, administered capital improvement plan and wrote and administered grants.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

City of South Tucson, AZ | 1992 - 1993

Reported directly to the Mayor and Council while administering all social service programs and economic development projects for the city. Wrote and administered all grants, including Community Development Grants and revolving loan funds.

- Successfully challenged results of decennial census that under-counted minority population.
- Negotiated franchise agreements with utility companies.
- Responsible for securing funding and served as project manager for revitalization of main community corridor.

Other positions held:

Principal Management Analyst | 1991 - 1992

Responsible for designing and conducting operational, organizational, functional and administrative analyses of municipal functions.

M. HEIN P/4

AWARDS + RECOGNITION

- 2024-Present SECO Energy Foundation Board Member
- 2023 ICMA 25 Years of Service Award
- 2022 Community Service Award, Public Service – Lake County League of Cities
- 2021 Heritage Award, South Lake Chamber of Commerce
- 2016-Present Florida City and County Managers Association
- 2012 FEMA Certificate of Achievement Emergency Management Institute
- 2011 FEMA Award for Whole Community in Emergency Management
- 2007 Silver Award, League of United Latin American Citizens
- 2005 Honorary Pi Alpha Alpha National Honor Society, University of Arizona
- 1998 Governor-Appointed Arizona Water Resources Advisory Board
- 1997 Governor-Appointed Greater Arizona Development Authority
- 1996 Honorary Citizen, City of Nogales, AZ

Candidate Introduction

MICHAEL HEIN

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, University of Arizona
Bachelor of Science, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
Senior Executives in State & Local Government – Harvard University
Certified Economic Development Finance Professional – National Development Council

EXPERIENCE

- ***City Manager*** – Groveland, FL, 2017 - present
- ***Assistant Town Manager*** – Longboat Key, FL, 2015 - 2017
- ***Director of Emergency Management & Homeland Security*** - Pima County, AZ 2009-2015
- ***City Manager*** – Tucson, AZ 2005-2009
- ***Deputy County Administrator*** – Pima County, AZ 2003-2005
- ***Marana, AZ (1997-2003) – Town Manager (five years) and Assistant Town Manager (one year)***
- ***Nogales, AZ (1993-1997) – City Administrator (three years), Planning & Zoning Director (one year) and Interim Finance Director (one year while also P&Z Director)***
- ***South Tucson, AZ, (1991-1993) – Director of Community & Economic Development (one year) and Principal Management Analyst (one year)***
- ***Personnel Management Analyst*** – Portage County/Stevens Point, WI 1987-1988

BACKGROUND

Nestled in the heart of Central Florida, the City of Groveland is one of Florida's fastest growing cities. Located just northwest of Orlando and northeast of Tampa, Groveland boasts a population of approximately 24,000 residents with over fifty square miles of service area. The City is strategically located off Florida's Turnpike and minutes from the I-75 and I-4 corridors – offering excellent access to Florida's major transportation networks and facilitating both economic growth and connectivity. While long the center of the citrus industry, devastation to the groves from natural elements have caused it to pivot to diversify its tax base. Groveland features a 1,000-acre Commerce Park that has recently prospered with over 3 million square feet of new construction.

The City of Groveland's general fund budget comprises \$32 million, and the total budget is \$327 million this fiscal year, with a robust capital investment program. The City has 177 full-time employees with thirteen directly reporting to the City Manager and contracts several services including building inspection and water and wastewater operations.

MICHAEL HEIN

The three most significant issues facing the City of Groveland relate to the pressures of growth:

- **Transportation.** Traffic has increased significantly with new homes being built coupled with expansion in the industrial park. Semi tractor trailers now account for nearly one-third of all daily trips on the major arteries of the community. These main corridors are also controlled by other jurisdictions, complicating the City's ability to make significant improvements.
- **Prior Vested Rights.** While the City has taken steps to ensure a sense of community rooted in its agricultural history and desire to maintain a small-town feel, there are over 21,000 units that enjoy vested rights. Many of these entitlements are in the form of Planned Unit Developments that do not harmonize with the vision and current market.
- **Structurally Balanced Budgets.** To maintain adequate levels of service for the growing population and commerce center, it is imperative to provide proper staffing and infrastructure. The City performed admirably but has sometimes relied on non-recurring revenues to fund operational activities.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Cocoa Beach's vibrant community and exceptional quality of life are incredibly appealing to me both personally and as a professional. The City's complexity and commitment to service align well with my experience and leadership style. I bring value through staff development, organizational stability, policy guidance, and stakeholder engagement.

I am known as a consensus builder able to bring diverse groups and interests together. My management style is transparent, inclusive, adaptable, and innovative. I believe in articulating vision and mission clearly and unifying teams around purpose while listening carefully. I am not afraid to innovate or refine, and I work to anticipate and communicate outcomes.

"Works to improve team development...maintains a calming personality...positively motivates employees...is a high performer and works with others to be a high performer...appreciates employee's value and properly motivates them...without a doubt provides excellent customer service and expects others to do the same...is a positive role model...looks for ways to increase or improve efficiency...effective planner, highly organized...a very good listener...supportive...is well versed in his business...good forward thinker...serves as a good ambassador of the organization...interacts with the public very well...handles pressure well and is a perceptive and skillful communicator...demonstrates ability and desire to consider all available facts before making a decision...leads by example." This is what I know my staff would say about me as a manager, as the quotes are direct from a review they provided. I invite you to talk with any one of them about my leadership style.

MICHAEL HEIN

The elected officials I have served will say that I am diligent, insightful, thorough, supportive, and unflappable. They recognize my ability to distill complex issues into clear, actionable guidance and find balanced, integrated solutions.

My greatest strengths include patience and determination – both essential when navigating multifaceted initiatives, from negotiating with state and federal agencies to assembling infrastructure funding coalitions. I am committed to seeing initiative through.

While I assume positive intent as a guiding principle, I have learned it can sometimes lead to misplaced trust. Even so, I find this mindset fosters a collaborative and respectful culture.

Success in public service is not always easily quantified. While hard metrics – like emergency response times or infrastructure performance – are important, I also value less tangible measures like quality of life and community satisfactions. Public interaction, outreach, and engagement are critical to measuring and improving these outcomes.

I have been privileged to participate in numerous innovative and successful initiatives throughout my career including negotiating multi-species habitat conservation agreements, consolidating library districts, attracting major employers, regionalizing economic development functions, and rebranding communities.

One of the more innovative projects involved the City's consumptive use permit (CUP). Soon upon joining the organization I learned the CUP was set to expire and part of the renewal required a \$4M capital project that was not funded or designed. With no time to comply with the existing plan, we were able to find a creative solution that involved buying a golf course from a developer, retiring the water rights, and then selling the land back to the homeowners. It resulted in a renewed permit, net savings of over \$2M for the City and a delighted neighborhood.

Of all the accomplishments and accolades, downtowns revitalized, resorts constructed, roads and bridges funded, I am most proud of the investment of time and guidance I have provided to people, staff, and community members.

While I've had many successes, I've also grown from mistakes. One example: I once proposed undergrounding an interstate to reconnect two neighborhoods in Tucson, a project that proved unfeasible due to technical and political barriers. That experience led to my personal mantra: *under-promise and over-deliver*.

I have occasionally had to terminate staff, and I always handle these matters personally, with dignity and clarity – never with surprise. I treat others as I would want to be treated.

The challenges I see facing the City of Cocoa Beach and its next manager are:

- Maintaining elevated levels of service with increasing costs outpacing revenue.

MICHAEL HEIN

- Maintaining warm, welcoming small-town charm and sense of place with negative externalities associated with short term rental expansions.
- Bracing for natural incidents given the vulnerability of a barrier island.

If I were selected to serve as the next City Manager, I would spend a substantial portion of the first 6 months listening and learning. I would engage with the community and ask each member of the Commission to provide me with the names of individuals and groups they would like me to meet. I would be spending time with staff to evaluate the rhythms and character of the organization and by the end of that period be able to articulate an understanding of where the City has been, where it is, and where it is going.

The fourth estate is a vital component in local governance. It is essential to foster mutual respect by being available, responsive, and transparent. I work to foster a comfortable relationship with reporters and editorial staff to ensure accurate and timely information is provided to the public.

After more than 30 years in the public eye, there is little about my career that isn't already public. I am proud of my work and serve with a clear conscience and integrity.

Social media has become the primary method of communication with many members of the public. As such, it is imperative to develop multiple outlets reaching various demographic profiles within the community. It is clear the City already employs many of the tools to keep residents and visitors engaged and aware.

If my candidacy becomes public in Groveland, it will spark discussion. I have had to say "no" to various interests as part of implementing Council policy. I don't aim to please everyone – I aim to serve honorably.

For leisure I enjoy the many outdoor offerings Cocoa Beach provides – walking on the beach, golf, tennis, riding motorcycles and I've even been known to ride a skateboard. Most of all, I enjoy time with loved ones.

SIX ADJECTIVES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Intentful
- Curious
- Approachable
- Dependable
- Authentic
- Mindful

MICHAEL HEIN

REASON FOR LEAVING MOST RECENT POSITION

Perhaps the most difficult decision in my professional career has been to submit my candidacy for this position. I love working for the City of Groveland and have developed strong roots in the community. After thoughtful consideration and conversations with my family, I believe the opportunity to serve as the City Manager for the City of Cocoa Beach perfectly aligns with my personal and professional goals.

MOST RECENT SALARY

Currently, my annual salary is \$214,156. In addition, I receive annual retention bonuses. If selected as the City Manager and invited to negotiate, I will provide a copy of the entire contract.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
MICHAEL "MIKE" CHARLES HEIN**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Lake County, FL	No Records Found
Manatee County, FL	No Records Found
Sarasota County, FL	No Records Found
Pima County, AZ	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Arizona	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Lake County, FL	No Records Found
Manatee County, FL	No Records Found
Sarasota County, FL	No Records Found
Pima County, AZ	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Arizona	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
MICHAEL “MIKE” CHARLES HEIN**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
MICHAEL "MIKE" CHARLES HEIN
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: _____

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ☐ No ☒
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes ☒ No ☐
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.

Facebook LinkedIn
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes ☐ No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: _____


Signature of Applicant

**Background Check Summary for
MICHAEL "MIKE" CHARLES HEIN
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

In 2009 I was cited and plead guilty for driving under the influence to the slightest degree. It is an incident for which I am deeply ashamed and regretful, but it has proved to positively impact and inform me.

CB&A Reference Notes

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Michael Hein

Evelyn Wilson – Former Mayor, City of Groveland, FL

Ms. Wilson has known Mr. Hein since about 2018. She served as Mayor of Groveland and was on the Council that hired Mr. Hein as City Manager. They worked closely together for several years, forming a strong professional partnership. Ms. Wilson and Mr. Hein shared a vision for the City and collaborated effectively to accomplish significant progress during their tenure. Their working relationship was productive. He made her job easier and allowed her to focus on her role while providing support and partnership.

Mr. Hein brings strong communication and interpersonal skills to his role. He demonstrates an ability to capture the attention of a room, engaging others with confidence and clarity when speaking. He maintains a professional demeanor under pressure and exhibits a high level of patience even in the face of stress or challenging political environments. He effectively manages the demands of the fast-growing City while responding to daily issues with calm and competence.

Mr. Hein consistently keeps key stakeholders informed and fosters a collaborative environment across the organization. His ability to hire and lead talented staff contributes to a positive team culture, and he excels at motivating employees around a shared vision. He regularly communicates in person and promotes transparency and accessibility.

Throughout his time in Groveland, Mr. Hein pursued bold and innovative changes that elevated the City's status within the region. He led the City to achieve the "dark sky" designation and implemented effective land-use planning that made Groveland a model for the surrounding County. His approach to problem-solving and change management reflects both strategic foresight and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Mr. Hein demonstrates strong financial management skills. He balances the City budget, informs Department Directors about capital projects, and could effectively run operations independently if necessary. He remains actively engaged with the community, regularly attending meetings and building strong relationships. He communicates clearly in both group settings and one-on-one public interactions and prioritizes customer service in his approach.

Even in contentious political environments, Mr. Hein works diligently to navigate interpersonal challenges and maintain professionalism. While there have been minor controversies, such as past background scrutiny and criticism regarding compensation, none raise significant concern or reflect negatively on his character or performance. He has never been involved in any conduct that would cause reputational issues for a hiring agency.

Ms. Wilson confirmed without hesitation that she would hire Mr. Hein again. She considers him the best manager she has ever seen.

Reference Notes Michael Hein

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Excellent,
- Compassionate,
- Has foresight,
- Innovative,
- Strategic, and
- The best.

Strengths: A charismatic leader with strong financial skills, community engagement, and transparent communication.

Weaknesses: He could improve by being more assertive in addressing personnel issues when needed.

Dina Sweatt – Former Council Member, City of Groveland, FL

Ms. Sweatt has known Mr. Hein since 2019 through their professional relationship in Groveland, Florida. She served as a City Councilwoman and Mr. Hein works as the City Manager. She interacted with him extensively during his tenure and gained direct knowledge of his leadership approach, performance, and character.

Mr. Hein consistently demonstrates strong leadership and a deep understanding of municipal operations. He approaches his responsibilities with professionalism and commitment. He works well under pressure, maintains a calm demeanor, and makes decisions with confidence and clarity. He effectively balances community needs with budgetary constraints and shows a solid grasp of government finance.

Mr. Hein manages relationships with elected officials with transparency and integrity. He communicates effectively, both in public meetings and in private discussions. Mr. Hein fosters an inclusive and respectful environment among staff and supports open dialogue, even when opinions differ. He addresses conflicts directly and constructively and works to maintain trust across the organization.

Mr. Hein maintains strong visibility in the community and regularly attends civic events and meetings. He supports community initiatives and encourages staff participation. Mr. Hein approaches citizens with respect and professionalism and maintains a strong service-oriented mindset.

Mr. Hein handles personnel matters fairly and with consistency. He communicates clearly with employees and holds them accountable while offering support and guidance. He hires qualified staff and manages employment terminations, when necessary, in a manner that maintains dignity and compliance. He earns the respect of employees and provides growth opportunities.

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Michael Hein

Mr. Hein responds to stress with composure and remains solution focused. He displays patience in navigating bureaucratic delays and communicates timelines realistically. He consistently follows through on projects and responsibilities in a timely and thorough manner.

Mr. Hein interacts well with elected officials with differing agendas. He provides each with relevant information and maintains neutrality and professionalism. He conducts public meetings confidently and facilitates effective dialogue with the public present. He ensures transparency in government operations and communicates with the community with clarity and respect.

Mr. Hein has not been involved in any controversy or incidents that would raise concerns about his conduct. Nothing in his personal or professional background would reflect poorly on an employer or present a risk of reputational harm. His behavior consistently aligns with ethical standards.

Ms. Sweatt would readily hire Mr. Hein and thinks he is an excellent manager. He is thoughtful, fair, committed to community service, and a strong leader. His knowledge of government operations and finance, coupled with his people skills and dedication, makes him well-suited to executive leadership in public service.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Fair,
- Dependable,
- Trustworthy,
- Accountable,
- Ethical, and
- Calm.

Strengths: Even-keeled leader, maintains strong relationships with staff and elected officials, remains calm and fair under pressure, understands municipal finance and community engagement, acts with integrity and professionalism.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Kevin Carroll – Chief of Fire Rescue, City of Groveland, FL

Mr. Carroll has known Mr. Hein since 2020. Mr. Hein served as City Manager during Mr. Carroll's tenure. Their professional relationship developed through regular interactions at Board meetings and for operations.

Mr. Hein demonstrates a highly effective management style that balances strategic oversight with direct engagement. He communicates clearly and consistently, ensuring all elected officials stay informed through weekly updates and open dialogue. Mr. Hein maintains a professional,

Reference Notes

Michael Hein

calm demeanor, even under pressure, and sets high standards for operations. He displays both patience and strong decision-making ability, navigating complex issues while balancing political sensitivities and operational goals.

Mr. Hein manages stress well and remains solution-focused during challenges. He plays a proactive role in the community, often attending events and meetings as a representative of the City. His responsiveness and ability to resolve problems efficiently build public trust and reinforce the credibility of the government. He demonstrates strong financial acumen, manages budgets effectively, and presents capital project proposals with clarity and thoroughness.

Mr. Hein excels at staff development and builds morale through transparency, accountability, and support. He demonstrates a balanced leadership style, empowering department heads while maintaining final accountability. He exhibits both visionary qualities and the ability to maintain a high-functioning organization. His approach combines innovation with practical application, making him especially effective in the public sector.

Mr. Hein collaborates well with individuals who have differing agendas and political viewpoints. He cultivates strong working relationships with elected officials and board members, often serving as a unifying presence. He also listens well to the perspectives of others, even when he ultimately makes a different decision. His ability to lead and maintain the respect of a diverse group of stakeholders reflects strong political acuity.

Mr. Hein regularly attends community meetings and engages with the public both one-on-one and in groups. He handles public feedback with professionalism and poise. His decisions in hiring personnel are thoughtful and typically result in strong hires. While no one is perfect, he demonstrates sound judgment in personnel matters and seeks input from others when needed. He accomplishes tasks promptly and sets a tone of efficiency and results-driven work across the organization.

No issues of controversy, personal or professional misconduct are known. Mr. Hein maintains a reputation for integrity and professionalism. There is no indication of any background concerns.

Mr. Carroll would hire Mr. Hein without hesitation. He is an outstanding manager. Mr. Hein is effective because of his calm leadership style, strong administrative ability, and deep understanding of government operations.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Strategic thinker,
- Calm under pressure,
- Great communicator,
- Responsive,
- Honest, and
- Professional.

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Michael Hein

Strengths: A calm and strategic professional who communicates effectively with elected officials and staff, maintains high operational standards, and builds trust within the organization and community. His financial and administrative skills are strong, and he exhibits both patience and decisiveness when managing complex issues.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Shawn Ramsey – Chief of Police, City of Groveland, FL

Mr. Ramsey, Chief of Police in Groveland, has known Mr. Hein since 2018. Mr. Ramsey served on the hiring board that selected Mr. Hein as City Manager. Over the years, Mr. Ramsey has worked closely with Mr. Hein and observed his leadership and performance in depth.

Mr. Hein performs at an exemplary level and consistently goes above and beyond the responsibilities of his role. He demonstrates exceptional commitment and loyalty to the community and approaches the job with a strong work ethic and unwavering dedication. He effectively fosters open communication and strong collaboration across departments. He maintains frequent contact with senior leadership through in-person meetings, email, phone calls, and text messages. He brings a charismatic presence to his interactions and ensures others remain well-informed about relevant matters within his area of responsibility.

Mr. Hein makes thoughtful, informed decisions both in personnel hiring and general operations. He includes senior staff in the hiring processes and uses their expertise to help guide selection. He remains calm under pressure and handles stress better than most people. He leads with vision, engages employees in achieving organizational goals, and does not confine himself to administrative tasks. His leadership played a central role in a successful water mitigation project where he led the City to acquire a golf course for well capping. This allowed Groveland to meet mitigation requirements, resell unused water capacity, and ultimately return the golf course to the Homeowners Association without the well. This was a multi-million dollar solution for the community.

Mr. Hein regularly engages with the public and maintains high visibility at community events, both during the day and in the evening. He is effective in one-on-one and group settings and displays strong customer service orientation. He collaborates with the Finance Director during each budget cycle and offers innovative solutions aligned with City priorities. He completes assigned tasks promptly and shows patience when navigating government processes. He works exceptionally well with elected officials, recognizing their varying communication styles and needs. He leverages their strengths and provides them with information and context that lead to better decisions.

In terms of community healing and leadership, Mr. Hein has played a meaningful role in helping Groveland acknowledge its past and move forward. He guided the community through the legacy

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Michael Hein

of a racially charged incident from the 1940s chronicled in the book *Devil in the Grove*. Under his leadership, the City embraced responsibility and committed to a better future.

There are no known concerns regarding Mr. Hein's background or conduct. Mr. Ramsey confirmed that if anyone offered a truthful and honest assessment, they would only speak positively of Mr. Hein. Mr. Ramsey would hire Mr. Hein again without hesitation. He is a major asset to the City and an excellent manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Problem solver,
- Community,
- Understanding,
- Compassionate,
- Work ethic, and
- Dedication.

Strengths: A leader committed to the community with clear communication, fiscal innovation, visibility, and consistent leadership.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Anita Geraci-Carver – City Attorney, City of Groveland, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Geraci-Carver has known Mr. Hein since 2018. She works as the City Attorney for Groveland, FL and Mr. Hein serves as the City Manager. Mr. Hein demonstrates excellent job performance. He has led significant progress since joining the City. Under his leadership, Groveland implemented plans that had long remained stagnant. His accomplishments within a few years far exceed what previous City Managers achieved in the past decade.

Mr. Hein demonstrates exceptional strengths in implementing plans and executing strategic vision. He unites the City Council and staff through effective communication and collaborative leadership. He possesses strong interpersonal skills, communicates directly and constructively, and remains open to professional feedback. He interacts well with colleagues and fosters productive working relationships. He consistently keeps Ms. Geraci-Carver informed through regular monthly calls and ad hoc communication via phone and email when necessary.

Mr. Hein makes sound decisions in personnel management and general operations. He has recruited talented and experienced directors, successfully identified individuals' strengths, and structured the organization for success, even creating new roles to address operational gaps. He displays innovation and problem-solving abilities, as seen in his work on reforming the City's utility department. He brought in a private firm to manage utilities, developed detailed utility usage plans, and optimized operational efficiency. In a separate initiative, he addressed

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Michael Hein

alternative water supply requirements by negotiating with a nearby defunct golf course to acquire and retire its consumptive use permit, thereby securing a more affordable water source for the City. These actions reflect his out-of-the-box thinking and results-oriented mindset.

Mr. Hein responds to stress with composure. He maintains a calm demeanor, does not display anger, and approaches challenges diplomatically. He exhibits all the traits of a leader. He rallies employees around the organization's vision rather than simply managing processes. He engages with the community regularly and attends public meetings as a representative of the organization. He performs well in both one-on-one interactions and group settings and consistently displays a customer-service-oriented mindset.

Mr. Hein shows strong financial skills, effectively managing the City's budget and capital planning. He completes tasks on time, exhibits patience in navigating governmental processes, and works diplomatically with elected officials, even those with conflicting agendas or challenging personalities. He is politically savvy and respectful, which allows him to work effectively across diverse stakeholder groups.

Mr. Hein has not been involved in any controversies. Ms. Geraci-Carver is unaware of any personal or professional conduct issues that would raise concerns for a potential employer. She would hire him without hesitation and considers him an outstanding manager. While some Council Members or citizens may occasionally express dissent, she notes that these individuals generally lack direct working relationships with him. Overall, staff members hold Mr. Hein in high regard.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Calm,
- Consensus builder,
- High integrity,
- Dedicated,
- Visionary, and
- Professional.

Strengths: A professional who leads through consensus and can navigate complex legal and political landscapes.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Mike Walker – Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Groveland, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Walker serves as the Parks and Community Services Director for the City of Groveland, FL. He has worked directly under Mr. Hein since 2019. In his capacity as Mr. Hein's subordinate, Mr. Walker has observed his performance and leadership daily for several years.

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Michael Hein

Mr. Hein performs at the highest level and consistently demonstrates proactive leadership. He stays ahead of problems and leads with integrity, passion, and attention to detail. He is the best person Mr. Walker has ever worked for. Mr. Hein exemplifies professionalism and humanity in equal measure. He maintains strong communication and transparency through bi-weekly senior management meetings, emails, phone calls, and open-door interactions. He brings energy and charisma to the workplace, creating an environment where staff feel supported and valued. Mr. Hein interacts exceptionally well with colleagues and subordinates alike, fostering a workplace culture rooted in mutual respect and trust.

Mr. Hein makes excellent decisions in both hiring and operational matters. He built a well-educated and highly functional team in Groveland. He exhibits sound judgment, even under pressure, remaining calm, collected, and focused during stressful situations. He never appears rattled or reactive, always addressing issues with composure and pragmatism. He demonstrates innovation, leads change, and maintains high-performance standards within the organization. He routinely engages with the community and represents the City at more than 30 events annually, including Chamber functions and local festivals. His high visibility and public presence reflect a sincere commitment to civic engagement.

Mr. Hein consistently rallies employees around the City's vision. He does not confine himself to administrative duties but leads with clarity and inspiration. For example, when state funding stalled plans for a truck bypass in downtown Groveland, Mr. Hein negotiated with the Department of Transportation to initiate the project, ensuring progress despite the initial financial obstacles. Additionally, to support the City's growth beyond its water usage limits, he facilitated the annexation of a golf course and secured water rights, allowing the City to continue expanding sustainably.

Mr. Hein maintains strong financial acumen, drawing on prior experience as a Finance Director. He balances budgets effectively, collaborates with staff, and remains attuned to the organization's fiscal health. He completes tasks promptly and exhibits patience when navigating the complexities of government decision-making. Mr. Hein works effectively with elected officials, regardless of their differing priorities. He meets with them individually each week, avoids negativity and gossip, and maintains focus on actionable, productive solutions. He handles oversight and public meetings with professionalism and composure.

No concerns exist regarding Mr. Hein's personal or professional conduct. Mr. Walker would hire Mr. Hein again without hesitation and believes he is an outstanding manager. He has full support from his leadership team. No one in Mr. Walker's view would hold a differing opinion about his capabilities or character.

Reference Notes Michael Hein

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Detailed,
- Smart thinker,
- Good communicator,
- Passionate,
- Not controlling, and
- Good person.

Strengths: A visionary leader with exceptional communication, problem-solving, community presence, hiring expertise, financial management, and emotional composure.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Virginia Wright – City Clerk, City of Groveland, FL

Ms. Wright, City Clerk for Groveland, has known Mr. Hein since 2018, when he became City Manager. They have worked closely since then, and she has observed his leadership firsthand.

Mr. Hein performs at a high level and plays a major role in transforming the City. He moves swiftly and methodically to drive progress and deliver results. He builds strong working relationships, demonstrates strong interpersonal and communication skills, and maintains consistent one-on-one and senior leadership meetings to keep others informed. He frequently rallies staff around the organizational vision and inspires confidence in his leadership.

Mr. Hein makes thoughtful, well-informed decisions and consistently hires personnel who contribute to a cohesive and effective team. He maintains a genuine concern for employee well-being and leads with fairness, often using interactive exercises to communicate expectations and create space for open dialogue. He leads by example and shows strong emotional intelligence under stress. His high tolerance for pressure allows him to remain calm and patient even in difficult situations.

Mr. Hein possesses exceptional financial skills and holds a finance degree. He completes assignments promptly and shows patience when navigating the slower pace of government. He works well with elected officials, managing varying personalities and agendas without issue. He handles public engagement with ease, demonstrating strong customer service skills in both one-on-one interactions and larger community forums. His efforts have led to significant community development achievements, including attracting major entities such as Amazon and Kroger to the area. He brings innovation and vision to his role, while also maintaining high performance and accountability within the organization. His ability to balance strategy with action makes him an effective leader and change agent.

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There are no concerns regarding Mr. Hein's background, conduct, or public reputation. Ms. Wright does not know anyone who would offer a differing opinion. She would hire him again without hesitation and describes him as an outstanding manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Dedicated,
- Motivated,
- Methodical,
- Determined,
- Leader, and
- Faith in staff.

Strengths: A strategic leader with strong communication skills, financial acumen, and team-building talent.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Jennifer Clutts – Director of Communications, City of Groveland, FL

Ms. Clutts, Director of Communications for the City of Groveland, has worked under Mr. Hein since 2023, when he started as the City Manager. She observes his leadership firsthand and works closely with him as part of the senior leadership team.

Mr. Hein performs at a phenomenal level. He leads with clarity, confidence, and empathy, serving as a reliable north star for his staff. He brings visionary leadership to the organization while supporting the personal and professional growth of those around him. He creates a work environment marked by respect, collaboration, and steady guidance. He recognizes and leverages the strengths of his team. He manages people and varying personalities with ease and demonstrates exceptional interpersonal and communication skills. He makes sound, well-informed decisions, particularly in personnel hiring, and includes the right people in the process. He responds to stress with composure and consistently shields his staff from unnecessary pressure by taking on challenges himself.

Mr. Hein leads with purpose and inspires employees to align with the City's mission. He does not manage from behind a desk but remains actively involved in all aspects of organizational performance and community engagement. In meetings, he provides context, clarity, and vision, and makes every effort to keep team members informed through one-on-one and group discussions.

In a notable example of leadership, Mr. Hein successfully navigated a challenging public outcry regarding a water rate increase. Through internal investigation, he identified timing errors in the billing process, communicated those findings clearly to the public, and worked with the

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Michael Hein

community over the next several months to resolve the issue. His problem-solving abilities and transparency helped restore trust and credibility for the City.

Mr. Hein stays deeply engaged with the community, regularly attending public events, weekend gatherings, and neighborhood meetings. He remains visible and accessible to residents, effectively managing one-on-one conversations as well as large public interactions. He operates with a strong customer service ethic and brings a high level of charisma and positivity to every setting.

Mr. Hein demonstrates solid financial acumen and completes assignments on time. He exercises patience when needed and adapts to the slower pace of government decision-making while maintaining progress. He handles the demands of working with five elected officials with grace and professionalism, balancing their needs and ensuring open lines of communication. He reminds staff of the proper governance structure and maintains control of operations while respecting the authority of Council.

There are no known concerns regarding Mr. Hein's background or conduct. Ms. Clutts would hire him again without reservation. He is an outstanding manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Visionary,
- Insightful,
- Leader,
- Humorous,
- Positive, and
- Charismatic.

Strengths: Visionary leader with strong interpersonal and communication skills and crisis resolution experience.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Pamela Brosonski – Finance Director, City of Groveland, FL

Ms. Brosonski has known Mr. Hein since 2023. She is the Finance Director for Groveland. Mr. Hein is the City Manager. She reports to him and engages with him regularly in City operations. Mr. Hein performs his duties exceptionally well, consistently maintaining a calm, level-headed demeanor. He serves as an effective buffer between City Council and staff, navigating the complexities of both while keeping everyone focused and aligned. He excels at maintaining harmony across departments and helps ensure all stakeholders stay within their proper lanes.

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Mr. Hein leads with professionalism, vision, and strategic foresight. He possesses excellent interpersonal skills and creates a cohesive work environment. He communicates clearly with staff and keeps the organization informed through regular meetings. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of operations across departments and supports improved collaboration. He makes sound decisions in both hiring and operations. He has built a strong team and cultivates a positive, high-functioning work environment. He handles stress with composure and does not allow it to impact his performance or interactions. He completes tasks promptly, demonstrates patience with slow governmental processes, and exhibits exceptional fiscal awareness and responsibility.

Mr. Hein demonstrates strong leadership by rallying employees around the City's vision rather than managing from behind a desk. He regularly attends community events, maintains an open-door policy, and ensures the communications team is well-equipped to share information with the public. He handles both one-on-one and group interactions with professionalism and demonstrates strong customer service skills. He functions effectively in politically complex environments. He works well with elected officials, even when they have competing agendas, and redirects discussions to the task at hand with diplomacy and professionalism.

No concerns exist regarding Mr. Hein's personal or professional background. He maintains a high standard of conduct, and Ms. Brosonski expressed a strong desire to retain him in Groveland. He would succeed in any management role due to his leadership capabilities, interpersonal skills, and fiscal expertise.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Fiscally responsible,
- Calm,
- Leader,
- Professional,
- Visionary, and
- Strategic.

Strengths: A strategic leader who prioritizes relationship management, communication, and staff development.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Deo Persuad – Director of Human Resources, City of Groveland, FL

Mr. Persuad, Human Resources Director for the City of Groveland, has known Mr. Hein since 2018, when Mr. Hein hired him into his current role. Mr. Persuad works directly with Mr. Hein and observes his leadership, communication, and decision-making firsthand.

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Mr. Hein is an outstanding City Manager who demonstrates exceptional interpersonal skills. He treats his staff with genuine care and respect, consistently fostering a positive, comfortable work environment. He maintains open communication, keeps employees informed through regular meetings, and ensures they feel valued and included in the City's strategic direction. Mr. Hein excels in leadership, communication, and political navigation. He builds and nurtures relationships both within the organization and with the broader community. When he joined the City, he quickly identified the need for stronger departmental leadership and successfully recruited and built out a team of directors. The majority of those hires remain in place, a reflection of the strength and cohesion he fostered.

Mr. Hein handles stressful situations with composure, remaining calm, even-keeled, and approachable. He brings innovative thinking to the City, balancing a high-performance standard with a long-term vision. Under his leadership, the City attracted major businesses such as Kroger and Amazon, creating economic opportunities and improving the quality of life for residents. His success in forming relationships and leveraging those connections has significantly contributed to Groveland's rapid growth. Mr. Hein leads from the front, rallies staff around a shared vision, and promotes collaboration across departments. He does not simply manage from behind a desk, he actively engages in community events, regularly attends meetings, and maintains high visibility among residents and stakeholders. He communicates well with the public in both individual and group settings and always approaches service with a customer-first mindset.

When faced with challenges, Mr. Hein demonstrates strategic problem-solving. For example, when utility rates increased and residents expressed concern, he guided his team in developing a communication strategy that addressed the community's questions and explained the rate change. He also collaborates effectively with union representatives to establish fair and lasting labor agreements. He possesses strong financial acumen, drawing from his past professional experience in finance. He understands budgeting and capital planning thoroughly and consistently meets deadlines with patience and professionalism. He works well with elected officials, successfully navigating differing agendas and personalities to find consensus and move the City forward.

There are no known concerns regarding Mr. Hein's background or conduct. Mr. Persuad would rehire Mr. Hein without hesitation. He is an exceptional manager who balances the internal needs of staff with the external demands of council and the community.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Compassionate,
- Kind,
- Intelligent,
- Great leader,
- Problem solver, and
- Organized.

Reference Notes

Michael Hein

Strengths: A politically savvy leader with strong interpersonal communication, staff development, economic development, problem-solving, and financial management.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Brenda Toscano – Assistant to the City Manager, City of Groveland, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Toscano, Assistant to the City Manager for Special Projects in Groveland, has worked with Mr. Hein since 2018, when he became City Manager. She credits him as a key mentor in her professional development, guiding and challenging her to grow in her role.

Mr. Hein performs at an exceptional level and consistently improves operations. He walked into a disorganized environment and immediately brought structure and vision by implementing a master plan and a strategic plan. These tools aligned the City with a clear mission and established measurable metrics that transformed performance and accountability. He empowers his staff to lead initiatives and learn through experience, offering support and guidance while allowing room for growth. He encourages autonomy while remaining present to provide direction when needed. His communication skills and interpersonal relationships foster a strong, unified team culture.

Mr. Hein demonstrates excellent judgment in hiring decisions, focusing not only on experience but also on passion and cultural fit. He builds teams that share a common vision and places individuals in roles where they can succeed. He reads people well and supports their long-term development. He maintains a level-headed demeanor under pressure and remains calm and focused during stressful situations. He embodies both innovation and consistency. He acts as a change agent, implements forward-thinking strategies, and maintains high performance across departments. He communicates regularly through recurring meetings, calls, and texts, and is always accessible to his staff.

Mr. Hein leads from the front, rallying employees around the organization's goals rather than remaining behind a desk. He consistently represents the City at every community event and maintains visibility both in one-on-one and group settings. He is customer-service oriented and engages directly with residents to address their concerns.

During a recent issue involving widespread discrepancies in utility billing, Mr. Hein created a live-response team composed of residents rather than outsourcing the solution. This approach restored community trust and reflected his commitment to hands-on, empathetic leadership. His financial skills stand out as a core strength. He approaches budgeting with precision, articulates complex fiscal matters clearly, and consistently produces innovative financial strategies. He completes tasks efficiently and displays patience when navigating slow government processes.

Reference Notes Michael Hein

Mr. Hein works well with elected officials, even when they have competing agendas. He stays focused on priorities, avoids personal conflict, and keeps discussions professional. He demonstrates integrity, humility, and a commitment to shared success. Ms. Toscano would not hesitate to work with him again and considers him an ideal City Manager who adapts well to any environment.

There are no concerns regarding Mr. Hein's background or conduct. While some residents may not agree with every decision, his colleagues hold him in high regard.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Caring,
- Loyal,
- Supportive,
- Leader,
- Great person, and
- Mentor.

Strengths: Visionary leader who excels in strategic planning, stays calm under pressure.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Jennifer Barker – County Manager, Lake County, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Barker, County Manager for Lake County, has worked closely with Mr. Hein, City Manager of Groveland, since 2020. Their collaboration on various projects gives her direct insight into his leadership style, capabilities, and overall performance.

Mr. Hein performs his duties at an excellent level. He communicates exceptionally well and has a gift for breaking down complex government processes so that residents and stakeholders can understand them clearly. He maintains a collaborative, open-minded approach and eagerly explores new ideas to improve services and strengthen the community. He leads Groveland with a vision of progress. He has implemented forward-thinking initiatives, such as dark light requirements, and championed changes that uplift the community. His leadership has played a central role in transforming Groveland into a more modern, forward-looking municipality.

Mr. Hein consistently makes sound hiring and operational decisions. He handles challenging board dynamics with composure and navigates politically complex situations effectively. His ability to manage both a previously aligned board and a currently more combative one demonstrates his political acumen and strategic skill.

Mr. Hein communicates regularly with peers and stakeholders through quarterly meetings and timely phone calls. He excels in one-on-one and group settings, interacts well with the public,

Reference Notes
Michael Hein

and brings a strong customer service orientation to his work. He possesses strong financial management skills and approaches budgeting and capital planning with care and strategy.

Mr. Hein accomplishes tasks on time, maintains a high level of patience in the face of government delays, and remains an effective leader under pressure. He functions well under public scrutiny and handles diverse agendas from elected officials with professionalism and grace.

There are no known concerns regarding Mr. Hein's background or conduct, and no indication that anyone who has worked with him would speak negatively about his performance. Ms. Barker would hire him without hesitation. He is an excellent manager. She credits him with introducing innovative, strategic leadership to a rapidly growing area of the County.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael Hein:

- Thoughtful,
- Analytical,
- Even temperament,
- Excellent communicator,
- Leader, and
- Great partner.

Strengths: A strategic partner who prioritized effective collaboration and strong public engagement.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Hazel Jones
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Facebook
South Lake Chamber of Commerce (FL)
August 8, 2025

2025 Young Professionals — with Barrels and Boards and 2 others

Today, our Young Professionals had the privilege of hearing from Groveland City Manager **Mike Hein**, who provided insightful updates on the city’s progress and shared his inspiring life story—a testament to perseverance and resilience in the face of life’s challenges. On behalf of all our Young Professionals, thank you, **Mike**, for your time and sharing your love for the City of Natural Charm!

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Lake Tablets
April 22, 2025

Groveland Leaders Spotlight Growth, Innovation, And Community at Chamber Breakfast

The South Lake Chamber of Commerce hosted an informative and well-attended business breakfast at the E.L. Puryear Building/Community Center, where Groveland Mayor Keith Keogh and City Manager **Mike Hein** delivered a keynote address focused on the city’s remarkable growth, key initiatives, and plans for the future.

Mayor Keogh, known as “Chef Keogh” due to his culinary background, shared his unique journey from the kitchen to city hall. Elected in November 2024, the Florida native is a retired chef and owner of Olive Isle Family Farm in Groveland. With a 25-year career at Disney, including work on the launch of EPCOT Center, Keogh later led COOK, a publicly traded culinary education company in San Francisco, and served as Senior Vice President of Culinary & Beverage Excellence at Darden’s Red Lobster Division. Now residing on his farm with his wife Vicki, near their two daughters and five grandchildren, Keogh’s passion for innovation and community remains central to his leadership.

City Manager **Mike Hein**, who has served Groveland since 2018, brings more than 30 years of public service experience, including leadership roles in several Arizona cities. A University of Wisconsin – Steven’s Point graduate, **Hein** holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Arizona and has completed executive training at Harvard University’s JFK School of Government. Known for his signature green jeans and entertaining presentations, **Hein** adds a personal touch to his professional style.

During the breakfast, Keogh and **Hein** emphasized Groveland’s rapid rise, noting its recent ranking as the #10 fastest-growing city in the U.S., according to the New York Post. Their address underscored priorities including education, infrastructure, healthcare, business development, and community engagement.

Key Highlights from the Presentation:

- **Community Development:** The Elsie Tomlinson Empowerment Center is poised to become a vital hub for resident support and empowerment.
- **Healthcare Expansion:** As the city grows, so does the need for accessible and comprehensive healthcare. The city is focused on attracting and supporting providers to meet these demands.
- **Business Growth:** Projects like Green Valley Commons—which will feature a car wash and additional businesses—and the continued success of the Groveland Exchange, connecting residents with locally grown produce, are enhancing the local economy.
- **Infrastructure & Transportation:** Major roadway improvements are on the horizon. The SR 50 bypass will break ground next year, with upgrades planned for SR 19 and Highway 33 to ease traffic and improve regional connectivity.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

- Environmental Stewardship: One of Groveland’s ambitious projects, The Blue Way, involves acquiring more than 750+ acres of land stretching from Lake Lucy to Lake Minneola for conservation and recreation.
- Youth Engagement: Mayor Keogh proudly highlighted the Groveland Youth Council, underscoring the city’s commitment to nurturing future leaders.

Throughout the presentation, both leaders praised the **Live Well Foundation** for its essential role in supporting many of these transformative projects. “Groveland is being heard in Tallahassee,” Mayor Keogh said with conviction. “They are informed and engaged.” The presentation concluded with a strong call for continued collaboration and community involvement as Groveland—the city with natural charm—continues to grow with purpose and heart.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clermont Sun
December 17, 2024

Water bill worries addressed by Groveland City at special workshop

By Sharon Keeble

Dozens of angry residents attended Groveland City’s water bill workshop to address their concerns that their bills have been much higher than anticipated after a recent rate increase. At the December 16 meeting in the Puryear Building, residents heard from Groveland’s water experts and City Manager **Mike Hein** who attempted to explain the huge increase and offer solutions.

The workshop comes after October 1 of this year, when a new tiered rate structure went into effect that changed charges for potable water, sewage and irrigation. The tiered structure was encouraged by state and regional water management agencies to help pay for upgrades to Groveland’s aging water infrastructure. The cost to upgrade was \$265 million, of which around \$60 million came from grants and the rest in low interest loans of less than 1%. Residents were told to expect at least a 45 % increase in their bills, but many have seen astronomically high bills and recorded water usages that are not in line with what they believe they actually used. At the meeting, **Mike Hein** addressed attendees. “I am certainly not proud to be here this evening, and, in the position, we find ourselves in. We’ve clearly angered and disappointed a lot of our customers, we frustrated them,” he said sincerely. “It has led to a deterioration of trust which is contrary to the type of culture that you have directed us to create and for that we apologize.”

Hein explained that the city has conducted a thorough investigation into the water bill fiasco. Here’s what they found:

Additional Days in the Billing Cycle: In an effort to close out the 2023-2024 fiscal year that ended September 30, the city began to read meters earlier than normal. This caused most customers to be billed for an average of 36 days of water usage rather than the 30 or 31 days in a typical month. For some customers whose meters couldn’t be read digitally, the billing cycle was even longer because the city paused door-to-door manual reads on October 7 to prepare for the arrival of Hurricane Milton. The pause meant that some customers had even more days in their billing cycle, some as many as 52 days.

Higher Irrigation Tiers: With more days in the billing cycle, many irrigation customers were automatically bumped into higher, more expensive tiers even though they didn’t change their irrigation routines.

Power Disruptions May Have Played a Role: Hurricanes Helene (September 26) and Milton (October 10) caused widespread power outages in the city. Although the city can’t verify this had a direct impact, **Hein** said that power outages and surges can cause irrigation timers to reset. When the power returns, homeowners may end up using much more water for irrigation than they realize. “These things don’t happen in a typical month, but we should have seen what was coming and mitigated the effects before the bills were sent,” said **Hein**. “That didn’t happen, and we offer you our deepest apologies for creating confusion and frustration.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

To make the situation right, all accounts will be credited for any usage above 31 days. The city will recalculate the bill residents received in November, and they will see the credit on the next bill. To allow time for the recalculations, that bill will likely arrive in early January. For 120 days, all irrigation rates will be capped at Tier Three. This will give customers time to better understand the tiers, check your irrigation systems and potentially find opportunities to lower usage.

Hein said there are plans to avoid such a fiasco in the future. These include providing three months of consecutive notices prior to new rate increases, standardizing the billing cycles to 31 days and posting a monthly report to the city’s website to update on revenue used from customers compared to what was forecast. He also said that the city is going to replace by mid 2026 meters that are not currently reading (about 800) and swap out all old meters (about 5,600) so that everyone is on the same system. In response to complaints that calls to the city regarding the higher water bills went unanswered, **Hein** said that there are going to be new systems put in place to ensure customers receive responses within 24 hours.

The City of Groveland also plans to introduce a new Irrigation Audit Program in which a water conservation specialist will visit resident’s homes and HOAs to check on systems and provide helpful insights.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clermont Sun
June 19, 2024

Groveland's naturally charming visionary

By Sharon Keeble

When **Mike Hein** arrived in Groveland for his interim City Manager interview in 2017, he wasn't exactly impressed. The city seemed tired, the police department was in a trailer, swings were broken in parks, there were no basketball nets and the place seemed tired. He took the job anyway because the countryside was beautiful and he had a vision, but he soon learned that Groveland has a very special class of people who live there. "I quickly learned that the employees I work with and the residents I meet have a strong pride in Groveland, even as it was when I arrived," **Hein** said. "I was struck by how nice they were, their strong family values, and the pride they took in their community. "Their spirit was incredible, they just lacked direction. I immediately saw the potential for Groveland, and I wanted to be a part of the growth and the future of this incredible city, so I took the job. I've loved it ever since"

Mike knows all about the importance of family. As an orphan baby in Wisconsin, he was adopted by Melvyn and June Hein, a blue collar, middle-class family. His father Melvyn was a mill worker in a lumber yard, while mom June was a stay-at-home mom. Together, they raised **Mike** and fostered abused infants; sometimes, there were four babies staying with them at one time. When he was a senior in high school, a friend showed him a yearbook of a college he was going to attend, and he liked what he saw. A teacher paid the \$21 application fee and he got accepted into the University of Wisconsin. When **Mike** arrived at the university to enroll, he didn't have a study subject. In fact, he didn't have a clue what he wanted to do with his life, let alone what subject to take. "I asked the guy who stood behind me in the queue to enroll, what he was majoring in," recalled **Hein**. "He said political science and I remember thinking that sounded interesting, so that's what I enrolled in. "Funny to think what I could have ended up doing! That is how I chose the next four years of my life. Luckily, I really enjoyed it."

During term time, **Mike** worked in the dorms, which gave him a place to sleep every night. In the summer months, he slept in the local park because he couldn't afford to stay in private housing. Yet in true **Mike Hein** style, he didn't let it bother him. In fact, he embraced it. "One year I had a tent, another year a pop-up camper," said **Mike**. "I made the best of it. There's something to be said for camping out with nature. I liked it for the most part."

Mike got his first job as an intern by chance. By this time, he was studying at grad school at the University of Arizona in Tucson on money borrowed from his then girlfriend Trish who he later married and started a family with. He showed-up at his statistics class not knowing that there was an exam that day, so he wasn't prepared. He borrowed a calculator and a pencil from another, friendly student and he went on his way. Two weeks later, he received a phone call from the finance director at the City of South Tucson in Arizona. He said that he was the person who lent him the calculator and the pencil, and he was so impressed with meeting **Mike** that he wanted to offer him an internship. Since that first job, which taught him so much about local government, **Mike** has

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

quickly climbed the corporate ladder; his first City Manager job was at the young age of just 27 years old. He has served in the small towns of Nogales and Marana, Arizona and assistant town manager of Longboat key in Florida. He also served in larger organizations including the City of Tucson and Pima County

In 2018, **Mike** took the job as interim city manager of Groveland, where he expected to stay maybe three months. What he didn't expect was that he quickly fell in love with the city's residents who he discovered care about their home. "People welcomed me to the city," he said. "They were polite, charming, neighborly and I liked that they had a connection to the land, which is of course such a major part of the city. Groveland was always going to grow, and the residents knew it, but I was only too aware that we had to keep its small-town feel." Since then, **Mike** and his team at the City of Groveland have transformed the city and rebranded it 'City with Natural Charm.'

When he's not working, **Mike** loves to play tennis, travel with his partner and her kids across the globe and ride his motorbike solo cross country a couple of times a year. His big passion is reading. He encourages his staff to read for 20 minutes a day, three times a week during work hours because he believes it 'expands the mind.' He also loves spending time with his kids Chloe, Maddie and James and his grandchildren. "I love living here," said **Mike**. "It's the place I call home. My son and his kids all live close, so it couldn't be any better. The two things I like most about Groveland are the people and the potential – it has the potential to live up to its City of Natural Charm motto and I believe it will continue to be the great place it is today for decades to come."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Lake Tablet (FL)
March 20, 2024

Groveland’s vision for 2024 discussed by keynote speaker City Manager Mike Hein

Author: Unknown

In a recent keynote address at the South Lake Chamber of Commerce Breakfast held at Groveland’s Puryear Building, City Manager **Mike Hein** provided a comprehensive update on the City of Groveland. With over 30 years of experience in public service management, **Hein’s** insights shed light on the ambitious initiatives and projects underway in Groveland. One of the initiatives highlighted by **Hein** is Groveland’s first Dark Sky Community in Florida. With growing concerns about light pollution, this designation demonstrates Groveland’s commitment to preserving its natural beauty and promoting sustainability.

Additionally, **Hein** discussed the Turnpike Logistics Center, which boasts Duke Energy as its primary tenant. This development not only promises economic growth but also underscores Groveland’s attractiveness as a business destination. Addressing the pressing issue of traffic management, **Hein** outlined plans for new traffic signals aimed at enhancing safety and efficiency on the city’s roads. Furthermore, the introduction of a Charter School catering to grades K-8 reflects Groveland’s dedication to providing quality education to its residents.

Henry Spellman’s grave is one of the WWI veteran graves that dot the cemetery. Most of the graves in the cemetery are unmarked. In terms of recreational facilities, **Hein** unveiled plans for a sprawling 40-acre playground and park, catering to residents of all ages. This commitment to community well-being extends to the Elese Tomlin Community Center., Highlighting Groveland’s rich history, **Hein** touched upon the restoration efforts at the Oak Tree Union Colored Cemetery of Taylorville. Thought to house 70 interred individuals initially, recent discoveries suggest the presence of 275 graves, emphasizing the importance of preserving the city’s heritage.

For outdoor enthusiasts, **Hein** announced the ongoing development of the South Lake Regional Park, featuring sports fields, batting cages, nature trails, and wildlife observation spots. This expansive park is poised to become a haven for recreational activities and nature appreciation. Infrastructure upgrades remain a priority for Groveland, with plans for the realignment of State Road 50 and the introduction of a new wastewater treatment plant. These developments underscore the city’s commitment to sustainable growth.

Mike Hein’s extensive background in public service management, including stints in cities such as Nogales, Marana, and Tucson, positions him as a visionary leader for Groveland. With a Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin – Steven’s Point and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Arizona, **Hein’s** expertise is complemented by his completion of the program for Senior Executives in State and Local Governments at Harvard University JFK School.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clermont Sun (FL)
May 10, 2023

The green, green grass of home

Author: Larry H. Oskin

While Groveland is one of the fastest growing cities in Florida, city managers have promised that the area will never be overdeveloped. At a recent South Lake Chamber of Commerce breakfast, members were told that half of the land in Groveland will always remain as green space and can only be used for agriculture use or as a conservation area. With housing subdivisions seemingly popping-up all over South Lake every few months, this will be welcome news to residents who live in the 50 plus miles size city.

At the breakfast event, keynote speaker Groveland City Manager **Michael Hein** gave a presentation on the city’s intent to maintain its natural charm and beauty while finding ways to deal with the growth already approved by past administrations. The city of Groveland is finding ways for the growth to pay for itself with the additional demands being placed on the city. Some of the revenue sources include partnerships with the private sector as well as county and state grants totaling over \$12 million. “Great cities don’t just happen. Groveland’s future is being secured through strategic, intentional planning, leadership by a well-informed council, involvement of our business and faith-based communities and, most importantly, by the support of residents who live here.”

Hein also announced that Groveland has applied to become the first certified International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) community in Florida. The city is expecting a determination this summer. If approved, it would be a major achievement towards keeping the city’s promise to stay as green as possible. DSP was founded in 2001 to encourage communities, parks and protected areas around the world to preserve and protect dark sites through responsible lighting policies and public education. **Hein** said that Groveland is also working on plans for several additional large industrial complexes and with major employers coming to the Christopher C. Ford Commerce Park near US 27 and the Florida Turnpike, there are expected to be hundreds of new jobs created in the area.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

South Lake Tablet
February 1, 2022

The City Spotlight Shines On The City of Groveland

During a recent city council meeting, the City of Groveland received three prestigious awards:

- The 2021 Regional Deal of the Year Award from the Florida Economic Development Council.
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for Groveland’s Annual Budget for Fiscal Year beginning October 01, 2020.
- The Live Well Foundation Grant awarded much-needed funds to Groveland and its Partner United Health and Wellness Initiatives. The check for \$6,200,000 will be awarded incrementally over a three-year period.

At the 2022 South Lake Chamber of Commerce Best of South Lake Gala, The prestigious Heritage Award was awarded to **Michael Hein** and The City of Groveland. The 2022 Heritage Award recognizes a business or community that has shown continued contributions to the South Lake business community and has been active in the community for 25 years or more.

The City of Groveland is celebrating 32 years of Chamber membership in 2022. They are also celebrating their 100-year anniversary. This City has transformed the culture of all city departments and improved the services that they provide. In recent years, it has rebranded itself as “the City of Natural Charm” and has helped to create economic prosperity in Lake County. It has helped attract significant business investment that has resulted in hundreds of good-paying jobs. These accomplishments include:

- The Grand Opening of Kroger in June 2021. This 375,00 square foot facility provides premier grocery delivery to our residents and added more than 600 jobs to our local economy. This project was recognized by the Florida Economic Development Council as 2021’s Regional Deal of the Year.

Also in 2021, Amazon held a grand opening for a 1,000,000 square foot Last-Mile Delivery Station that added more than 200 jobs to the local economy. Construction is underway for a 425,000 square foot class A speculative Distribution Center on American Way in the Christopher C. Ford Commerce Park that will bring \$26 million dollars in investment to Lake County. This project is sure to bring more excellent jobs and prosperity to our local communities. (to learn more, visit 2022 Best of South Lake)

CONGRATULATIONS To The Charming City

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Lake Tablet (FL)
March 23, 2022

Groveland City Manager Mike Hein packed the house at the SLCC breakfast

Author: Unknown

Groveland City Manager **Mike Hein** was the featured speaker at the South Lake Chamber Breakfast on March 18. The early morning breakfast brought business and community leaders from across south Lake to the E.L. Puryear Building in Groveland to hear an update on The City With Natural Charm. **Hein** is not only a charming city manager and speaker but enjoys boasting about all the new and exciting things happening in Groveland and, nobody can tell it better than **Mike**. However, was the building filled to capacity to hear **Mike** speak or to see if he was wearing the green pants he wears to such occasions?

Why the green pants? Some might guess he’s wearing the green for St. Patrick’s Day! The truth he explains is in recognition of the Groveland Greenbacks. History has it that the name Greenbacks came from the man who donated large sums of money near the end of the Great Depression in 1939 to build the High School. When asked what he’d like to name the school, he said, “Well, there’s nothing stronger than the U.S. Dollar. Let the school be called, ‘The Groveland Greenbacks.’” When **Mike** was hired, he promised the city council that he’d wear the jeans at special events, “Go Greenbacks”. That was over 4 years ago and the jeans still fit.

Mike Hein was appointed City Manager for the City of Groveland in March 2018. Prior to relocating to the City of Groveland, **Hein** managed several other cities, including the cities of Nogales, Marana, and Tucson in Arizona. **Hein** is a senior executive with over 30 years of experience in public service management. City Manager **Hein** received his Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point and completed his Master of Public Administration from the University of Arizona. He then went on to complete the program for Senior Executives in State and Local Governments at Harvard University JFK School.

Below are just a few of the highlights that the city manager spoke of during his presentation: Many milestones have been reached this year: Groveland is celebrating its 100th anniversary, with Centennial celebrations going on throughout the year. Lake Catherine Blueberry Farm, The First Baptist Church, and the South Lake Chamber of Commerce also celebrate centennial celebrations. Faith Neighborhood Center turns 50. Ford Commerce Park has brought approximately 3,341,189 sq ft of building space to thriving businesses, including Kroger Distribution Center, Amazon Distribution Center, Lakeview Industrial Properties Distribution.

Lots of new businesses and housing developments are planned or are already part of the Groveland community. And, changing the face of the city, Groveland has received full funding for right-of-way acquisition totaling \$39.9 million to purchase needed properties throughout the next two years for the long-awaited State Road 50 realignments. Happy Birthday, Groveland. May the City With Natural Charm create another 100 years of Charming Developments.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clermont Sun (FL)
October 20, 2021

Temper flares over Cherry Lake Park issue

Author: Steve Steiner

For whatever reason, for Groveland city councilors, the issue of Cherry Lake Park will not go away. Nor will another issue, that of the traffic flow into the Cranes Landing subdivision, which borders upon South Lake High School. Of the latter, traffic flow into the subdivision has been taking place for more than one school year, according to Theresa LaBree, who has reached out to city leaders and staff on previous occasions. LaBree contends that since the installation of speed bumps (also referred to as speed tables) on Silver Eagle Road (which is also County Road 565), and is the main thoroughfare that leads to the high school, has prompted drivers to cut through the front entrance of the subdivision to get to the back entrance, which leads to the high school, in an effort to bypass the speed bumps.

In the process, those using the roads through Cranes Landing have caused a number of adverse situations, ranging from blocking people’s driveways; driving onto and/or parking on people’s properties — in one instance, vehicles parked right up to a swimming pool, claimed LaBree — block view of the stop sign at the back entrance; knocked down or stolen no parking signs; blocked fire hydrants; as well as in the afternoon, waiting to pick up students as school lets out, to park on both sides of a street. She once again addressed city councilors during the public comment section of the city council meeting of Oct. 4. It appeared she found a sympathetic ear with Councilor/Vice Mayor Mike Smith. “It’s been a recurrent problem there a long time,” said Smith. He added that he would get together with Groveland Police Chief and at least a city staffer (whom he did not name, nor mention which department).

However, Mayor Evelyn Wilson felt this is an issue that’s broader than just the requirement of Groveland to address. “The county commissioners need to get involved,” Wilson said. This is because at least part of Silver Eagle Road is a county, and not City of Groveland, road, said LaBree in a separate conversation with the *News Leader* on Wednesday, Oct. 6. In an email response, City Manager **Michael Hein** acknowledged the school traffic has been an issue for some time and that more still is to be done. “The City has stepped up in a variety of ways over the past couple of years,” **Hein** stated in an email reply to the newspaper, and provided examples of efforts made by the police chief and the public works director. **Hein** concluded in his email response on the issue that both Police Chief Ramsey and Public Works Director TJ Fish had met with LaBree, along with South Lake High School Principal Benson and several other residents of the area. “They came to a consensus regarding some traffic control measures that they will be initiating this coming Monday,” stated **Hein**.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Lake Tablet (FL)
November 22, 2020

City Manager Michael Hein is helping to shape and rebrand Groveland’s future

Author: Larry H. Oskin

Groveland’s City Manager **Michael Hein** has successfully helped Groveland achieve prestigious local and national attention with teamwork and creative leadership. Originally an orphaned child from Milwaukee, he was fostered and then adopted by a low-income blue-collar family that shared love, inspiration, and common-sense ideals. He was faced with numerous family challenges, some homeless experiences and poverty. Even though **Michael** had no long-term goals nor any ambition to enter college, his best friends suggested it would be fun for all of them to go to a state university. Money was a big obstacle but a friendly teacher helped to pay for his college application fees. After being accepted with a low-income support scholarship grant, he went to register for college. While standing in line, the boy next to him asked what he planned to major in. **Hein** didn’t even know what a major was, so he asked. When the other boy said he was going to major in Political Science, **Hein** said, “OK, I’ll try that too!” He worked very hard and proceeded to achieve a 4-year Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science. After graduation, he traveled by plane for the first time to Arizona with all his personal belongings and \$20. Today, **Hein** holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from Stevens Point, Wisconsin and a Master of Public Administration Degree from the University of Arizona in Tucson. He proudly holds other government study certifications and diplomas from Harvard University JFK School and in Economic Development from the National Development Council. After college, he began to professionally work for a series of city governments in the Tucson area. Most roles were related to high-profile positions such as the Director of Community and Economic Development, Director of Planning and Zoning, City Finance Director, Assistant City Administrator, Assistant Town Manager, Town Manager and as a Deputy County Commissioner. He was hired as the City Manager of Tucson, Arizona for 4 years before becoming the Director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

Hein’s first wife passed away from cancer. He later remarried and they relocated to Florida five years ago to pursue career change opportunities. **Hein** said he actually moved to Florida to support his wife’s career path as Executive Director of the Sarasota Art Museum with Ringling College in Sarasota. He took on the role of assistant town manager of Longboat Key. **Hein** was first introduced to Groveland by an executive head hunter in 2017. He researched Groveland’s history and discovered a unique community with many challenges. When he first visited the city, he immediately loved the landscape, the rolling hills, the climate and the people. He saw that the city had very old and tired facilities with little to no training and support for the government employees. However, all of the people he met were very proud of Groveland and the services they were providing to the public. He fell in love with Groveland. **Hein** notes, “I was searching for a new place for a better quality of life and a place where I could be the best me. I found it all here in Groveland! I was quite inspired by the optimism and possibilities in Groveland”. **Hein** saw that he had the opportunity to make a positive impact on the growth and well-being of the city and when he was immediately offered a position as an Interim City Manager of Groveland to test the waters for at least 3 months. He said, “yes”! He has since become Groveland’s City Manager. In March 2018,

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Hein explained to the Mayor and City Council that they had all of the puzzle pieces, yet they still needed to discover and put together the big picture. They all began to work together to create challenging objectives and realistic goals. With the positive pressures of quick growth and the need for a new Master Plan, they rebranded the city with a new slogan, “*Groveland – A City of Natural Charm!*” They all wanted to protect the natural landscape, while developing progressive new codes and guidelines to properly plan positive new growth. Together they examined what they had and what they really needed to improve. They knew that they had to redevelop the Highway 50 Route for traffic. They needed to invest in planning for storms, weather challenges, safe water supply, utilities, parking, recreation and many needed community services.

Michael Hein shares, “I am a long-term thinking public servant. I want our Master Plan to help us all succeed long after I am here. We need to create responsible land use and development utilizing a healthy mixture of our natural open spaces while providing superior economic growth and opportunities.” Groveland has annexed over 1000 acres, which in turn will bring in over one million dollars in new tax revenues. With a downtown revitalization in the works, many new businesses opening and companies like Kroger-Ocado coming here to Groveland with their safe Internet-based food distribution center, we really do have a lot to look forward to. The Master Plan and branding of the City of Groveland maintains and preserves Groveland’s lands, lakes, community and economic development for years to come. Groveland is already planning and executing their long-term plans to make Downtown Groveland as polished, positive and successful as possible. **Hein** proudly describes the city’s plans and accomplishments, “We plan to maintain and improve our parks and recreational areas with a new development code. We are creating a new mixed-use agricultural community and want to develop our much-needed Groveland arts and cultural programs. The dedication on the new public safety facility to house community development with the fire and police departments will be held on Founder’s Day, March 2021. We recently opened our third Groveland fire station with a supportive grant to help us hire 12 new firefighters. I know a lot of our work is seemingly invisible, yet all of our plans are poised and geared to help us not only catch up, but to get a head start on our success-oriented future. With help from a fifty-million-dollar Florida state grant for land acquisition, Route 50 will soon safely circumvent and protect the downtown area. Olive Isle is open and in the works for the remarkable investment and creation of a new farm to table community resource, headed by Keith Keough, a world-renown chef from Groveland”.

Today, **Michael Hein** supervises all day-to-day City of Groveland operations, management and municipal services. Their new Master Plan is in the works. The new Highway 50 bypass is expected to become a reality in two years when Groveland Centennial is celebrated in March 2022. Under his leadership, they are busily working together on development of strategic planning workshops to achieve short, medium and long-term goals. Groveland is proud of its diverse history, resources, services, residents, businesses and future plans. When **Michael Hein** was asked about the Groveland City Mission and Motto, he replied, “They are both important! With Groveland’s motto, we must always harmonize and align our community resources, land development, people, economics and assets with each other. Our slogan describes that our arts, culture and organizations must all work together. **Hein** is very grateful to the City Mayor, the City Council and the Groveland residents for their positive support. He adds, “Our growing Groveland recognition continues to help our long-term success story.”

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South Lake Press (FL)
April 22, 2020

Amazon warehouse a possibility – Developer linked to Amazon submitted plans for a distribution center near Groveland

Author: Roxanne Brown

Late last week, Groveland city officials learned that an Atlanta-based developer has its eyes set on a 48-acre parcel of land located in the Ford Commerce Park in unincorporated Lake County. The developer, identified as Seefried Industrial Properties, has been linked to various projects involving the construction of large warehouses or fulfillment centers for distribution-based companies, including Amazon. Rumors are now swirling that the mega e-retailer could be setting up shop near Groveland. And they come just months after Kroger-Ocado broke ground on a new 375,000-square-foot grocery distribution facility expected to create 400 jobs in the same area. If it is Amazon, city officials say it could have a huge economic impact on not just Groveland, but the entire region. Site plans submitted to Lake County Planning and Zoning show that Seefried has proposed building a 202,044-square-foot distribution center on the northwest corner of the intersection between Republic Drive and Independence Boulevard, according to Tim Maslow, Groveland’s Community Development Director. A rendering also includes areas for van loading, stacking and loading, as well as van and associate parking. This week, the county also confirmed that an application – dubbed “DFL8-Groveland Last Mile” – was received on April 6. And on April 8, a letter from Lake County Senior Planner Sheila Short to Seefried’s Senior Vice President Paul Seefried, said the application “has been found adequate to begin the review process.” The application includes accommodations for a traffic study and asks for a rezoning of the property.

On Friday, however, Short said she could not elaborate on the next step for the project or how long it would take, being that she is only in charge of intake. Steve Green, the assigned case manager for the project, was not available for comment since he is out of the office until next week, Short said. As for Groveland, City Manager **Mike Hein** said the city has already reached out to the developer to coordinate details about a utilities agreement. The company would more than likely connect to Groveland’s utility lines for water and sewer. **Hein** also said the city plans on talking to Seefried about annexing into Groveland. “We will be engaging in conversations about the benefits of annexing into the municipality,” said **Hein**. “We will start those conversations concurrently with the county’s planning process.”

Hein said he is not surprised by the company’s interest in coming to Groveland, considering that the Kroger-Ocado distribution center – a similar venture in size, scope and purpose, under construction just down the street from where Seefried’s development is proposed. In his letter to **Hein**, Maslow also said: “Staff views this opportunity as similar to the recent Kroeger/Ocado development in terms of location, scale, and potential as a major employer in the City. We strongly feel that our relationship with Kroeger and Ocado makes a strong case for the developer and owner to choose annexing into the City, along with several other benefits that will be presented”

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The letter further reads: “Next steps include reaching out to Lake County staff, including Elevate Lake and their Planning Department, to work in tandem in welcoming the project’s developer and property owner into the City of Groveland and making a strong case for annexing into the City. Staff will also be reaching out to the City’s Attorney Anita Geraci-Carver to lay out the most expedited path toward annexation in light of Covid-19 and its impact on holding public hearings.” Groveland’s Vice Mayor Mike Radzik called the opportunity “absolutely incredible,” whether the developer annexes into the city or not.

Radzik said the way he sees it is that no annexation would mean the loss of property taxes for Groveland but what the construction of a new distribution center of that size and scope, especially if it should turn out to be Amazon as rumored, would outweigh that in terms of discretionary dollars. Radzik said the center would boost the city’s economy by creating jobs and attracting other new businesses, people, housing and more, plus the amount of sales tax revenue it would create would be substantial. He said U.S. Highway 27 could be especially affected. “Highway 27 would see a spike as far as hotels, restaurants or otherwise,” Radzik said.

Still, Radzik said an annexation into Groveland would be the ideal scenario. “I would imagine that the developers that are looking to do this probably have looked at the Kroger/Ocada project and have seen the relationship they have with Groveland and noticed how well we’ve responded to their needs,” Radzik said. “It was estimated that Kroger would generate \$67 million to the economy and I could just imagine what Amazon, if that is what is coming, would provide.” Requests for comment by email and phone to Seefried went unanswered.

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South Lake Press (FL)
December 11, 2019

Groveland property owners receiving city rebate

Author: Roxanne Brown

In the past weeks, nearly 6,000 home and business owners saw the fruits of a decision city leaders made to redistribute \$1.4 million that was sitting in the city’s building fund for several years. A total of 5,900 property owners received a \$234.44 check. City Manager **Mike Hein** said the money, which came from building permit fees, can only be used to enforce the building code, per Florida law. He said past administrations, aware the funds were accumulating, had not been able to pinpoint a specific use for the money, so the fund kept growing.

After **Hein** came on board in March 2018 however, he, with Finance Director John Ter Louw and other staff, were approached by Mayor Evelyn Wilson and asked to look into the matter. “I got with the city attorney, the finance director to discuss how it could be used and instead, figured it would be more prudent to refund it,” **Hein** said, explaining that the suggestion then went to City Council members for a final vote.

According to Wilson, she said citizens and city officials had been made aware of the surplus in 2017 by her husband and local watchdog Glenn Wilson before she was elected mayor. She said he pointed it out at a city meeting and asked about the plans for the money, suggesting it not go back to developers. Regardless, staff seemed intent on saving it for the city’s use at some point, she said. “We had heard of the surplus and we knew that you just couldn’t spend it on anything,” Wilson said. “To have a surplus like that doesn’t help anyone. Then, it becomes questionable.”

Ter Louw said after extensive financial and legal review, it was decided that the best option for both the city as a whole and for taxpayers was to issue rebate checks. **Hein** said the city was not really benefitting from the surplus because it continued with sufficient reserves and revenues to adequately and effectively enforce building codes. He also said that to avoid a future surplus, the city has drastically reduced building permit fees. “It shouldn’t build up again,” **Hein** said.

Hein said since September when the council unanimously agreed, he and his staff have been working out disbursement details and last week, after Ter Louw and finance department employees stuffed the envelopes with individual checks, they were mailed out. **Hein** said they worked as quickly as possible to make sure the checks were received by property owners before Christmas as an added gesture. “It was an unconventional approach and I applaud the mayor, council and staff for having the restraint to not spend the surplus fund and bring the issue to everyone’s attention,” **Hein** said. “In 30 years in public service, I’m not aware of a local government issuing refund checks and just so motivated to serve the public and do the right thing.”

In a City of Groveland Facebook post on November 26, a note to residents says: “As of now, many of you may have received a rebated check from the City of Groveland, due to enhanced efficiencies and a surplus in funds in our building department from the collection of fees.” “Our City Council

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weighed many options as to how they could handle these funds, and chose to distribute the surplus to all improved property owners as of October 1st, within Groveland city limits. This rebate is not a scam, and will not have to be returned to the City in anyway. Thank you for choosing Groveland as your place to call home!” Comments from residents mostly varied from expressions of surprise and gratitude.

Sarah Cardwell wrote: “Very nice surprise. I appreciate this so much and think it speaks volumes of the people running our city.” “Imagine that. A city with a surplus. Then imagine that they give it back to its citizens. Hard to believe but it's true. Congratulations city of Groveland. Job well done,” Joann Felice wrote. Wilson said she would like to see citizens keep the money in Groveland by patronizing local businesses because until more recently, Groveland didn't have many. “Our businesses are really coming into the city now. We've definitely turned a corner,” Wilson said.

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)
October 13, 2019

Groveland water supply in jeopardy

Author: Lauren Ritchie

This is a tale about what bad public management looks like - not to mention what it costs - when a community wants something so badly that it goes outside the bounds of good judgment to get it. Two words for you, dear reader: Groveland and \$4.3 million. Oh, ouch, that's a lot of money to fall under the category of "bad idea." Let's take a look at what happened and how City Manager **Mike Hein**, who has been on board since early last year, has worked to reduce the amount by \$2.5 million. First, remember that Groveland wants nothing more than to grow like dandelions after rain. These folks would divide their grandma's garden patch and build a whole subdivision of birdhouses if they thought it would bring in more tax revenue. Good thing for grandma's green beans that birdhouses don't add taxable value.

This is the city that so desperately wanted to expand that in a failed build-it-and-they-will-come bid for more houses that it doubled the size of one of its sewage plants at a cost of \$10 million. Growth didn't come. City residents were left paying for a 40-year loan of \$6 million that will cost \$13 million after interest. That was the first foolish thing the city did to attract growth. Then in 2014, Groveland was faced with the decision of whether to approve the largest subdivision ever built in Lake County, called Villa City. It needed a steady supply of water and was expected to be under construction by now. (It's not.) The amount of water Villa City would draw would have exceeded Groveland's allotted amount, so the city applied to the St. Johns River Water Management District - that's the agency that controls how much water big users can suck out of the underground aquifer - to increase its permit to withdraw up to 4.1 million gallons per day. The permit states, "Allocations from 2023 through 2038 are dependent on timely and complete implementation of specific water supply and recharge enhancement projects in accordance with the permit conditions." Water supply and recharge enhancement projects. Those are the key words in this permit.

In exchange for getting a particularly generous water-use permit that would handle Villa City, Groveland set a precedent that other municipalities abhorred - it agreed to give something in return for getting water. And the "give" in this case was an expensive project. The city would have to build a pipeline from a stormwater runoff lake at Waterside Pointe subdivision on State Road 50 to an area near Apshawa Lake about two miles away, where water is recharged quickly into the Upper Floridan. It would have to pump at least 75 million gallons a year and be operating by 2022. Cost: \$4.3 million. This is what is known as a foolish deal. This deal and others like it are seldom counted when pro-growth forces sing the praises of how much money new subdivisions bring in for any given area. **Hein** was horrified, and no wonder. Consider that the amount is equivalent to about a fifth of the city's general budget for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. And that failure to live up to the deal jeopardized the city's water supply. No simple solution was readily available. Instead, **Hein** came up with a creative one that involves several transactions that are to start this week. Here's how it will work:

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First, the city will buy the now-closed golf course at the Palisades Country Club development, which includes a clubhouse, from the developer. That move was complicated because the owner, a New Jersey development corporation, had granted the first right of refusal to another developer, then got into disputes with the second corporation, resulting in an adversarial stalemate. When the developers proposed building townhouses on the failing golf course, residents objected, and the course closed in 2015, leaving what **Hein** described as a scene from an apocalypse movie. "The tables in the clubhouse are still set, sugar packets are on the tables," he said. The \$2.3 million deal for the golf course is to close before the end of the week.

Then, the city voluntarily will "retire" the Palisades' permit to use 300 million gallons per year of surface water from Lake Minneola and Spring Lake and ground water from the Floridan aquifer for irrigation of 177 acres of golf course turf. That move will get the city out of its obligation to construct the \$4.3 million pipeline because it "saved" the water that could have gone to the golf course.

Afterward, the plan is to sell the course and clubhouse, along with the pro shop, lockers and everything else in the building, to the Palisades Homeowner Association for \$500,000, a loss of \$1.8 million for Groveland taxpayers. Still, when the math is said and done, the city will have spent \$1.8 million instead of \$4.3 million on a pipeline, a savings of \$2.5 million. This was the second time Groveland has had to pay to learn a very expensive lesson about its greed for growth. How many more "lessons" will taxpayers stand for?

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The Daily Commercial (FL)
July 28, 2019

A storage room at Groveland City Hall has found

Author: Linda Florea

A storage room at Groveland City Hall has found new life as a break room for city workers and a place for the community. Once filled with old furniture and boxes, the room has been transformed into a bright and airy space with comfortable furniture, artwork of local children and even a fire station ladder. The room serves a number of purposes for the city: break room, meeting room, a place to go for privacy. “We basically took that space and I asked the public services staff to give me a little rail to put some artwork up,” said City Manager **Mike Hein**. “They astonished me when I turned the corner and saw a ladder.”

While the fire department no longer needed the ladder, it had a history all its own. The ladder is mounted on a brick wall that used to be an exterior wall of the fire station. The 24-foot extension ladder, named Climey, served the city fire department for 31 years on two different trucks. Notes on the ladder tell its history. For example, it was used during the four-alarm Groveland High School fire in the 1980s. Firefighters from around the county worked 12 hours to extinguish the blaze and saved most of the school building so students could return to classes the following year. “The other thing I do is try to connect community with City Hall, because a lot of people don’t know what happens here,” **Hein** said.

Hein reached out to the elementary school and had an art teacher ask students to create pictures about what Groveland means to them. The artwork was brought into the room and displayed on the ladder. In front of their families and city staff, the students described what they were thinking when they made their pictures. **Hein** said when the new school year begins he plans on continuing to bring students into City Hall and to showcase their artwork to promote a positive experience with government. “There’s a lot of synergy connecting the past with the present and the future,” he said. “The past is the old wall and the ladder reminding us of where we came from, and a trajectory of the future is with the artwork of the students.”

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The Daily Commercial (FL)
July 21, 2019

Groveland sees new fulfillment center as ‘game changer’

Author: Roxanne Brown

City officials are readying for a celebration this week intended to welcome grocery giants Kroger and Ocado to their future home in Groveland that, when built, will be only their second such high-tech customer fulfillment center in the United States. The event, scheduled to take place at 10 a.m. Wednesday at 7925 American Way in Groveland, will include a ceremonial groundbreaking, plus a sneak peek into the robotics technology that U.K.-based Ocado is known for.

James O'Brien, Kroger's network strategy project manager, said in an email Friday afternoon that the company is excited about its partnership with Groveland and its future presence in Lake County and Central Florida. "Kroger sought out a strategic partnership with a community that would help us reach our goals and purpose in Feeding the Human Spirit. The City of Groveland and its officials to date have been a tremendous partner in our vision to bring an unparalleled home delivery solution to the people and communities of Central Florida," O'Brien wrote. "The City has been dedicated to the project since its inception and we couldn't be happier to partner with the great people of Groveland."

According to officials, Kroger is investing \$55 million of the \$125 million overall investment to build the approximately 375,000-square-foot facility that is expected to create 400 high-paying jobs at an average annual salary of \$52,000 locally. Beyond that, Kroger has committed to building 20 customer fulfillment centers nationwide, powered by Ocado, to accelerate its ability to provide customers with anything, anytime and anywhere. The customer fulfillment center model — an automated warehouse facility with digital and robotic capabilities, also known as a "shed" — will be replicated to serve customers across America, said Kroger representatives. In June, the first fulfillment center of its kind in America broke ground in Monroe, Ohio.

The Groveland fulfillment center, like the one in Monroe, is expected to be finished by early 2021 and already, city, county and state officials are calling it a "game changer." "We're quite excited because (to Groveland), it'll mean an additional employment base directly, along with all the indirect benefit of suppliers that will further assist with bolstering an already strong housing market and assist with driving ancillary economic development, like restaurants and retail," City Manager **Mike Hein** said. "It is very significant because no matter what happens in the national economy, this project will certainly reinforce the health of the local economy now and into the future."

Lake County Commission Chairwoman Leslie Campione, who also expressed excitement about the venture, said the project "will put Lake County on the cutting edge of the e-commerce industry" and "is precisely the type of company we have been working to attract." Jamal Sowell, president & CEO of Enterprise Florida Inc., said in a statement when the project was first announced, "Enterprise Florida is thrilled Kroger and Ocado have decided to locate their new customer fulfillment center in

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Central Florida. We look forward to your success here in the Sunshine State." Because of that, the Lake County Commission earlier this year approved a Lake County Economic Development Grant for "Project Infinity," the project's code name, according to county documents, that will be based on the percent difference between the value of the undeveloped property and the improved property value.

The city of Groveland is waiving building department permit fees and is providing \$1.4 million in business incentives, according to city documents. It's giving Kroger and Ocado breaks on impact fees and a job growth incentive that comes out to \$1,000 per new job. In turn, **Hein** said since the announcement in March of Kroger and Ocado's arrival, the city has seen an increased interest in surrounding areas regarding other distribution centers. The attraction can be compared to the common occurrence of companies like Home Depot and Lowe's or CVS and Walgreen's ending up in close proximity to one another.

Hein said he thinks that type of thing may result when companies in like industries see that another of its kind sees the worthiness of an investment into a particular community. "As it turns out, we have seen an increase in inquiries for similar types of facilities," **Hein** said. **Hein** said the city, earlier this month, met with representatives of both companies to finalize agreements and discuss plans with the preconstruction development team. **Hein** said thus far, those plans indicate that the new facility will be built on one of three contiguous parcels of land Kroger purchased. **Hein** said he looks forward to learning what future plans are in store.

Kroger, on Friday, offered a hint. "We are looking forward to working with the City of Groveland for years to come as we make strides together to accomplish one of Kroger's goals of Zero Hunger Zero Waste by 2025," O'Brien wrote. Last month, Kroger, though not physically present, also made a big splash at the city's groundbreaking celebration of its new Public Safety Complex by having 24 cases of Kroger Diet Root Beer delivered to the event after hearing that the drink was Mayor Evelyn Wilson's favorite Kroger beverage. On Wednesday, Kroger and Ocado representatives will be joined at their own groundbreaking by Lake County and Groveland officials. The public is invited to attend the ceremony, but officials warn that since the location is an active site, open-toed, platform or high-heel shoes are strongly discouraged.

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The Daily Commercial (FL)
July 18, 2019

Municipal elections come at a cost

Author: Roxanne Brown

Citizens will experience a rarity ahead of the Nov. 5 general election in Groveland: no campaign signs on city right-of-ways or along city streets, no ads or campaign flyers in their mailboxes and no candidates or their supporters calling, knocking on doors to introduce themselves or standing at busy intersections waving signs. That’s because for the first time since 2005, the furthest election records available to the city clerk go, the city will have no election to speak of. Groveland’s qualifying was from noon June 17 to noon on June 21, and no one turned in packets except for District 2 and 4 incumbents Mike Radzik and Dwane Mike Smith. As a result, they will automatically retain their seats because they are running unopposed.

City Manager **Mike Hein** said the topic is the buzz around town and, as it turns out, may prove beneficial in more ways than one. “I find it remarkable, or others have remarked to me how interesting it is, that for the first time in recent memory, that there hasn’t been a contested election in the city of Groveland,” **Hein** said. “The city has gone through some (challenging) periods from a management standpoint, as well as a political standpoint.” **Hein** said the city charter specifies two-year council terms and alternating election cycles. Thus, having an election every year is a matter of fact unless a race is uncontested. Having said that, **Hein** said the election season and qualifying period always falls right around the budgeting cycles and processes, something the city will not have to worry about this time. “It’s a collateral issue that can’t be discounted. But this year, it (budget season) will be free from any outside interest, disruption or concern from political posturing,” **Hein** said. “There will also be an economic savings to the public,” he added, speaking of the way municipal elections are handled by the local elections office when held on odd years.

Lake County Supervisor of Elections Alan Hays said when a municipal election does not coincide with a county, state or federal election, any associated costs are the responsibility of individual municipalities holding the election. “Some cities have revised their election cycles to coincide with the county’s election cycle to not incur the costs, but it all revolves around local rule. We treasure the ability to make our own decisions. That’s what makes America,” Hays said. In 2017, for instance, there were five cities that incurred election costs, which includes paper for ballots, having ballots printed, the mailing and counting of absentee ballots, personnel training and availability for manning polling places and securely transporting ballots for counting. Some cities have more polling places than others, which would mean higher costs. Also, if anything about elections is posted online or scanned onto a city website, it must be converted to be ADA compliant for the visually impaired. Still, the main bulk of the cost, Hays said, is personnel. “We try to do anything we can to save cities money, so if we can get all the questions and/or candidates on one piece of paper, we’ll do that. But as far as personnel goes, we train every worker for each election by statute,” Hays said.

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During the last election, the costs for elections ranged from \$2,300 total that Mascotte paid (\$1,400 for personnel) to \$19,000 that it cost Clermont (\$13,000 for personnel.) Additionally, Astatula paid \$3,300 (\$1,760 for personnel), Groveland paid \$9,000 (\$5,500 for personnel) and Mount Dora paid \$15,000 (\$11,000 for personnel.) Then there is the cost to cover code enforcement policies, **Hein** said. “One factor that the community will immediately recognize is the lack of political signs, because I know that’s a very salient issue in Groveland with the location and content of signs,” **Hein** said. “So, in addition to the direct cost of not having to have an election, we will benefit from not having the indirect costs of code enforcement and staff resources devoted towards monitoring and enforcing ordinances involving political campaign signs.”

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The Daily Commercial (FL)
June 26, 2019

Groveland to start work on \$10-million public safety complex

Author: Roxanne Brown

When Fire Chief Willie Morgan joined the city more than 40 years ago, Groveland's fire station was located in a two-car garage behind City Hall. In the 1990s, the fire department moved into the old Public Works barn, which was built in the 1960s, and it is still there today. The police department is also housed in nearby buildings that date back to the 1960s. Before long, however, both departments will move into a new 33,000-square-foot Public Safety Complex that they will share. The city will break ground on the facility at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, July 3 at 6825 State Road 50, next to Tractor Supply. "Oh, we've been waiting on this for years. It's been a long time coming and we are very excited," Morgan said. "The new facility will have all the modern advances and equipment and it will be right up there with the best of the county. From when I started out to what we will have is nothing like I could've ever imagined."

Groveland City Manager **Mike Hein** said Morgan, Police Chief Shawn Ramsey and Mayor Evelyn Wilson are expected to speak at the event about the vision for the new facility. **Hein** said this is Groveland's biggest project yet. "So many people have waited so many years for this. It is the most significant vertical project or public facility the city has ever built," he said.

When finished, the new Public Safety Complex will house the police and fire departments, as well as an Emergency Operation Center (EOC) that will serve as the city's communication center during storms and other emergencies. The multi-level building will also feature an ambulance bay, training classrooms, Groveland's community development department and more. For firefighters, the new facility also means safer working conditions. It will offer decontamination safety features designed to allow first responders to cleanse themselves of possible cancer-causing agents after calls. Morgan said the fire trucks will actually be equipped with units that eliminate exhaust fumes before they enter the bays.

After council members approved the construction of the facility, GatorSkitch Corp., an architectural firm based in Clermont, was awarded the project design. **Hein** said GatorSkitch estimated that the new complex will cost about \$10.5 million. The city has received five construction bids ranging from \$8.7 million to \$10.6 million. On July 1, council members will award a bid, and construction is expected to begin sometime in August. **Hein** said the money is already budgeted, so the project won't result in a tax increase for property owners. "We budgeted just over \$10 million this fiscal year so we can pay for the building without impacting future budget cycles," he said.

Vice Mayor Mike Radzik said on Facebook that the new facility will improve response times for the police and fire departments. "The men and women who put their life on the line for our residents deserve a good quality area to work, not to mention the station needed to be closer to the east side so we can respond to calls for service quickly. This, in turn, will help keep homeowners' insurance lower to an extent. As for affordability, we collect fees on all new construction specific for police

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

and fire that have to be used for new capital equipment," Radzik wrote. **Hein** said he cannot wait to see the faces of all of the city's first responders at the groundbreaking and as the project begins to take shape. "We appreciate and want to thank all the women and men who have put up with less than ideal work conditions for so long. We are excited for what they have to look forward to," **Hein** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)
February 14, 2019

Groveland moves to rebrand itself

Author: Stephen Hudak

The orange is out in Groveland, where City Council members have re-branded the former citrus community as the "City with Natural Charm," changing the municipal logo to reflect its lakes and scenic features. The civic change of identity comes about a month after the Florida Clemency Board, led by new Gov. Ron DeSantis, issued pardons posthumously to four young black men who had been known internationally as the Groveland Four since 1949, when they were accused of raping Norma Lee Padgett, a married white teenager. Groveland's former logo featured an orange, the city's staple crop from the 1940s to the 1980s. The city's slogan had been, "City with a future - watch us grow."

City Manager **Mike Hein** said the idea for a new look and slogan arose from a series of focus groups and citizen vision sessions conducted long before DeSantis' initiative to extend pardons to Charles Greenlee, Ernest Thomas, Samuel Shepherd and Walter Irvin for the abuse and racial injustices they endured in Lake County. The new logo approved this week features an artistic rendering of the letter "G" with a green upper half and a blue lower half intended to represent ripples on a lake. The design reflects not only the city's agricultural assets, which include the Cherrylake tree farm, a multimillion-dollar commercial landscaping firm, and Lake Catherine Blueberries but also its array of water bodies, including lakes Lucy and David. "We're excited about this new look, which captures what people love about Groveland," Mayor Evelyn Wilson said.

Hein said the orange would always hold sentimental value but doesn't accurately portray the city today. Citrus which was king in Groveland after World War II but began to dwindle in the 1980s after killer freezes ruined crops and groves. Located 30 miles west of Orlando, Groveland is one of Central Florida's fastest-growing communities, with a population topping 16,000. **Hein** said the city gradually will replace the old logo with the new one, created by Alarie Design Associates. The logo appears on city stationery, park signs, police vehicles and the water tower.

In an email, Groveland spokeswoman Doris Bloodsworth said city leaders have been discussing a possible re-branding of the city for more than a decade while its population swelled. When **Hein** arrived last spring, he made re-branding a priority. "This was due to the outdated look of the logo and negative feedback about the tagline. They were seen as outdated and ineffective," Bloodsworth said. "Groveland had the same concerns Clermont and other former citrus-related cities had."

Last month, Wilson and City Council members signed their names to a letter that defended Groveland's diversity and insisted the city had been regrettably and unfairly linked to the racial injustices piled on Greenlee, Thomas, Shepherd and Irvin. The letter described the pardons as "an important moment for all Floridians" and said for Groveland "it is not an end but a catalyst to continue a community dialogue on diversity and inclusiveness that started at our very founding."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clickorlando.com (FL)
December 14, 2018

Racial slur written on ‘slave’ doll leads to have crime investigation

Author: Adrianna Iwasinski

A "slave" doll with a racist slur painted on its clothing was left in a workplace truck in Groveland, prompting a hate crime investigation. Steven Parks said he was outraged that he and his wife, both of whom work for Waste Pro, have been the targets of harassment at their workplace. Parks said he discovered the doll last Friday when he stepped into his truck. "Somebody hanged a 'slave' doll and they wrote on it, 'You 2 (expletive) go back to Philly,'" Parks said. "The only two people who work here that are from Philadelphia are me and my wife." Parks said he called the company's human resources department several times, but nothing was done. The couple then contacted News 6.

A representative with Waste Pro's corporate office said the company called the Groveland Police Department as soon as the incident was brought to its attention. The company said it is also conducting an internal investigation. "While we cannot comment on the specifics of these investigations, any type of discrimination or hate crime is abhorrent in the culture of our company, in which more than 60 percent of our 3,500-member workforce are minorities," said Ron Pecora, senior vice president at Waste Pro USA. Pecora referred all questions to company attorneys.

The city of Groveland confirmed that a criminal investigation is underway into an allegation of racial harassment at Waste Pro at 20344 U.S. Highway 27. "The City of Groveland is confident our police department is investigating these allegations thoroughly. The City of Groveland is committed to providing a safe, diverse community where all citizens are treated with respect, and we are putting our full resources toward this investigation. Hate crimes, hate speech and acts of bias will not be tolerated," city manager **Mike Hein** said.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Gainesville Sun
July 6, 2018

Burying the past**Little Groveland museum has no interest in display about the Groveland Four episode**

Roxanne Brown

It has been written about in books, there is a major motion picture coming out about it and the Lake County Historical Museum is creating a display about it. Yet the little community museum in Groveland has largely ignored the Groveland Four episode that continues to enrage people across the nation in hopes of letting the community put the darkest episode in the city's history behind it.

At the Groveland Historical Museum, which is operated by the Groveland Historical Society, there is no mention of the time in 1949 when four young black men were accused without evidence of raping a white woman. Howard King, a longtime Groveland resident and a board member of the Groveland Historical Society, had a simple explanation. “Enough people are talking about it that we don’t have to,” King said.

Last week, a 90-minute PBS documentary titled “The Groveland Four,” highlighted the incident, when Norma Padgett, a 17-year-old Groveland farm girl, accused Walter Irvin, Samuel Shepherd, Charles Greenlee and Ernest Thomas of raping her. Thomas fled Lake County the next day but was tracked down, shot and killed by a posse, including then-Sheriff Willis McCall. Both Shepherd and Irving were sentenced to death while Greenlee, a juvenile, was given a life sentence. In November 1951, NAACP Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall had the death penalty verdicts overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court. While transporting Shepherd and Irving from Raiford State Prison back to the Lake County Jail, McCall claimed he was jumped by the handcuffed pair, so he shot them three times each. Shepherd died instantly, and Irvin said he survived by playing dead. Irvin was eventually found guilty, had his sentence commuted to life in prison and was paroled in 1968. Greenlee was paroled eight years earlier.

Descendants of the both families also live in the area and there have been at least two books written about the incident – one by Gary Corsair and one by Gilbert King -- and a movie, based on King’s Pulitzer Prize winning “Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America,” is due out soon. The museum board and Historical Society’s stance is that because there are so many conflicting stories about what happened and there is no one to prove or disprove any of it, so it’s best not to promote the story at all.

Groveland Historical Society President Marie Padgett – who is not related to Norma Padgett – said when people come into the Groveland museum asking about the Groveland Four, they are referred to online sources for information or to the city library for the books that have been published on the subject. “We agreed since the first Groveland Four book was being published, and we could not offer any additional documentation or expertise, we did not wish to risk backlash from the community with a “best guess” exhibit,” Howard King wrote in an email. “Anyone who is asked about the events will give a different description. Few people alive today were there, and even their

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
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descriptions vary, if they offer one. In today’s times, I would not believe ANYONE who was not old enough at the time to comprehend the mood of the community with respect to the sequence of events...”

Bob Grenier, the curator of the Lake County Historical Museum, run by the Lake County Historical Society, said the responsibility of a museum and the job of its curator, is to simply share the known and “complete” history of the area. “My job as a curator is to tell the County’s complete story, which means the beautiful stories and the tragic ones as well,” Grenier said. Grenier said that although none of the initial incidents surrounding the Groveland Four took place in Tavares, the story is part of Lake County’s history as much as Groveland’s. He said though every detail may not be known, it is known that the incident took place.

Grenier is planning a Groveland Four exhibit in the Lake County Historical Museum. He also said that because the museum is located in the old Lake County Courthouse where McCall once roamed the halls and where trials took place, a display there would be meaningful. “Especially now, we should be ready for those people who have seen the documentary or the movie when it comes out. That’s our job. That’s the job of any museum,” Grenier said. “What happened at the time is nobody’s fault today. People can look at the information and take away what they want from it. It’s just a piece of our history.” Tim Loucks, a former Groveland mayor who helped push to exonerate the Groveland Four, believes there should be a Groveland Four display at the Groveland museum.

In 2016, the city issued a resolution apologizing to the families. The Lake County Commission and the Florida Legislature followed suit. “The alleged crime did not happen in Groveland, but the arrest did and the command post was located here. Ignoring it is not going to make it go away,” Loucks said. “I don’t think we have the right to be selective on which history we choose to recognize or tell and which history we choose not to, even if don’t like elements of it.”

Howard King said the community is embarrassed by what happened but creating an exhibit at the museum wouldn’t help people “put it behind them.” “When all that happened, Groveland was a little Southern town with families that had learned to live in peace ‘together but separate’ and what happened was really out of their control,” he said. “The town was segregated but it was not violent.”

Groveland Councilman Mike Radzik is sensitive to the stigma created by the event and hopes to create a “Unity Day” to bring people together.

Groveland City Manager **Mike Hein** said there have been discussions about commemorating the Groveland Four. “Apologies have been issued by the city, but sometimes people need something more durable,” **Hein** said. “We are the fastest growing city in Lake County and one of the most diverse,” he said. “We enjoy that and because of that, we have to have inclusive conversations.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Lake Tablet (FL)
May 12, 2018

Groveland is defined by its rich past and its bright future

Author: Unknown

This year Groveland City Council interviewed five potential candidates for the City Manager position, and in March, **Mike Hein** was unanimously chosen as the new city manager. It was a sharp move on the part of the council. The new city manager has brought positive energy and a cohesive vision to Groveland’s future. When **Mike Hein**, a knowledgeable professional, was asked why he chose to become the City Manager of Groveland, he said he sees an exciting future for Groveland and he wants to play a part in its impending growth. “Groveland is at an exciting time in its history. While other communities have committed to certain paths, Groveland’s is in some ways still uncharted. While it has a rich past, how it moves forward is critical. If everyone takes the time and participates in crafting that vision, it can maintain that warm small-town charm, while embracing inclusivity and developing as a place where families grow”.

Part of what **Mike** is referring to is the City of Groveland’s Downtown Master Plan. The plan focuses on creating a pedestrian-friendly setting; encouraging intense commercial development and redevelopment; and providing additional residential options so that people may live and work downtown. In the plan, a segment of SR 50 will be moved to the north of downtown on a new alignment to facilitate a more walkable downtown. This change would shift the truck traffic and allow the existing SR 50 roadway to be modified to provide improved access to downtown businesses. Once SR 50 is realigned and constructed, Broad Street and Orange Street will be returned to the City of Groveland’s jurisdiction and no longer will be part of the State road system.

The South Lake Trail is another plan that, when implemented, will impact Groveland’s future. The Trail is a paved, multi-use path planned from Clermont west through Groveland, Mascotte, and the remainder of Lake County. Presently Groveland has a total of 112 employees. Last year 300 building permits were issued, this year 500, and it’s estimated that 1,000 building permits will be issued in the not so distant future. Last year five new police officers were added to the force to meet the growth and demand in the community. Each month a city employee is spotlighted.

With the anticipated growth, **Hein** believes it is essential to cultivate and empower his team. He recently held a team workshop where both his and his teams’ expectations were established. A get to know your team program has been implemented. Each month, a member of the city’s team is spotlighted and receives the prime parking space right outside City Hall. This program is especially popular during heavy rains and extreme heat. The spotlighted employee of the month gets a reserved parking space at the BEST parking space at City Hall!

Hein says he wants to build a sense of community and see it prosper with pride. He hopes Groveland can create a bright future by learning from its past. With that said, he has planned a field trip for his team to Groveland Historical Society to learn more about Groveland’s rich history. **Hein** looks to the future, where no request should be ignored or downplayed. He has been in Groveland

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
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for less than six months, but his unpretentious manner has endeared him to many already. He recently told a story which validates the nature of Groveland’s city manager. “About two months ago, a young person came to the lobby of City Hall and asked to meet with me. Ms. Hope Brownlee, an 11 year told me about her idea to put a “little free library” near the Gazebo in Lake David Park. She inquired about what steps would need to be taken to make her concept a reality. “I was familiar with the model as I’ve placed a similar facility in another community. I was quite taken with Ms. Hope and her enthusiasm, and I told her, “no problem, approved – let’s do it.”

After reflecting for a day or two, I realized I had made a mistake and robbed her of an important opportunity to learn about government and process. As good fortune would have it, she came back to City Hall a few days later to tell me she wanted to reconsider the location. The Mayor and the Parks Manager happened to be in my office at the time, and she was able to articulate her vision. I told her I also had a chance to think about it, and to do it properly she would have to go to the Recreation Advisory Committee (RAC) and get their approval. If she received their endorsement, she would then need to present her idea to the Mayor and Council and ask for their consent.

In less than 90 days, Hope Brownlee came to City Hall with an idea, got approval from the RAC, presented to the Mayor and Council (a remarkable presentation without notes btw), got resources, found labor, coordinated with Parks and installed the Little Free Library outside the Puryear Building. Anytime any of us think something can’t be done or will take too long to go through the process; I suggest we take a book out of the library. I did, and I certainly learned something today.”

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Lake Tablet (FL)
March 8, 2018

The City of Groveland selects its new City Manager

Author: Marty Proctor

This week the Groveland City Council interviewed the final five potential candidates for the City Manager position. The Council showed solidarity in offering **Mike Hein**, the position as permanent City Manager in a 5-0 unanimous vote. **Mike** has been the Interim City Manager since January. The City continues to move away from a troubled past and focus on the future. Police Chief Shawn Ramsay acts as Sergeant at Arms attending most Council meetings. He has been witness to the rapid change in management and politics within the City.

During the public comment session, the Chief complimented the City Council for their professionalism and thoroughness in the interview and selection process. Staff members also voiced their support. Other members of the community have expressed compliments regarding the professionalism, solid city planning and management capabilities exhibited by Mr. **Hein**. The Mayor stated, “Oh he’s great.” She shared a specific issue she is pursuing with City Council about a local, historic cemetery. “I ask a question and get a response very quickly.”

Mr. **Hein** adds, “I’m honored to be chosen at this moment in time and place for the organization and the City of Groveland.” Most Lake County residents are well aware of the distractions, uncertainty, and instability surrounding Groveland. In picking Mr. **Hein**, the City Council has added a skilled professional to the Staff. **Mike** pledges “to work on your behalf and maintain the spirit of excellence within the organization while working with all of you to make Groveland an even more outstanding place to live, work and invest.” Now that the decision is made, the process continues to approve a contract at the March 19 City Council meeting. Mr. **Hein** is under contract as interim city manager through the end of March. Between the 19th and the end of March, the formal hiring is expected to be completed.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Longboat Observer (FL)
August 9, 2017

Mike Hein Resigns as Longboat’s Assistant Town Manager

Author: John McGuire

Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager **Mike Hein** has resigned after about a year and a half on the job. “He’s going to move on with this next chapter of his life,” said Town Manager Dave Bullock, who hired **Hein** in December 2015. Bullock said he has no plans to replace **Hein**. Though he did not return requests seeking comment, **Hein** wrote in his Aug. 4 resignation letter: “It has been an honor and privilege to serve the community and wish nothing but the best for its continued success.” As the town geared up its campaign in June to find a replacement for Bullock, who is retiring in early 2018, **Hein** asked commissioners to be considered for the town’s top administrative role. In July, the Town Commission voted 6-1 to hire Sarasota County Administrator Tom Harmer for the job. After the decision, **Hein** said he was looking forward to the opportunity to work with Harmer. “I enjoy working with the community and hope to further contribute in whatever capacity,” **Hein** said at the time. A few days before **Hein** submitted his resignation, Bullock said he spoke with **Hein** about his role with the town in light of the commission’s decision to hire a new town manager. Vice Mayor Ed Zunz, who was the dissenting vote in naming Harmer town manager, said the commission should have taken more time in making a decision and discussed additional candidates for the job, including **Hein**. “I didn’t realize he had such a resume,” Zunz said. “I took him as a serious candidate.” **Hein** has more than 25 years of experience in public service. He was city manager of Tucson, Ariz., from 2005 to 2009 and most recently worked as the director of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security for Pima County in Arizona from 2009 until 2015. He has also served as deputy Pima County administrator and worked for the Arizona cities of Marana, Nogales and South Tucson.

While he believes commissioners should have given **Hein** more thought, Zunz has referred to Harmer as “extremely well-qualified” for the town manager role, and the vice mayor’s issue with his hiring is entirely procedural rather than merit-based. “I don’t know if (**Hein**) should have been chosen,” Zunz said. Both Bullock and Mayor Terry Gans praised **Hein** for his work with the town. “He did everything that I asked him to,” Bullock said. “I have nothing but good stuff to say about **Mike**.” Gans referred to **Hein** as “a good sounding board” on issues facing the Key, and wishes him the best in his future endeavors. “He’s a good man,” the mayor said. Bullock created the assistant town manager position in January 2013, promoting to the role Anne Ross, who previously served as the town’s engineer in the Public Works Department. In October 2015, Ross resigned from the position to become executive director of Lakewood Ranch’s Inter-District Authority. Earlier this year, the Charter Review Committee suggested revising the town’s charter to include a section on the assistant town manager position. The current charter makes no reference to the job and the selection of the assistant town manager does not require commission approval. A document reflecting the committee’s suggestion reads: “The town manager, with the approval of the town commission, shall appoint an assistant town manager solely on the basis of professional and administrative qualifications.” If approved by commissioners and, subsequently, Key voters, this language would require the town to have an assistant town manager.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Longboat Observer (FL)
May 17, 2017

Longboat Key Estimates 2017-18 Revenue at \$15.56 Million

Author: John McGuire

As Longboat Key opened deliberations for the budget season, Town Manager Dave Bullock made clear not a lot has changed from the previous go-around. “We are not a growth community, and we’re not much of a growth operation,” Bullock told commissioners and town staff Monday. “Our services remain relatively steady. Our population remains relatively steady.” To that end, so will the 2017-18 spending plan, which will be discussed through the summer and approved in September. It will be the last budget overseen by Bullock, who is retiring in January. In the preliminary proposal for 2017-18, Bullock expects revenue will be about \$15.56 million, a decrease of 3% from the previous year. That decrease comes from two changes in the allocation of funds and a drop in franchise fees from Florida Power & Light. The total revenue includes a 3% projected increase in property-tax revenue, though the values on which that is based won’t be solidified by Sarasota and Manatee county assessors until July. Expenditures are projected to rise about 3.5% to \$16.67 million, the projected difference coming from a dip into the \$6 million general fund balance. The town would be left with a 108-day supply in the fund, beyond its 90-day milestone. “I will always project our revenues lower, and our expenses higher,” Bullock said.

With a goal of holding the line on property tax rates and department budgets, the town does have a couple changes in mind: In 2016, the Town Commission directed police to provide 24-hour coverage of the police station, which resulted in the town hiring four, full-time customer service specialists. In the past year, Key police have reported an average of two walk-in calls after 5 p.m. a month, all of which were non-emergency. Because a phone in the police lobby automatically connects to the dispatch center, town staff recommends the reduction in the hours of coverage. “Seems like a no-brainer,” said Commissioner George Spoll.

Assistant Town Manager **Mike Hein** said the town will work to absorb those four employees into other open staff positions to avoid layoffs, should the commission approve the recommendation. About \$185,000 would be saved, **Hein** said.

- \$150,000 in new spending relates to records management system for the police department. “The system we have now is a homegrown system,” Bullock said. “It works, but the ability for us to maintain it in the future is going to be declining.”
- Police wages will increase by an average of 3.5% in 2018, while firefighters will receive a wage increase of about 4.3%, Bullock said.

The general fund preliminary budget for 2017-18 will be presented for review at the June 19 Town Commission workshop meeting, with first reading, public hearing and discussion scheduled for the Sept. 11 regular meeting.

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PERSONNEL COSTS

Here is how personnel costs are broken down in the proposed 2017-18 town budget:

- Health Insurance 17.5%
- Pension 26%
- Payouts and Overlap for DROP and Retirees 23.5%
- Contractual and Merit-Based 24.5%
- Net Position Changes 8.5%

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Longboat Observer (FL)
March 1, 2017

Longboat Commission Considers Major Changes in Code Enforcement

Author: John McGuire

Town commissioners considered an ordinance last week that, if approved, would alter the way Longboat Key’s town code is enforced. The ordinance would allow the Code Enforcement Board to continue issuing liens for code violations, but it would also give code enforcement officers the option to issue citations with monetary fines, similar to parking tickets. Commissioners also discussed the possibility of eliminating the Code Enforcement Board altogether, but that action would require a change to the town's charter. At a commission workshop, Town Attorney Maggie Mooney-Portale spoke of a recent situation in which a licensed contractor, hired by a Key property owner, was improperly using a storm drain. If the officer had the option to issue a citation on the spot, the contractor could have been held accountable instead of the property owner, Mooney-Portale said.

The ordinance would also add a special magistrate to hear code-related cases. While the Code Enforcement Board is composed of Key residents, the special magistrate would be a member of the Florida Bar who does not live in the Longboat community. Assistant Town Manager **Mike Hein** said one of the aims of the ordinance is to encourage code compliance during crucial times such as turtle-nesting season. The citation option would allow the town the ability to take some measure against renters or visitors who are violating codes. If issued a citation, the violator could either pay the fine, contest the citation or appear before the special magistrate.

Such a hearing could be scheduled faster than setting up a Code Enforcement Board meeting. **Hein** stressed that citations would only be issued after code enforcement officers have made informal attempts to gain compliance, such as by telling people they are violating the town code. “Our goal is not to gain revenue,” **Hein** said. “Our goal is to gain compliance.”

Commissioners expressed concerns about how code officers would use discretion, with no guidelines, to determine how to approach violations. “We could have a situation where the exact same thing could happen, even on the same day, one person would get a citation, one person would get a lien,” Vice Mayor Phill Younger said. “I’m not comfortable with that.” After discussing elimination of the Code Enforcement Board, the commissioners set aside further action until after the Charter Review Committee has been appointed.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Longboat Observer (FL)
February 8, 2017

Plans to Renovate Longboat Fire Stations in Limbo

Author: John McGuire

Chris Krajic, Longboat Key Fire Rescue’s deputy chief, said he and his colleagues are accustomed to getting things done right away. “We’re in emergency services,” he smiled, sitting at his desk at the Key’s north station. Krajic is referring to plans to renovate both the north and south fire stations on Longboat Key, projects he said he would like to see begin “as soon as is feasibly possible.” Fire Rescue Chief Paul Dezzi had originally hoped to present up to \$2 million worth of renovation options to the Town Commission last month, but the plans remain in limbo. Dezzi’s plan for the north station, which he expects will cost between \$450,000 and \$500,000, includes building gender-specific locker rooms and sleeping quarters, as well as hardening the station to withstand a Category 4 hurricane.

The plan for the south station, which was built more than 30 years ago, is more ambitious. It includes all of the same renovations as the north building, plus the additions of a quarantine room and a bedroom for trainees, as well as relocating the fitness center. The plan raises an important question. “The bottom line is the cost,” Dezzi said. “Do we need a new firehouse or can we live with a remodel?” Dezzi estimates remodeling the south station would cost between \$1.5 million and \$1.7 million while a brand-new building could cost upwards of \$2.5 million. Dezzi met with Town Manager Dave Bullock, Assistant Town Manager **Mike Hein** and Public Works Director Juan Florensa last month to discuss the plans. **Hein** said town staff will go to the commission with a plan for renovating the stations before the start of the budget process, but there is no set date yet. **Hein** said he wants to make sure any outstanding issues in the plan are settled, like whether the doors and generators of the stations will be accounted for in the final cost. “We want to make sure it’s inclusive of any and all costs,” **Hein** said. “The last thing we want is to think we have everything settled, then ‘Yeah, but ...’” As to whether the south station will be rebuilt or remodeled, **Hein** said town staff is working to determine which option works best. “I have long been taught that, until a decision is made, everything lies in the realm of possibilities,” **Hein** said. “At this point, you can’t rule anything out.” Florensa held that, due to costs, he thinks town management is leaning toward a remodel for the south station. “A rebuild would be substantial,” he said. Dezzi plans to meet with Bullock, **Hein** and Florensa again next week to finalize the plan so it can be brought before the commission in March.

Krajic, who has been deputy chief at the north station for two years, emphasized that ensuring both stations can withstand a Category 4 is vital. “You need a place to come back to,” Krajic said. Krajic added that making sleeping quarters and dressing rooms gender-specific is important in providing firefighters with a sense of privacy. “It’s just something that makes good common sense,” Krajic said. Longboat Key Mayor Terry Gans affirmed that it’s important that both stations are completely operational, but will wait to make any decision about the renovations until he sees the analysis by town staff.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Longboat Observer (FL)
August 9, 2016

Longboat Key Officials Brace for AquaPalooza

Author: Alex Mahadevan

UPDATE: As of Thursday, MarineMax Sarasota has received a permit from the town of Longboat Key for AquaPalooza.

It's less than a week until a boat party planned for the sandbar near Jewfish Key is scheduled to set sail. MarineMax Sarasota advertises AquaPalooza, slated for 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 13, as “the largest party on the water,” with “sunshine, great friends, live music and more!” But it caught Longboat Key town staff and nearby residents by surprise. On Monday, Assistant Town Manager **Mike Hein** sent a letter to MarineMax asking organizers to apply for a special event permit, since the waters around Jewfish Key falls within the Longboat's boundaries. The correspondence came after Jewfish Key resident Nancy Nolin emailed Mayor Jack Duncan Monday. “We wonder if they will inform their guests that Jewfish Key is a private island and to stay off the island,” Nolin said in the email.

According to the town code, event organizers must apply for a permit 30 days before a scheduled event. In **Hein's** letter to MarineMax, he assured event planners that town staff would work to expedite processing a permit — but the first application staff received was incomplete. “I've been informed that historically the town has worked with applicants with much shorter timelines to accommodate similar special events,” **Hein** said in an interview with the *Longboat Observer*. The code also maintains that the town manager has the authority to consider whether to grant a permit based on 13 criteria, including whether the organizer provides for sanitation and public safety. “We're going to do everything we can to make sure our residents and visitors enjoy their quality of life,” **Hein** said.

Capt. Kathe Fannon, a fourth generation Cortez resident who runs a tour boat with her dog and first mate Pup Pup, said she's concerned about the behavior of partygoers. “They rape and pillage everything off of that sandbar,” she said. “You can't find anything alive anymore.” Further, she doesn't believe any of the surrounding jurisdictions will have authority on the water to prevent illegal behavior. “I go by there on weekends, and there's actually naked people on their boats dancing,” Fannon said. But two Longboat Key police officers will be stationed on the mainland of Jewfish Key to discourage trespassers, while two police boats will patrol the waters. And Police Chief Pete Cumming said he is coordinating with the Manatee County Sheriff's Office and the U.S. Coast Guard for more vessels. “I'm bringing all my people in,” he said. “We're going to be out there in force.” After receiving a message from a MarineMax spokeswoman and speaking to town staff, Nolin said her fears about the event have been largely tempered. The Facebook event now lists the sandbar — instead of the main island — as the site of the party. “As long as they get the word out that it's not on Jewfish Key, I don't have any concerns,” Nolin said. “Otherwise, I hope they have a good time and stay safe.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Longboat Observer (FL)
December 15, 2015

Bullock Selects New Assistant Town Manager

Author: Kurt Schultheis

Town Manager Dave Bullock has hired a new assistant town manager to help him guide the town through what's expected to be one of the busiest fiscal years in its history. Bullock informed the Longboat Key Town Commission in a Dec. 11 email that he has selected **Michael Hein** as the new assistant town manager. **Hein's** first day is Jan. 4. His starting annual salary is \$115,000. **Hein** was city manager of Tucson, Ariz., from 2005 to 2009 and most recently worked as the director of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security for Pima County in Arizona from 2009 until earlier this year. He has also served as deputy Pima County administrator and worked for the Arizona cities of Marana, Nogales and South Tucson.

“**Mike Hein** is an experienced public management professional who resides in Sarasota,” Bullock wrote in his email. “**Mike** is anxious to jump in and start helping the town out.” **Hein** resigned his most recent post in April, when his wife, Anne-Marie Russell, accepted a job as director of the Sarasota Museum of Art. “I am the classic trailing spouse that followed my wife because it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for her,” **Hein** said. Bullock has been interviewing potential candidates for the assistant town manager position since Anne Ross departed from the role in October to become Lakewood Ranch's executive director.

Hein said he asked for a meeting with Bullock even before he knew there was a position opening on the island that suited him. “I was encouraged to meet with Dave through other people when I began looking for a job,” **Hein** said. “I was inspired by his contacts, his leadership and what he does out here. Discovering a job was available soon after that I was being considered for was a bonus.” **Hein** met with town staff last week. “The devotion to public service is remarkable, and I look forward to working with them,” he said.

Bullock said he will be helping **Hein** catch up on projects that include beach projects totaling \$23 million scheduled for the coming year, the Gulf of Mexico Drive undergrounding utilities project and a possible \$23.85 million neighborhood and side street undergrounding project. “This may be a small town, but the amount of capital projects and work going on here is something that attracted me to this position,” **Hein** said. “I'll help Dave in any way possible as we work toward completing projects while developing a high degree of intimacy with the staff and the public.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
March 11, 2015

County Emergency Manager Mike Hein Resigns

Author: Patrick McNamara

Pima County’s director of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security has resigned. **Mike Hein**, who also served as Tucson city manager for four years, told county leaders on March 2 he plans to resign at the end of April, a county news release from Tuesday said. **Hein** and his wife, Anne-Marie Russell, plan to move Sarasota, Florida, where Russell has accepted a job as director of an art museum. Russell was most recently executive director of Tucson’s Museum of Contemporary Art. “I’m the plus one,” **Hein** said. “It’s really a once in a lifetime opportunity for her.” **Hein** said he plans to begin searching for work in Florida after the move.

During his time with the county, **Hein** said the most significant project he’s worked on has been helping to implement the Pima County Wireless Integrated Network. The network is a multiagency digital communications system for police, fire and other first responders. **Hein** said his role was to coordinate with the various agencies to create a governance plan. “**Mike** has been a good friend to the people of Pima County for a long time,” Deputy Pima County Administrator Jan Leshar said. “We’re sad to lose **Mike**.”

Hein has worked for numerous Arizona governments since the early 1990s. In 2005, the Tucson City Council hired **Hein** as city manager. During his time with the city, however, **Hein** was often at odds with council members and the Tucson police union. Council members disapproved of **Hein’s** recommendations to consider layoffs, curtail spending and raise revenue through additional taxes and fees at a time when the city faced an \$80 million budget shortfall in 2009. The council voted to terminate **Hein’s** contract in April 2009. Current council members Regina Romero, Shirley Scott and Karin Uhlich supported **Hein’s** firing. Since then, the city has had two city managers and currently has an interim manager. The council this week has been interviewing candidates for the job.

Before his time with the city, **Hein** was a deputy county administrator for Pima County. From 1997 to 2003, he was an assistant town manager and town manager in Marana. **Hein** also worked for the city of Nogales in finance, planning and as an assistant county administrator until 1997. From 1991 to 1993, he was with the city of South Tucson as management analyst and director of economic development.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
October 3, 2013

Tortolita Preserve Future in Doubt

Author: Tony Davis

A 2,300-acre preserve in Marana originally set aside to protect an endangered bird may be endangered itself. Citing fiscal reasons, Marana officials want to end the town's 99-year lease on the Tortolita Preserve with the State Land Department. The town says it makes no sense to keep putting money into the lease now that the once-endangered pygmy owl for which the preserve was established is no longer listed as an endangered species. But environmentalists say it makes no sense to let the preserve slip from the town's hands.

The Town Council took a preliminary step Tuesday night toward letting go of the preserve. It voted to terminate its separate agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to manage the land as a preserve. Town officials note the once-endangered cactus ferruginous pygmy owl hasn't been federally listed since 2006. They say the money they're putting into the state land lease — which will total more than \$121 million once it expires in 2099 — would be better spent elsewhere, perhaps on buying other open space. “We feel it's wiser to have title to open land than having a lease,” Town Manager Gilbert Davidson said this week. “We'd rather take this money and be able to buy property.” State land officials — whose mandate is to raise maximum revenue for public schools through trust lands — are noncommittal about prospects for renegotiating the lease. But Marana Mayor Ed Honea said, “I'd rather spend this money on parks, roads and other things. There's really no need for it anymore.”

Environmentalist view - But Christina McVie, an environmentalist long active in efforts to preserve Sonoran Desert land and protect the owl, says this would be an ill-considered move, given the preserve's value to other species such as the endangered lesser long-nosed bat and the declining Sonoran Desert tortoise. “It is important to find some way to preserve the area as the mature ironwoods may be anywhere from 300 to 1,000 years old and the mature saguaros are 100 to 200 years old,” said McVie, who is active with the Tucson Audubon Society and the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection. “We cannot re-create that mature habitat elsewhere, nor mitigate the habitat functions with baby plants in subdivisions.”

Mike Hein, the former Marana town manager who helped engineer the 2000 state lease agreement, agrees this preserve still has inherent value without the pygmy owl issue, just for its beauty. He added that he's not trying to advise his former employer about the land. Today, the preserve is essentially a large, mostly flat patch of the old growth saguaro-ironwood forest that marks much of the metro area's far northwest side. Those entering it first see jumping cholla cacti, prickly pear, palo verde, saguaro and mistletoe-filled ironwood trees. The preserve adjoins the large Dove Mountain development on the south and west, but the homes are out of sight as hikers start the 9.2-mile trail through the preserve. A sign at the entrance says, “This is their home. Leave the critters alone. For your safety and theirs.” When **Hein** negotiated the preserve agreement with the state back in 2000, he was ecstatic at what he called a “win-win-win” situation. That's because the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

preserve created a large public park, while allowing continued development of the Dove Mountain project. Construction had been stopped at Dove Mountain for more than a year because a pygmy owl had been seen on the development site. That required developers and federal officials to negotiate over the owl issue.

Rising lease rates - But over time, Marana officials have soured on the preserve agreement, as annual lease rates kept escalating. Every five years, they rise another 10 percent. Rates started at \$432,000 annually, are now \$522,000 and will hit \$2.64 million once the lease runs out in October 2099. By then, after the town has paid more than \$121 million in leases, “guess what we will have — nothing,” Town Manager Davidson said. A significant portion of this money comes from the town’s bed tax, paid by customers of the Ritz-Carlton resort at Dove Mountain and about 10 other hotels, town officials say. At the same time, Davidson acknowledges that the state lease has no provision for early termination, and “the state will not just let us out.” “We will have to work with them” to renegotiate the lease, said Davidson, adding that town officials would like to meet with Land Department officials “as soon as possible.”

State Land Commissioner Vanessa Hickman said she’s open to meeting with Marana officials. But she added, “We would have to make any decision in the best interest of the trust.” State trust land is supposed to reap the most money it can from sale or lease, with most of the money earmarked to support schools. Hickman said the land department would be willing to discuss what benefits the department and the land trust might receive in lieu of the Marana lease income. Mixed feelings - Others have mixed feelings about the preserve’s fate, including the president of a mountain biking group. Zach MacDonald, president of the Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists, said his group has made use of that land. But its members have ridden the preserve less and less since a major network of trails was built in the Tortolita Mountains — “they’re so much more interesting because they give you views,” he said. “This piece is kind of an island.” “It would be sad to have that piece not be preserved,” McDonald said, “but knowing what Marana is trying to accomplish, it would be better to put that \$500,000 into protecting other areas, building trails in other areas that are maybe more valuable.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
March 16, 2010

Hein Admits Lesser DUI Charge, Will Pay Fine, Do 10 Days in Jail

Author: Andrea Kelly

Former City Manager **Mike Hein** pleaded guilty Monday to driving under the influence of alcohol. He was cited in September. His lawyer entered a plea of not guilty in the case earlier this year, but **Hein** accepted a plea deal with the Pima County Attorney's Office this week. According to the agreement, **Hein** pleaded guilty to being impaired to the slightest degree. The other two initial charges of extreme DUI and DUI of 0.08 or more were dropped. **Hein** was fired by the Tucson City Council last April. He was hired as director of emergency management for Pima County in November. He will have to serve 10 days in jail and pay more than \$1,400 in fines. His car must be fitted with an ignition interlock device, which tests a driver's breath for the presence of alcohol. "It's the same plea we'd offer to anybody with the same facts in his case and the same BAC (blood alcohol level)," said Casey McGinley, deputy Pima County attorney.

Hein has already attended the requisite counseling and Mothers Against Drunk Driving victim-impact panel, said **Hein's** attorney, Christopher Wencker. The attorney released a prepared statement that said **Hein** is accepting the consequences of his actions and "wanted to acknowledge the mistake quickly." "He hopes that some good may come from this by people realizing that it can happen to anyone, and that it is never OK to get behind the wheel after drinking," Wencker's statement said. **Hein** will also have one year of unsupervised probation. If he violates any of the terms of his plea or probation, he could be required to serve up to six months in jail, McGinley said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
November 4, 2009

Pima Hires Ex-City Manager Hein

Author: Andrea Kelly

He'll head county emergency dept.; was fired by city

Former Tucson City Manager **Mike Hein** has been hired to head the county Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. **Hein** will make \$110,000 a year - well below the \$210,000 he made as city manager, but \$20,000 more than the previous emergency manager. He was recommended by a three-member panel that interviewed six finalists. County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry made the appointment. The Tucson City Council fired **Hein** on a 4-3 vote in April, citing concerns about his handling of the Rio Nuevo downtown redevelopment and budget shortfalls.

Hein's first day at the county will be Monday. He has a long history of work for local governments, including as an assistant city administrator for the cities of South Tucson and Nogales, Ariz. In 1998 he became the town manager for Marana, and in 2003 Huckelberry hired him as a deputy county administrator. He became Tucson's city manager in early 2005. In September, **Hein** was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol in Oro Valley. The case is still pending. "We are in the final stages of investigation" in the case, said Deputy Pima County Attorney Bruce Chalk.

Huckelberry said **Hein** was the top recommendation because of his broad government management experience. The position also requires the ability to work with local government agencies, planning for emergencies throughout the county, he said. "I think **Mike** has proven he can work with other jurisdictions," Huckelberry said. **Hein's** border experience from having worked in Nogales was also a plus, Huckelberry said. Since the previous emergency manager left a year ago, Deputy County Administrator Dennis Douglas has been filling in, Huckelberry said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
April 12, 2009

Business Leaders Critical of Hein's Firing

Author: Josh Brodesky

Tuesday's firing of City Manager **Mike Hein** has triggered harsh reaction from Tucson's business leaders, many of whom criticized the move, saying it not only threatens Rio Nuevo's funding but will make it harder for the city to attract and develop new businesses. With the city facing a budget deficit of about \$80 million, Rio Nuevo funding for Downtown redevelopment already on the ropes and the City Council unable to agree on a new police chief, many in the business community said the timing of the firing couldn't have been worse. Beyond that, there are widespread doubts the council can find an adequate replacement for **Hein** during this recession. "I think it was handled poorly, to say the least," developer Don Diamond of Diamond Ventures Inc. said. "I think that it puts us in jeopardy and can lead to further problems. And it's not that I'm defending **Hein**, who has made some mistakes, but the fact that the way they did it was so inept because the real key is they are dysfunctional down there. To fire somebody and not have any game plan or have any idea where they are taking us is not the way you run a business."

City Councilwoman Karin Uhlich, who led the call for **Hein's** firing, said people were confusing the change in management with a change in direction. The council is committed to economic development, she said. "It would be wrong to interpret this as a change in direction of the city, it is a change of management," Uhlich said. "Mayor and council has offered a clear direction not only on Rio Nuevo, but on priorities within the budget and other fundamental concerns." Diamond and others questioned that view, saying the firing sends a message to businesses to stay away from Tucson because it shows instability, infighting and a lack of vision at the council level. "We live off signals and vibes, and that's a bad vibe and bad signal," Diamond said. Potential employers "look at the school system, and they look at the politics, and we get a zero on those." Diamond said he is using the firing to argue Tucson needs to adopt non-partisan elections, which could lead to what he called "a better class" of elected officials. All six members of the council are Democrats, while Mayor Bob Walkup is a Republican. **Hein** was fired on a 4-3 vote by Uhlich, Shirley Scott, Steve Leal and Regina Romero. Uhlich and Romero said certain Rio Nuevo funding decisions were among the reasons. Tim Prouty, managing director of CB Richard Ellis commercial brokerage in Tucson, agreed with Diamond about nonpartisan elections, but also said salaries for the council and mayor need to be "dramatically raised" to attract more people to run for those offices. State Sen. Jonathan Paton, a Tucson Republican, has a bill lined up to mandate non-partisan elections in Tucson, but he said it won't get introduced until a budget is passed. Meanwhile, Paton said as long as it's legally possible, the Republican-led Legislature will strip control of Rio Nuevo funding from Tucson's City Council and place it with an oversight board.

Hein's exit "means the municipality's involvement with Rio Nuevo, and the life of the project, is probably over," Paton said. "I don't want to say he's such a great guy, but what are they going to do now? They are \$80 million in debt, this Rio Nuevo thing is hanging by a thread, and they can't even find a police chief. And they're going to find a new city manager in the midst of all that chaos?"

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Uhlich said she would like to see local control over Rio Nuevo remain, but she has no problem with the state adopting an oversight board as long as Tucsonans comprise it. Deputy City Manager Mike Letcher is a suitable replacement, she said, even though he will retire in November. That should be enough time for the council to find a full-time replacement, Uhlich said. When businesses look at relocating or opening new operations in a community, they look at such factors as operation costs, crime levels and the quality of schools, said Laura Shaw, a spokeswoman for Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, or TREO. Young professionals want vibrant city centers, she said.

Shaw wouldn't say if the firing of **Hein**, the potential loss of Rio Nuevo and the announced layoffs of up to 600 teachers at Tucson Unified School District might be obstacles to economic development - only that Tucson has a solid economic development blueprint to follow. "I don't have a concern about the blueprint being blown up because it's still important to have that vision to work with," Shaw said. "So, it's a great guide and framework." But Jack Camper, president of the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, said he is concerned about the message **Hein's** firing sends to outside businesses. "It wasn't time to make this kind of change in the community," he said. "When you take the TUSD situation, when you take the overall recession, city manager just got canned, Rio Nuevo that is up in the air . . . any business is going to have to say, 'How can we get things done there?'" But while the perception of Tucson among outside businesses is a concern, Camper said he is even more concerned about how the Legislature views the city because Maricopa County holds a majority of votes. "The perception from Phoenix is that we are not getting it right in Tucson," he said, citing Rio Nuevo's tax-increment financing. "That we didn't handle our . . . funding properly, and they are just looking down their noses on us."

The general consensus of those interviewed in the business community is that Tucson is a tough place to get business done - even without all of the recent distractions - because the process moves slowly and different businesses are treated differently. "I think, in general, that it's symptomatic of a less-than-great business atmosphere in the community as a whole. It's in both the government elected officials and in some cases the staff structure and leadership," said Robert L. Davis, with Grubb & Ellis Company. "It's like businesses are bad when they are the ones that create" jobs and tax revenue. Davis was part of the team that assisted Target.com with the development of its distribution center in Tucson, which will bring about 600 jobs. That process went extremely well, Davis said. But he said for smaller firms that want to open shop here, the city has at times been less than accommodating. "For the little guy, it's really hard," Davis said. "A lot of it has to do with excess red tape, delay, duplication, inefficiency in the permitting process or the entitlement process."

Uhlich said the city has worked to streamline its development process, but she welcomes ways to improve it. Looking to the future, Roger Yohem of the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association said it is time to build a political willingness to make projects happen throughout the city. "They have got to address what it is that is going to make the business community want to invest down there because the buzzword I am hearing down here is that the City Council is just so dysfunctional," Yohem said. "There is a lot of talk, and the community needs to start seeing some tangible results. Not a hot dog shop on the corner and not a new art studio in an old warehouse. You know, something that is a world-class type of attraction that will keep bringing people Downtown."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tucson Citizen (AZ)
April 2, 2009

Criticism Wearing on Hein as Council Evaluation Looms

Author: Carli Brosseau

City Manager **Mike Hein** is no longer so sure he likes his job. It's no longer so certain he'll have it. After a year of economic recession, a city personnel exodus and a Republican state Legislature lobbying threats of several kinds toward Democratic-led Tucson, **Hein** is up for an annual performance review. The outcome, by all accounts, is difficult to predict. It has been four years since **Hein** landed the job with resounding support and 10 months since Councilman Steve Leal demanded he resign, citing an irrevocable breach of trust. The coming evaluation, scheduled for an hour behind closed doors during the City Council's Tuesday study session, will cover what could, even in its rosiest characterization, be considered a tough year.

Which brings **Hein** to a resignation-tinged shrug, a smile and an acknowledgement of swirling rumors. He answered quickly when asked if he liked his job Wednesday. "I don't right now," he said. Even so, he said he loves the community and, though not so much right now, loves serving it. He said he thinks he got a bad rap in talks about the city's budget situation, pointing to reports of other cities mired in far worse recession-wrought muck, and he plans to keep showing up to work. The City Council has been mum this week on **Hein's** future, citing concerns about violating the state's Open Meetings Law. Council members are under investigation by the Pima County Attorney's Office for possible violations of the confidentiality restrictions of closed executive sessions after talks about an aborted police chief search. But as recently as last week, Mayor Bob Walkup and council members Rodney Glassman and Nina Trasoff voiced support for **Hein**. Others withheld overt praise.

Unlike last June, when Leal pushed to fire **Hein**, no council member has recently demanded that **Hein** step down. Still, questions about financial management and decision-making responsibilities remain flashpoints. Stakes, in the meantime, have been raised. The council now faces difficult decisions on how to close a multimillion-dollar budget shortfall as well as threats of interference from the Legislature, which has proposed changes to city election rules and oversight of downtown development efforts. Tempers flared in recent weeks as officials faced the prospect of tax and fee increases, layoffs, staff furloughs and department consolidations to balance a budget that depends heavily on plummeting sales tax receipts. The council was frustrated to learn of previously unacknowledged fund shortfalls and vocabulary mix-ups that caused shifting impressions of the city's finances. "We've been waiting for correct numbers," Councilwoman Regina Romero said at a recent meeting, pointing out the visible anger at the council table.

Hein is scheduled to present a recommended budget April 18, which the council will vote on at a later date. New life was breathed into allegations of financial mismanagement Jan. 30 when Finance Director Frank Abeyta quit abruptly after four months on the job. His last e-mails indicated concerns about several funds and planned and prospective audits. Just two weeks ago, Councilwomen Karin Uhlich and Romero supported exploring ways to separate **Hein** from the

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

city’s embattled downtown development effort, citing a lack of clarity in financial and managerial boundaries. Uhlich proposed the division immediately after a unanimous vote to explore doing a detailed audit of the Rio Nuevo downtown development district, which has been faulted by state legislators for a perceived lack of transparency, accountability and visible results.

Hein recently announced decisions to halt work on several Rio Nuevo projects, citing the economic downturn. Other concerns voiced over the past year by members of the council centered on transparency, including evidence that **Hein** has used his wife’s e-mail account for city business, and his decision in December 2007 to suspend extending water service outside of the area Tucson Water is obligated to serve, which highlighted disagreement over the bounds of **Hein’s** authority. **Hein’s** salary is \$211,820. He was hired in 2006 from Pima County, where he was an assistant county administrator. He was Marana town manager before that.

Also slated for consideration at Tuesday’s council meeting are a proposal to charge a fee each time city inspectors are called out on possible code violations and the city’s initiative to promote “green” jobs.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

13 News
March 31, 2009

Tucson city council scrutinizes manager Mike Hein
By Bud Foster

The fuse has been lit. The fireworks are about to light up Tucson city hall again. Next week, Tucson City Manager **Mike Hein** faces the council for his annual evaluation. If the events of recent weeks and months are any indication, it could be a contentious time. The council talked about firing **Hein** last year when things were not as bad as they are now. With Rio Nuevo hanging in the balance and the budget out of balance, his critics are ready to pounce.

"These are not bad people. They're just bad decisions at a time now that we can't afford bad decisions," says Rick Grinnell, founder of Smart United Business Strategies, Inc., which represents 80 Tucson companies. Grinnell has been a student of Tucson city politics for decades and he says, in his opinion, what's going on now, is unprecedented. "I think this is the most disorganized group or body of elected officials assembled at one table that I've seen in my 20 years. And when my father was alive, he'd complain about these things and I don't remember him complaining this bad about their status, he adds.

Two weeks ago, council member Karen Uhlich tried to wrestle control of Rio Nuevo out of the city managers office, citing mismanagement. She lost a four to two vote but it's unlikely the battle is over. She surprised many on the council by asking for the vote. When asked how she'll vote on **Hein's** future, she told us, it's an evaluation and I "will hold any further comments."

Last summer, News 13 was the first to publish a letter which called for **Hein's** resignation, was authored by council member Steve Leal. When asked today if he supports **Hein**, or not, he said, "it's inappropriate to talk to about personnel issues."

In council actions in recent weeks, the search for a police chief has been started and stopped. The idea to suspend impact fees was floated then made voluntary. Several finance directors have come and gone with no permanent replacement and while some departments have cut their budgets 20% or more, the council cut only 7%. **Hein** has in recent weeks made several proposals to raise fees and revenue enhancements to cut the budget deficit, none of which has passed the city council. "We don't need to be doing this anymore. Enough is enough. The city manager is responsible. They have to provide him with clear, concise direction and they, to fault other people for their lack of ability to understand their job, is unrealistic," says Grinnell.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
March 29, 2009

City Tax Hikes, Service Cuts Possible

Author: Rob O'Dell

Council may have to reconsider solutions for budget that it turned down earlier. As Tucson grapples with the worst budget crisis in its history, the City Council may be forced to reconsider tax increases and service cuts they rejected in the early days of the downturn. Over the past 15 months City Manager **Mike Hein** has recommended cutting outside-agency funding, employee layoffs, raising bus fares and hiking other taxes and fees. Those moves might have lessened the \$80 million shortfall this year, and eased what promises to be an equally bad budget situation next year. But the council balked or delayed action, which will likely force bigger future cuts than originally would have been necessary.

Last summer the council approved a preliminary 2009-10 general-fund spending plan of \$469 million. The city's current projected revenues are \$393 million. And fixing next year's problem may be even harder than solving this year's because, in order to avoid raising taxes or cutting services, the city spent down its reserves - or rainy-day fund - from \$31 million to \$11 million. Less than a year ago, the reserve fund had nearly \$44 million. Bruce Ash, a Republican who is highly critical of the city, said the council has not made the moves necessary to balance the budget: employee furloughs and layoffs, and cutting services. "It appears they are fiddling like Nero as Rome burns," Ash said. "That's their standard operating procedure." Councilwoman Karin Uhlich said the council couldn't have taken more definitive action without **Hein's** full budget plans. The budget must be considered in a holistic and not piecemeal fashion, she said. "We can't comprehensively do that without the whole document in front of us," Uhlich said. Little action on proposals. The council and **Hein** have done an intricate dance with the budget over the past year. **Hein** urged changes the council either rejected or took no action on - or, in a few cases, implemented. While rejecting **Hein's** proposals, council members offered few alternatives, and haven't passed any of their own ideas. Last June, council members complained **Hein** was over-stepping his authority and they needed to be more involved. But at an October budget-strategy session, in the face of an increasing deficit, they demurred and told **Hein** to figure out where to make cuts. In most cases, the council and **Hein** have backed away from dramatic action.

A timeline –

- January 2008: **Hein** created a list of outside-agency funding he believed could be cut. Mayor Bob Walkup stressed belt- tightening in his State of the City speech.
- February 2008: **Hein** announced a hiring freeze, travel restrictions and deferring maintenance and acquisitions to help bridge what was then a \$12 million shortfall for the budget year, which ended June 30.
- March/April 2008: **Hein** suspended the city's sustainability plan of pre-programmed spending increases for road paving, police officers and firefighters, and parks.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

- June 2008: The council approved this year's budget, but slammed **Hein** over a proposal to increase bus fares to raise \$1 million. The council soon moved to fire **Hein**, but then he was retained unanimously weeks later.
- August 2008: The city announced it needed to use \$12 million to balance the previous year's budget, lowering the city's reserves from \$44 million to under \$32 million.
- September 2008: **Hein** proposed combining Community and Neighborhood services departments to save \$380,000. The council agreed.
- October 2008: Plunging sales-tax receipts prompted the city's budget deficit to explode to \$51 million. The city said for the first time it might cut or suspend services. The council voted to cut funding for outside agencies by 10 percent, but told **Hein** to come back in December with a plan for more cuts.
- November 2008: The city began to quietly cut swimming pools and recreation centers, the TICET shuttle, graffiti abatement, and the Community Food Bank. It laid off some part-time and seasonal workers.
- December 2008: **Hein** announced another \$31 million in cuts were needed. The council signed off on cutting police and fire academies, some Sun Tran bus service, and Parks and Recreation classes.
- January 2009: The council said it preferred raising fees and taxes or spending down the city's rainy-day fund to making massive budget cuts.
- February 2009: **Hein** unveiled budget cuts and potential tax increases for next fiscal year, which starts July 1. Cuts included taking \$4 million from outside agencies, saving \$2 million by combining the Planning and Development Services departments, cutting \$4 million in transit, and hitting employees with furloughs, higher benefit contributions and no more sick-leave buybacks to save a total of \$10 million. He also offered a menu of tax increases, from which he hoped the council would implement \$5 million worth. The council agreed it would back most of **Hein's** proposed cuts at that time, but, on Tuesday, council members said they need to think about it further.

Still scrapping - Despite earlier statements they would back many of **Hein's** cuts, council members criticized **Hein** over his budget again last week. Councilwoman Regina Romero demanded more public hearings on the budget, including longer ones to allow more people to speak. Uhlich was much harsher, saying the council needs to vote on many of **Hein's** proposals, rather than continuing to let them linger in the public mind until they become de facto cuts with no council input. For example, the merger of the Planning and Development Services departments is already under way, and employees have been given layoff notices. The council has discussed the plan, but it has not taken action. In an interview, Uhlich said she has been "very aggressive to have the budget come in front of us. . . . Decisions have to be made sooner rather than later."

Councilman Rodney Glassman said in an interview that he has been talking for some time about his priorities of police, fire, parks and roads. But he said the council has not been able to come to any consensus, and he can't make decisions alone. "The longer we wait, the more difficult our financial situation will be," he said. "It takes four votes to align my priorities with the budget." **Hein** said he welcomes policy direction because he doesn't want to submit a budget to the council that is dead on

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arrival. But he told the council that submitting his own budget is "a duty under the (city) charter that I'm willing to fulfill." He is scheduled to submit the budget on April 21.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
February 25, 2009

Council Will Back Most Budget Cuts

Author: Rob O'Dell

Members won't sign off until talks with representatives of city's 4 unions. After mildly rebuking City Manager **Mike Hein** for unveiling proposals for employee layoffs and furloughs in the media, the City Council indicated Tuesday that it will back most of the budget cuts when they come back or a vote in March. Council members said they won't sign off on the cuts until the layoffs and furlough plans are discussed with representatives with each of the city's four unions over the next several weeks, though. Although the council directed **Hein** to come up with budget cuts to balance what is estimated as an \$80 million budget shortfall for the fiscal year starting July 1, several council members said they didn't like the "process" in which **Hein** unveiled the layoffs and furloughs. "I like the concept," Councilwoman Regina Romero. "What I felt was not right was the process. ... We heard it leaked through the media. That makes me uncomfortable."

In two memos over the past three weeks, **Hein** laid out two proposals to cut an estimated \$8 million next year. Both of the proposals were sent first to the City Council offices, and **Hein** and his deputies stressed at the time they were proposals that needed council approval. The first cut was to combine the city's Urban Planning and Development Services departments to save \$2 million. It would lay off 17 people, and cut 30 total positions. The second memo called for 12 furlough days for all city employees, including upper management - with only public safety exempt - to save \$3 million, as well as eliminating a sick-leave buyback option for public safety to save another \$3 million. Then last week, city human resources representatives began telling some employees their jobs could be eliminated after July 1.

Councilwoman Shirley Scott said notifying employees their jobs could be lost caused much "consternation," adding **Hein** must have realized the uncertainty it caused because she knew **Hein** was not an "insensitive" person. Scott said she was concerned some city employees wouldn't be given a chance to apply for other positions in the city before being terminated. She said she wanted to hear the results from the meetings with the city's labor unions before approving the furloughs and layoffs. **Hein** said the employees were notified their jobs could be cut because he wanted to give them the maximum amount of time possible to look for new work in case they are laid off in July. "It is not the goal for me as a human being and a manager to fire people," **Hein** said. "It's an unfortunate situation. Some employees will not have the situation they have currently. Some may not be with us on July 1. This is the start of conversations we'll have in the next month or so."

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tucson Weekly (AZ)
February 12, 2009

**More Money - The City Council will Consider a Number of 'Revenue Enhancements'--
Including a Trash-Fee Hike**

Author: Jim Nintzel

Most politicians will do just about anything to avoid saying that they support a tax increase, particularly in an election year. So it's no big surprise that when City Manager **Mike Hein** delivered a report to the Tucson City Council on ways to bring in more money to counter sinking city sales taxes, he called it an "Analysis of Potential Revenue Sources." **Hein's** revenue-enhancement memo--a response to council members who wanted to know the range of financial options as they work to bridge an estimated \$80 million shortfall in the budget year that begins July 1--is filled with what you might call "creative solutions." There's a plan to raise an estimated \$1.6 million from Tucson Water users by creating a pseudo-property tax on the water utility's property, which now pays no property taxes. There's a proposal to raise \$3.4 million by increasing the tax on other utilities inside the city limits. There's even a pitch to implement a new tax on tanning salons that would raise \$15,000 a year. There are proposals--such as a tax on advertising revenues (worth \$964,000 annually) or residential rental payments (which would raise \$12 million)--that were rejected by a City Council largely controlled by Republicans (with the help of Democrat-turned-independent Carol West) earlier this decade. And there is a politically sensitive proposal to raise the \$14-a-month trash fee enacted by that Republican council.

Current council members Nina Trasoff and Karin Uhlich, Democrats who will seek re-election this year, disparaged the "garbage tax" when they ran for office four years ago, arguing that its creation demonstrated the insensitivity of their GOP opponents. The women also criticized Republicans Fred Ronstadt and Kathleen Dunbar for hiking fees for Parks and Rec courses. **Hein's** memo suggests that the city could increase those fees, which were rolled back when both women took office. Trasoff did not return a phone call from the Weekly, but Uhlich said that fees for Parks and Rec classes may need to be boosted. She says the cuts in the fees in 2005 were pushed by Councilman Steve Leal at the first council meeting she attended. "He seemed to have the support of experienced colleagues we had by our side," said Uhlich, who added that nobody anticipated the severity of the current recession. Uhlich hadn't had a chance to review all the options **Hein** had laid out last week, but she said that she wanted a "transparent" budget process. While she didn't address the trash fee directly, Uhlich signaled that higher city fees were on the horizon. "We will be asking everybody in the community to contribute a fair share toward the city's services," she said.

Hein says a boost in the trash fee is certain to happen eventually. "It's an enterprise fund, so it certainly has to break even," **Hein** says. "Whether it's done this year or not, there will have to be a rate increase at some point. ... There will certainly be a cost-of-service study done this year." If things work out the way that **Hein** is now proposing, the City Council may not need to embrace too many of the "revenue enhancements" to balance next year's budget. Earlier this week, **Hein** released a budget plan that only requires \$5 million in tax and fee increases. **Hein** proposes to bridge the remaining budget gap with a number of other budget maneuvers, including:

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- Saving \$2 million by merging the city's planning and development services departments.
- Cutting another 7.5 percent from other city departments.
- Requiring city employees, with the exception of police and firefighters, to take 12 unpaid days off.
- Dipping into the city's reserve fund for \$4 million.
- Refinancing portions of the city's debt to save \$10 million.
- Cutting \$4 million in Sun Tran funding.
- Cutting \$4 million in funding to outside agencies.

Hein also expects that some commercial property owners neighboring the city will agree to annexation, bringing in an estimated \$1 million in tax revenues. **Hein** says he'd like to decide which workers will be laid off by April so they'll have a chance to look for new work, make plans to take care of their insurance and take other steps to brace for losing their jobs. "I'd like to let them know as soon as possible," **Hein** says. "They can use our insurance through July and get other employment, hopefully." City Councilman Rodney Glassman said he hadn't yet had a chance to review **Hein's** memo on fee and tax increases, but he said that the city would probably need to implement some of them. "I think we need to be honest with the citizens of Tucson, evaluate what things cost and then make a decision about how to pay for them," Glassman said. "We cannot make empty promises about providing services for free, because it's not possible."

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tucson Weekly (AZ)
December 11, 2008

Crunch Time

Mike Hein Says the City Budget is Short by \$31 Million--and Next Year Could be Worse

Author: Jim Nintzel

City Manager **Mike Hein** didn't mince words last week when he informed the Tucson City Council that it was now facing a \$31 million spending gap in this year's budget. "The structure of local government has permanently altered," **Hein** told council members in his memo. "Tough decisions must be made to prioritize resources." **Hein** proposed a mix of financial maneuvers to get through the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2009, including \$1 million in spending cutbacks on Parks and Recreation classes, golf courses and the Tucson Convention Center; collecting an additional \$2.5 million in court fees; reducing the amount of money the city provides for the bus system by \$3 million; and saving \$4 million by delaying the training of new police officers. **Hein** also planned to dip into the city's reserves for \$5 million and defer a contested \$2.1 million payment to the state.

The city's problems stem from the country's ongoing economic crunch. With the local homebuilding industry collapsing and consumers trimming spending, sales-tax revenues, which typically grow year to year, are about \$6.5 million behind last year's figures through the first five months of the fiscal year. On top of that, revenues that the city receives from the state have dropped another \$1.5 million. If the slump continues, **Hein** warns that next year, the city could end up collecting as much money as it did in 2004 while paying the expenses of government in 2010. "Either you have to peel back all of your expenses while at the same time compensation and liabilities have grown," **Hein** says, "Or you've got to change the amount of services you provide." Unless those changes are made, **Hein** estimates that the city could be facing a shortfall of more than \$70 million in the 2009-2010 fiscal year. He provided the council with a lengthy list of cuts to consider for the next fiscal year, including scrapping the city's Urban Planning and Design Department; cutting back funding for outside agencies; eliminating funding for the city's Channel 12 and public-access stations; more reductions in spending on the Tucson Convention Center and Sun Tran; and reducing benefits for employees.

Council members, who were scheduled to discuss this year's \$31 million shortfall on Tuesday, Dec. 9, had mixed reactions to **Hein's** memo. Ward 6 Councilwoman Nina Trasoff praised **Hein's** "carefully reasoned" plan, although she called this year's cuts "painful." "There is no cut in there that I like, but there are cuts that have to be made, because the money isn't there," Trasoff said. "But we have to be careful with this to make adjustments as needed." In particular, Trasoff cautioned that if the police force were to experience attrition, the staff would have to be able to get another training academy underway. Ward 3 Councilwoman Karin Uhlich also expressed concern about delaying police training.

"What I hear across all the neighborhoods in Ward 3 is that fully staffing and sustaining public safety is a real priority. People want to make sure that we're not cutting basic, core public-safety services." Uhlich said that in general, "the City Manager's Office has done a pretty good job of

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trying to help us identify options for balancing this fiscal year, even though many of them are one-time savings." Ward 2 Councilman Rodney Glassman didn't address specific cuts, but said he would emphasize spending on police, fire, transportation and parks ahead of other departments. Ward 5 Councilman Steve Leal said **Hein's** "vision of core services is different from mine. There are some programs that save us money by engaging in prevention."

Leal said he wanted to offer more creative solutions. "The community expects us to try to figure things out," says Leal, who wants to see the city review many expenses, such as how much it pays city staffers to be on-call. Leal suggested the city could bring in money by increasing the value of a parcel of land that it owns on the southeast side by rezoning it for development before the land is sold to a homebuilder. He also proposed that the city start a towing business in conjunction with Pima County. Leal estimates that Tucson police officers order 14,000 cars a year towed to an impound lot by private trucks. "How come we're not doing this?" Leal asks.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
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The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
October 26, 2008

Hein: Water-Service Refusal a Prudent Course of Action

Author: Tony Davis

State law requires that Tucson-area developers prove an assured 100-year water supply. But many water-policy professionals have looked askance at the idea of using water to manage growth. To them, water policy is supposed to treat growth as a given. Tucson City Manager **Mike Hein** has flipped that attitude on its side, with his recent practice of refusing to serve developments outside the city's water-service area. Imposed last December, his policy will last at least until a city-county committee finishes a long-term water and wastewater study next year. The city's utility, Tucson Water, had traditionally served water to anyone who requested it in unincorporated areas of Pima County, and in suburbs on the city's fringes. For many years, Tucson taxpayers paid much of the cost of extending new services, but that has changed since the City Council approved new-home fees in 2003 to help pay for new water service.

Hein said he decided to stop serving areas outside the city service area in part because of Tucson's continuing dispute with Marana over effluent, or reclaimed sewer water. Marana is suing to get the rights to effluent, which Tucson has had, or claimed, legal rights to since a 1979 agreement. **Hein** is concerned that Marana won't turn over any effluent to the federal government for use by Indian tribes, which are supposed to get local effluent under a federal Indian water-rights settlement. "It seemed people were enjoying the benefit of our asset being used regionally without sharing in the responsibilities," **Hein** said in an interview last week. Marana says it's not obligated to give effluent to the tribes because it wasn't part of the water-rights settlement. Here, **Hein** fields questions about the city's water-delivery stance - including whether he's trying to limit sprawl, and whether he has the clout to buck influential developers:

Q: Why the change?

A: It started with Marana. As we continue to expand our service area and services in another jurisdiction, Marana, and then that jurisdiction refuses to cooperate with us on the obligations under the Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act, it seemed people were enjoying the benefit of our asset being used regionally without sharing in the responsibilities.

Q: You dropped this policy unannounced on a newly seated City Council. Why no public hearings first?

A: If you look into the history of how the city had done this in the past, there wasn't any thoughtful deliberation to set up that policy. All I did was suspend any activities until some policy could be forthcoming.

Q: Are you saying that if the old policy was done without public notice, it's OK to do it that way now?

A: No, I'm saying I didn't set policy, I undid policy that was set previously without public discussion.

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Q: If this isn't a policy, what is it?

A: The policy is to follow law, the service area and what we're required to serve under law. We have a flow chart. It goes through a series of questions the staff asks about, 'Are we required to serve it?'

Q: Did you do it that way to forestall a rush by developers to get water service before a new policy kicked in?

A: No. An examination of requests for water service will show that there was no immediate backlash or rush to get service, either.

Q: A lot of experts think you shouldn't use water to manage growth.

A: If I ran a water utility and I was charged with bringing in revenue, the easiest way to do that is to add customers. When looking at the long-term prosperity of the city, that isn't necessarily (consistent) with adding customers and bringing in revenue.

Q: Does your stance mean that the city lacks enough water for future growth?

A: It would be ridiculous to assert that we have consensus on that issue. That is part of the ongoing water-wastewater study, so we can agree on exactly how much is here. I think there is an opportunity where we as a community can come to a consensus. Until that time, I feel no sense of obligation or rush, unless legally compelled to, to serve some of these areas.

Q: Are you doing this to try to limit sprawl?

A: No, but it does certainly raise the question of how far out the city should serve growth and how far out growth should go. I hope to get to that question with the dialogue with the community on this water and wastewater stuff. It's an appropriate time to re-examine and articulate values and policies, and that's what I would expect the community and mayor and council to do in the next year.

Q: Are you trying to prod developers into being annexed by Tucson? When the city tried that under your predecessor, James Keene, developers protested and the city had to back off.

A: I do from time to time study local history and in no way want to repeat that. While we have an active annexation office, we're not targeting mass residential areas outside the city limits. But if property that otherwise (Tucson Water) would not be legally obligated (to serve) annexes in, and there is a community benefit to it ... I would anticipate the mayor and council raising the questions of public good, whether it is a good thing to annex, and along with that is the factor of their using our water resources.

Q: Can the city of Tucson really stand up to a developer as influential as Diamond Ventures?

A: It doesn't matter who the applicant is; we treat them all the same.

Q: Do you have the will to deny water to developments in unincorporated areas for the long haul? What would spur you to do this for several years or longer? What would make you buckle?

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A: It is as durable as we need it to be in regards to letting the public process run. Until there is a demonstrated mal effect on the environment or the community, I don't see any reason that we should set a long-term policy before finishing the public process.

Q: Some critics say your policy may cause developers outside the city to sink a well and join the Groundwater Replenishment District. That's a three-county agency that buys and recharges renewable Colorado River supplies into the ground to make up for the pumped water - usually far from where it had been pumped, to the detriment of the pumped aquifer.

A: Yes, (my policy) potentially could be playing into that problem, but I think the developers could also join the Metro Water District or they could do a variety of things. You have to look at it on a case-by-case basis. That is an element of the value discussion that the community is going to have to have.

Q: Will the city ever go back to the old way of doing business or is this a permanent change?

A: I don't want to speculate about the outcome of public dialogue. I think in the end, whatever happens, there will be a clear basis and understanding as to why the policy exists. It will be founded in community values.

AN OUTSIDE EXPERT'S VIEW

Here's what one local planning expert, Laura Huntoon, director of graduate studies for the University of Arizona's planning program in the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, says about Tucson's new stance of refusing to serve water to developments outside the existing delivery area: "We don't have a limitless amount and we can't supply it indefinitely to whoever wants to develop. But selecting who gets the water doesn't seem to be a transparent process. "It's perfectly within (City Manager **Mike**) **Hein's** jurisdiction to say no, but having an orderly process is important. Telling them that on such and such a date, the door closes. But of course, then everybody rushes in. "A whole thing that planners believe in devoutly is that you want an orderly process so people understand what is required. When you make a change, the change itself is of concern to all participants. It's amplified because of the chaos in the larger economy."

DID YOU KNOW - So far, Tucson has denied city water service to four projects outside city limits:

- * Painted Hills: 260 homes on 286 acres, where West Speedway and Anklam Road merge.
- * Montecito: 3,500 homes on 837 acres, southwest of the Ajo Highway (Arizona 86)-West Valencia Road intersection.
- * An industrial parcel, 166 acres, north of Valencia Road and west of South Craycroft Road.
- * Another industrial parcel, 222 acres, south of Hughes Access Road and east of Old Nogales Highway.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
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The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
July 2, 2008

Unanimous City Council keeps Hein

Author: Rob O'Dell

In a closed meeting, members decide to work with manager. A push to fire Tucson City Manager **Mike Hein** died quietly Tuesday, as the City Council voted unanimously to work out its differences with **Hein** instead. Several council members were seen hugging each other after the vote, saying it had been an emotional and turbulent week since Councilman Steve Leal called for **Hein** to resign. No one was hugging **Hein**, who said nothing from the dais and left the meeting without being interviewed by reporters. He did not return phone calls later.

The council held a closed-door session Tuesday after four council members - Leal, Regina Romero, Karin Uhlich and Shirley Scott - had voiced public concerns about **Hein's** job performance in the past month. Leal upped the ante just over a week ago by sending an e-mail to **Hein** demanding that he resign immediately or face being fired by the council. **Hein** was on vacation at the time. But on Tuesday, Leal was backpedaling before the council even met in closed session with **Hein**. Leal said he "regrets" the way he called for **Hein's** firing and that things didn't go "the right way." The closed session lasted nearly two hours and took so long that the council and **Hein** took a break to go to the bathroom and regroup.

During the break, **Hein** and Leal were seen talking calmly to each other in the hall, with **Hein** looking somewhat exasperated from the entire process. As they headed back into the session, Leal remarked that **Hein** was "even walking with his back to me so you can see there's trust" - joking that he wasn't stabbing **Hein** in the back. After emerging from the closed session, the council members voted unanimously to work to address the issues between **Hein** and themselves. The council members said they couldn't say what was discussed behind closed doors because it was a personnel matter, and disclosing it would violate the state's Open Meeting Law. "All of us have faith we have mitigated and shrunk the symptoms that have caused us discontent," Leal said. "We can give each other the benefit of the doubt."

Uhlich, who made the motion to back **Hein**, said the council was moving forward with "great confidence" in **Hein**. Scott said she has expressed her concerns publicly, and they are real. However, she added: "I'm convinced my concerns have been heard. "Our council will see changes that are desired and be able to move forward with Mr. **Hein** as the manager. It's my duty to attempt to make this relationship work." Romero said the council and the manager had a strong conversation and "I look forward to a new day." Councilwoman Nina Trasoff said the council would work together as a team to "resolve this issue before us." Mayor Bob Walkup said the closed-door session confirmed his faith in **Hein** and also gave him faith in the City Council as a whole. "The winner is going to be the city," he said.

At the start of the council meeting, Leal said he sent the resignation demand out of frustration. But he said last week's memo was a success in one sense: It showed that the council's concerns

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about **Hein** were serious. "My goal with the letter was to say these things matter," Leal said at the opening of the council meeting, before the council discussed creating an independent auditor position or went into closed session. "I think that part of the letter worked." Also before the closed session, the council voted 6-1, with Councilman Rodney Glassman voting no, to consider creating an independent auditor position during its August study session. Uhlich, who proposed the position, said the study session would be a discussion of how to create the best independent auditor position for the city. She said she was happy that Tucson has "evolved to a point where we are considering more checks and balances" in city government.

Glassman said he voted no because there weren't enough specifics on the auditing position. "The concept has not been vetted or discussed with the community, which gives me great pause," he said. Uhlich called for the independent auditor to sit on a three-member commission, where the auditor would be the only paid member. She estimated the cost of the commission at around \$250,000. She said cities such as Albuquerque, Denver and Seattle have such positions, and the responsibilities could include conducting audits and investigations; preventing and detecting fraud, waste and abuse; and finding ways to increase fiscal and ethical accountability. Romero said the idea of an independent auditor was "a very visionary action," adding, "It's important for us to think creatively about transparency." Scott said she supports discussing an independent auditor, but she wants to ensure that the council discusses all issues and concerns about the new position before creating the job.

DID YOU KNOW

Tucson's longest-serving city manager was Joel Valdez, who took office in 1974 and retired in 1990. The Main Library Downtown is named for him. Since Valdez stepped down, Tucson has had six managers: Tom Wilson, Ruben Suarez, Mike Brown, Luis Gutierrez, James Keene and **Mike Hein**, with an average tenure of three years.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tucson Weekly (AZ)
June 26, 2008

Firing Line**Councilman Steve Leal Wants City Manager Mike Hein's Head**

Author: Jim Nintzel

Councilman Steve Leal delivered an ultimatum to City Manager **Mike Hein** earlier this week: Quit, or be fired. In a letter to **Hein**, Leal said that he has "lost the comfort level that I need for a viable working relationship with a city manager. "Because of the significance of the issues at stake in our community, it leaves me no choice but to ask for your resignation," Leal wrote in the letter. "... If this is not agreeable to you, I will place your contract and its termination on the next mayor and council agenda." Whether Leal has the votes to force out **Hein** remains to be seen.

Mayor Bob Walkup said on Monday, June 23, that he was behind **Hein** "110 percent." **Hein** also has solid support from Council Members Nina Trasoff and Rodney Glassman. But his support remains weak among the other three council members. Shirley Scott, who was unavailable for comment on Monday, has been upset with **Hein** over police salaries, while Regina Romero has been critical of the city manager over the progress of downtown redevelopment. Ward 3 City Councilwoman Karin Uhlich may prove to be the swing vote. Last week, Uhlich was critical of **Hein** over a proposal to raise bus fares by a quarter. Uhlich said that **Hein's** proposed budget had reduced the general-fund subsidy for the bus service by about \$4 million in upcoming years, which was the same amount of money that the fare increase was estimated to bring in. Uhlich has complained that city staff hasn't yet been able to explain the drop in funding in the budget documents that she's examined, but she stopped short of calling for **Hein's** head. "I think I've been clear about my frustration about getting very basic information that's essential to making good policy decisions," Uhlich said. "And that is a serious concern that needs to be addressed. Whether or not that means **Mike** has to go--I haven't made up my mind yet." Uhlich said she wants to have a meeting next week to decide **Hein's** future "in as professional and orderly of a way as possible."

Hein was on vacation and unavailable for comment, although one council aide said that the city manager would be returning to Tucson to meet with council members this week. Walkup defended **Hein's** job performance, saying the city manager had done a good job of working cooperatively with Pima County since he was appointed to the job in 2005. "As a result of that, we've moved forward on more regional initiatives that are of great benefit to the community," Walkup said. "I absolutely believe in **Mike** and what he has done. We need to shore up a couple of things, but in my opinion, every one of the things that council members have mentioned is fixable by sitting down and talking about it and implementing corrective action." Trasoff, who was elected alongside Uhlich in 2005, also praised **Hein's** management of the city. She added that "there are communication issues that need to be worked through, but I am extremely hopeful that can be done."

Leal, however, said that **Hein** has too often ignored the will of the council in making decisions about downtown redevelopment and the location of the Greyhound Bus depot. He also complained

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that the manager too often briefs council members in 1-on-1 meetings rather than having discussions at council study sessions. Leal's call for **Hein's** ouster comes as the city is facing a tight budget year. Sales-tax revenues are below projections; state budget funds could still be cut; and a slowing housing market has stalled many downtown revitalization projects.

The proposed city budget avoids layoffs and continues funding street repairs, but it does not include raises for any employees or new hires for the police and fire departments; those new hires have been a key element of the council's sustainability plan. While the firefighters and other unions have expressed understanding that money is tight, the police union has put pressure on the council to hire more cops. As of press time, city staff had yet to respond to Uhlich's concerns and explain the decrease in Sun Tran funding in future general funds, although an earlier report from Jim Glock, the city's transportation director, noted that the general-fund subsidy for Sun Tran has increased from \$25.5 million in fiscal year 2004 to an estimated \$38 million in fiscal year 2008.

Lone vote supporting an increase in bus fares, said it was "unfortunate" that the city staff had been unable to respond to Uhlich's complaints sooner. "I don't think it was an attempt by someone to change the subsidy level, which means you're changing the service, without the approval of the council," Walkup said. "I think it's a matter of capital moving out, and maybe some other things moving in. I wasn't nearly as concerned about that as some other council members."

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Arizona Daily Star, The (Tucson, AZ)
June 15, 2008

Hein wants to start small projects on Rio Nuevo's western side

Author: ANDREA KELLY

City Manager **Mike Hein** said he's almost ready to sell about \$25 million in bonds to do a series of smaller projects in the western portion of Rio Nuevo. But the manager said he hopes the City Council doesn't insist on going ahead immediately with a quartet of major projects in what will become the Tucson Origins Heritage Park. Financing just those pieces, out of sync with the other West Side facilities, could be so expensive that it could have a severe impact on the city's ability to pay for some projects, he said. **Hein** said plans and permitting for a parking garage, cultural plaza and re-creation of the convento - a historic building used by visiting priests in the 1800s - are done or nearly done. Construction could start in months, if that order comes from the council, he said.

Council members Regina Romero and Steve Leal are pushing to start building as quickly as possible. On Tuesday, the council unanimously backed Romero's motion authorizing \$41.4 million in construction funding for those projects and associated road and utility improvements. The council did not specify when construction must start, instead giving **Hein** 30 days to come up with a timetable that includes "sequencing" with the museums and the University of Arizona Science Center, which also are supposed to be built around the cultural plaza. The fact that most of those other developments are not near ready is why **Hein** wants to delay the city projects.

He said borrowing rates for museum facilities such as the convento are extremely high unless they can be packaged with other facilities. He said he also worries that the convento, sitting there in isolation for a year or two while other facilities catch up, would become "a graffiti magnet."

The parking garage relies on parking revenues to pay off its financing. Without the museums and science center to attract customers, Rio Nuevo will have to pay off the loan and interest, taking money away from other projects.

Hein wants to scrap the Origins Center entirely. He said the "interpretive center" is a vestige of a past Rio Nuevo vision, one of the many evolutions the Downtown redevelopment project has gone through since it was approved by voters 1999. It's little more than a \$12 million turnstile to collect \$9 to \$12 admission to look at the faux convento, mission gardens and other elements of the heritage park, he said. "For all their patience, for all they've put into this thing, Tucsonans ought to be able to get some kind of free experience out of it. . . . It's their history," he said.

The UA is easily the farthest along in having plans ready to build its science center and the Arizona State Museum, possibly as early as next spring. The university plans to combine those two facilities, once envisioned as separate buildings, into a single \$130 million project to cut costs. It will ask the Arizona Board of Regents for approval of the project later this week.

But the city and the university have not agreed on a financing plan as far as how much Rio Nuevo money the city will provide and whether it will be a smaller - \$55 million to \$60 million - upfront subsidy or more money in installments over time. The council gave **Hein** two months to work out those details. The approximately \$25 million in certificates of participation, a type of non-voter-approved bond, **Hein** is ready to sell would pay for smaller projects that will pave the way for some

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of the bigger ones. About \$2 million would go toward design work on the Arizona Historical Society Museum to speed its planning, a move already approved by the council. Another \$3 million would be to construct the Mission Gardens agricultural site. Backers say the gardens should be done even if it takes a while for the rest of the facilities so the plants will have time to mature.

Hein said he's in no rush to start the gardens but is willing in order to demonstrate that progress is being made. The rest of the money would go toward expanding the Clark Street underpass at Interstate 10 to accommodate the trolley and for a bridge across the Santa Cruz River at Cushing Street. With some of that infrastructure work under way, the larger projects could begin at a better-coordinated pace, he said.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
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The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
June 9, 2008

Hein: Forget City Buy of Hotel Arizona

Author: Andrea Kelly

Price too high, he says, urging move on 700-room Sheraton Downtown City Manager **Mike Hein** says the city should dump plans to buy and renovate Downtown's Hotel Arizona because it would be too expensive. But **Hein** said the city should begin planning in earnest for a 700-room Sheraton hotel next to the Tucson Convention Center and pay \$17 million for 6.7 acres just west of the TCC. The land, now owned by Allen Norville, along with property the city already owns, would be used for the hotel, a new arena and other projects in the Rio Nuevo Downtown redevelopment program. Exactly where each building should go should be decided within six months if the City Council approves plans that **Hein** will pitch at its Tuesday session.

Hein also will ask the council to approve an agreement giving Garfield Traub Development of Dallas the same six months to do the first phase of planning for the project, including construction schedules and costs for the hotel and the arena, proposed development agreements, financing plans and commitments from hotel and arena operators. Plans to build a 12,300-seat arena on city land adjacent to Interstate 10 have been scaled back because the cost turned out to be well above the \$130 million initial estimate. The reduced size makes it possible to move the arena closer to the TCC and still build a hotel nearby.

The city was interested in buying the Hotel Arizona because it believed the aging 250-room hotel needed a major upgrade. It was hoped that renovations could be done quickly to provide a supply of higher-quality rooms while the Sheraton is being built, then provide convention overflow rooms with the two hotels operating in tandem. Last month the City Council authorized **Hein** to negotiate a purchase contract for no more than the appraised value, Councilwoman Nina Trasoff said. But **Hein** told the council in a memo last week that the owners' \$28 million asking price is more than the appraisal, so he recommended that it be left in private hands, although he said he hoped the owners would make upgrades on their own. He also left the door open to a possible city purchase later, if the price changes or the hotel is upgraded. "The city hopes private development continues," said Jaret Barr, **Hein's** assistant. "We want to see private investment happen there."

Councilwoman Regina Romero also said she hopes the hotel owners continue to make the property an important part of Downtown. Barr said he wouldn't reveal the appraisal value because the appraisal cost was split between the city and Centro Nuevo Partners, the hotel owners. "We do not feel comfortable releasing the appraisal number without CNP's (Central Nuevo Partners') permission," a city memo says. "We made an offer based on the appraisal, which is below their asking price. They said no, they thought it was worth more, so we said we have to move on," Barr said. Without the Hotel Arizona property, the reduction in the total number of rooms in the city's plan could make financing and occupancy goals easier for the Sheraton hotel the city will now move forward with, Barr said. The goal was an average 68 percent occupancy rate, and fewer rooms to fill could make that goal easier. "But then again, maybe that means there will be less conventions,

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too. It's all related," Barr said. Another consideration is that having one fewer project to finance could leave more money for other Rio Nuevo projects, he said. Romero added: "Even though we've lost one element of what was planned, we are still moving forward."

In addition to the hotel component of Rio Nuevo, the council on Tuesday will discuss the timing of redevelopment plans for the area west of Interstate 10. In a memo to the council, **Hein** said he has been asked why construction has not yet begun on the Origins Heritage Park and a parking garage, because the design plans are done and building permits are ready. He said construction of the Origins Park and garage needs to be coordinated with the planned University of Arizona Science Center and a trio of planned museums, all of which are still in earlier stages of design.

Opening the Origins Center by itself won't draw many people to the site, potentially tarnishing its image. And financing for the parking garage depends on paying customers, and there wouldn't be enough of them without the other facilities, he said. Romero said she still wants work to begin on any portion of the West Side plans that can be started. "I'm not asking for us to build without a master schedule; I want them to do it right and start," she said. "There are things that are definitely ready to go, and I want to make sure they are ready. I don't want to ask for more than what has been promised to the residents of Tucson, but I'm also not going to settle for less."

Continued delays could eventually affect the private development waiting to step in after the city's work is finished, Romero said. "If we start delaying one project and then another and then another . . . everything is going to be delayed," Romero said. The council also will hear a proposal for a \$54 million exhibition expansion of the Convention Center, which Romero said would draw bigger conventions to town. As part of the deal to buy Norville's property, the city agreed to help relocate the gem show he hosts each year in conjunction with the Tucson Gem, Mineral & Fossil Showcase. One of the options is a structure built on top of the TCC. Norville has been using a large tent for his event.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
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Tucson Weekly (AZ)
May 8, 2008

Cops and Budgets the Police Union Raises Hell after City Manager Mike Hein Proposes a Pause in New-Officer Hiring

Author: Dave Devine

Two years after it was launched, the city of Tucson's 10-Year Financial Sustainability Plan has hit rough waters. Could political pressures sink the idea entirely, or will the City Council stick with the concept? City Manager **Mike Hein** insists that the plan's goals can be accomplished "with patience and discipline." He adds that the City Council will need to reject "knee-jerk reaction to pressure." The Tucson Police Officers Association is applying that pressure. Its president, Larry Lopez, says **Hein** has failed at his job while declaring: "The community's not safe out there, because we don't have the officers."

Lopez says that the number of police patrolling Tucson's streets is about the same now as it was a decade ago, and forecasts that up to 68 officers might retire shortly. He also says many others could move to the Phoenix area, where the pay is higher. **Hein** responds: "There are more police officers on the street today than ever." Lopez believes there should be close to 1,000 patrol officers for Tucson, a city of 550,000 people. A review of budget figures shows that--while their assignments may vary--in 1998, there were approximately 658 police officers. The number is now about 765.

The financial-sustainability plan was supposed to annually increase that figure significantly. Based on 40 years of revenue data, in 2006, **Hein** proposed, and the council adopted, the strategy. It called for devoting 60 percent of future general-revenue increases--estimated to total \$783 million over a decade--to improve services in four areas: police, fire, residential street maintenance and parks. The balance of the new revenue, **Hein** suggested, should go to what he labels "human capital costs, such as salary and benefit adjustments." The first two years of the sustainability plan happened during a growing economy. Hundreds of miles of residential streets were improved; parks maintenance was upgraded; and 80 police officers, plus 75 firefighters and paramedics, were hired. Those last two categories were critical, since Tucson has lagged substantially behind many other similar-sized communities in the number of officers and the response time to emergency calls. According to figures supplied by **Hein** to the council two years ago, Tucson had 1.9 police officers, including supervisors, for every 1,000 residents. He wanted to raise the figure to 2.4, which would mean hiring 560 new officers over the 10-year period, beginning with 40 in each of the first several years. At the same time, to reduce the response time for emergency medical calls to a four-minute level--the level is currently more than five minutes--**Hein** projected the city should employ 354 additional firefighters and paramedics over the next decade. More civilian staff members in the police and fire departments and the judicial system would also be needed to meet the plan's goals. All of these new public-safety employees were going to cost a lot of money--\$547 million, by **Hein's** estimate.

After successfully implementing the first two years of the plan, the downturn in the economy has apparently put the brakes on the plan, at least for the time being. **Hein** is recommending no new public-safety personnel be hired in the next fiscal year, although all existing positions will be

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retained. **Hein** is proposing a continuation the residential street-maintenance program to the tune of \$7.4 million, while allocating \$800,000 toward the parks and recreation goal. As for "human capital," city employees aren't slated to get any pay increases in the coming fiscal year. With such limited financial resources, **Hein** was asked: Why not spend what money is available on more public-safety employees? "That would add to the base budget," he responds. "We're not adding new money to the base of street maintenance."

Since Tucson's population hasn't grown as much as was expected when the forecast was originally made, **Hein** also indicates 40 new police officers may not be needed to meet the plan's annual goal. However, if the city does not fund any new positions, the city will sit almost 100 employees short of meeting the established targets of the sustainability plan. "We'll get there," **Hein** predicts of the future. "I don't expect to see zero revenue growth again." Lopez thinks the City Council needs to move money around in the proposed budget to focus more attention on public safety. He mentions two possibilities--the millions spent on organizations outside of the city government, and \$43 million held in reserve accounts. "Why are they sitting on that money?" Lopez asks of the reserve accounts. "If nothing changes (in the proposed budget), this community won't be protected." **Hein** doesn't agree that the reserve funds should be used. "If I wanted to be popular with the employees, I'd recommend spending down the reserve fund balances, giving everybody a raise. (And) then (I'd) look for another job in two years. But I want to stay in Southern Arizona."

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
January 22, 2008

City Looks for Possible Program Cutbacks

Author: Rob O'Dell

Budget-minded, **Hein** surveys listed \$117.4M in outside agency funding. With tough budget times ahead for all Arizona governments, City Manager **Mike Hein** has compiled a comprehensive list of discretionary spending the City Council could cut if it wants money for new programs. **Hein** insists he is not putting these items on the chopping block but instead wants the council to understand the money it gives to outside agencies and how much discretionary money is available. "The goal is not to reduce it - the goal is to make sure it's being strategically invested," he said. "I don't expect or want to argue over individual line items." The list includes \$117.4 million worth of programs, with nearly half coming from the federal government. The other half is from the city's general fund. The manager said pulling together a list of outside agency programs is not a new initiative put together because of tough budget times. Because of a slowing economy, the state has a \$1 billion budget shortfall, and the same gloomy economic trends are likely to affect the city.

Instead, **Hein** said he has been asking for a list since he was hired in spring 2005. Still, the release of the outside agency funding comes as several council members have proposed projects that likely would carry high price tags. New Councilwoman Regina Romero has proposed creating a curriculum for KIDCO, the city's after-school program. While there is no cost estimate yet, a curriculum would add to KIDCO's \$1.75 million budget. Councilman Steve Leal last year pitched a \$6 million expansion of the city-funded Schools Plus Jobs program, which makes sure students have the skills and experience necessary to make it through college or into the job force when they graduate from high school. The council is also weighing \$10 million in improvements to Hi Corbett Field in Reid Park in the hopes of keeping the Colorado Rockies in Tucson for spring training. Some council members have also suggested repealing the city's garbage fee at a cost of \$24 million. "It's going to be a tough fiscal year," **Hein** said. "If people think it should be redistributed, that's the prerogative of mayor and council."

Hein said he asked for the list because many times an agency requests emergency funds from the city, and that appropriation simply becomes part of the city budget in the following years. Times change. Issues that were salient five years ago may not be the issues of today," **Hein** said. "Programs get funded in the budget, and there's no periodic review on them." Council members said they were happy with the level of detail in the list - 27 pages of single-spaced program entries - but said they want that same specificity in the rest of the city's budget. "The detail is helpful," Councilwoman Karin Uhlich said of **Hein's** list. "It would be helpful to see it in other areas of the budget." Romero said the list showed the city is doing a good job of funding outside agencies. But she said she wants this amount of detail in other parts of the city's budget if the council needs to make cuts. "Why not look at the other departments the same way?" Romero said. "Why do we have to pit outside agencies and nonprofits against each other all the time?" Find more programs on programs vulnerable to cuts. A few of the outside agency programs and their costs that City

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Manager **Mike Hein** says the City Council could cut to provide money for new or expanded services:

* Low-income Bus Pass Program: \$9.88 million, * Parks and Rec Senior Programming: \$571,000, * Access Tucson: \$997,700, * Job Path: \$500,000, * School Resource Officer Program: \$2.7 million.

More programs on the list. More, but far from all, of the outside agency programs City

Manager **Mike Hein** says the City Council could cut to provide money for new or expanded

services: Social services, * Mental Health Diversion Program: \$165,000, * Vista Del Sahuaro

Neighborhood Association/Creative Quilts: \$21,300, * Sunnyside Neighborhood Associations

Peace Gardens: \$14,000, * Humane Society of Arizona: \$18,000, * Community Mediation

Program/Our Family Services: \$54,800, * Wingspan: \$65,000, * Tucson Centers for Women and

Children: \$105,000, * PRO Neighborhoods: \$93,100, Seniors, * Van Tran: \$11.9 million, * Elder

Abuse: \$322,000, * Pima Council on Aging: \$220,000, * PCOA Sunshine Senior Center: \$2,150, *

Elder Shelter: \$52,000, * Tucson Urban League Senior Lunch and Recreation: \$30,000

* El Pueblo Health Center/Preventive Health Services for Children and Elderly: \$30,000, * Jewish

Family Services/Serving Our Seniors: \$30,000, * Interfaith Community Services - Safe and Healthy

Senior Independence Program: \$30,000, Arts and culture/ civic events, * Tucson Pima Arts

Council: \$691,000, * Tucson Museum of Art: \$85,800, * Tucson Children's Museum: \$48,900, *

Arizona Opera: \$40,500, * Tucson Symphony: \$89,700, * Winterhaven Festival of Lights: \$58,700,

* Tucson Rodeo Parade: \$68,400, * El Tour de Tucson: \$30,000, Economic development, * School

Plus Jobs: \$190,000, * Critical Path Institute: \$375,000, * Tucson Regional Economic

Opportunities (TREO): \$1.9 million, * Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau: \$4.6

million, * Tucson Downtown Alliance: \$350,000, * Pima Community College/GED Now!:

\$45,000, * Metropolitan Education Commission: \$70,800, * Tucson Learn2Save Program: \$32,500,

* Tucson Urban League/Microenterprise Training and Loans Program: \$75,300, Kids and

recreation, * Junior Teen Scene, Teen Volunteers and In-Between: \$268,500, * Free Bus Fares for

Children five and under: \$244,000, * Tucson Unified School District/Exploring Our Future:

\$130,000, * Fire Dept. Curriculum Budget including Adopt a School: \$302,000, * Tucson Urban

League/Child care services: \$35,000, * Child and Family Resources: \$155,000, * Late Night Hoops:

\$79,200, * Arts for All Inc.: \$50,000

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Daily Wildcat
April 24, 2007

UA asks city for \$130 mil.
Matt Andazola

The UA is moving forward with a redesigned facility downtown that will combine a science center and the Arizona State Museum, and it is asking the city to pay for the building's \$130 million construction. City Manager **Mike Hein**, who worked on the redesign in conjunction with the UA, said he has tentative plans to bring the proposal before the Tucson City Council at its May 15 meeting. **Hein** said he is more optimistic about sending this proposal to the council than he would have been with past arrangements. Previous plans had asked for two separate downtown facilities for the science center and museum. The science center alone was projected to have cost \$175 million in the fall.

Leslie Tolbert, vice president of research at the UA, said the new scaled-back redesign better reflects financial realities of the Tucson budget. ““It was clear the city of Tucson can’t afford a stand-alone science center,”” Tolbert said. Instead, Tolbert said she is excited about the possibilities of the hybrid facility, including plans to have certain exhibits overlap, drawing both from museum collections and science center displays. ““It’s going to tie the community to its past as well as with its future,”” **Hein** said.

If council members approve the \$130 million facility, money for its construction will come from a tax increment financing district – in other words, without using taxpayer money. The facility itself will be more financially viable because it will have common ticketing, gift shops and possibly a restaurant, Tolbert said. The UA will be in charge of operating the center and providing exhibits. But the downtown attraction should be self-sustaining financially so that it does not cost any new money to run, Tolbert said. The facility is not a profit-seeking venture for the university, she said.

President Robert Shelton’s ““very up-front attitude”” was a big factor in getting the project to its current state because Shelton had asked for a final proposal to be finished by April 15, **Hein** said. Councilwoman Nina Trasoff said this proposal stands a much better chance of passing than prior ones because it represents ““a very strong spirit of cooperation”” between the city and the university. ““It was much more of a partnership this time, rather than one party working in a vacuum,”” **Hein** said.

Tolbert said employees and equipment from the Flandrau Science Center will be moving downtown and the on-campus building given some other purpose, but campus facilities for the Arizona State Museum will still be in use. ““The State Museum is busting at the seams,”” Tolbert said. ““They’ll be able to breathe again.”” **Hein** said the facility will occupy the same land as was planned for the original science center, a 5-acre plot west of the Santa Cruz River and south of the Cushing Street Bridge. Tolbert said the land allotted is purposefully larger than the proposed building to provide for the possibility of a future expansion. The city has not yet determined how the remaining land in the Rio Nuevo downtown renovation project, including that previously allocated for the State

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Museum, will be used, **Hein** said. Trasoff said the city has begun work on trying to get private developers to plan for hotels, stores and other commercial buildings. Despite its scaled-down size and newly imagined purpose, Trasoff said she has confidence the new building will still be as positive a force in the area as a stand-alone science center. “”It will be a major gift to the west side,”” Trasoff said, adding that while it may have the most impact on that specific area of town, the cultural attraction will benefit the whole city.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
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Arizona Daily Star
August 4, 2006

City panel wants joint conservation effort with county

By Tony Davis

Tucson planning commissioners want city and county governments to join forces to produce a regional land-saving plan — five years after the two conservation efforts split apart. The city Planning Commission voted 7-2 Wednesday night to recommend preparing a joint Habitat Conservation Plan, on the grounds that it would save time and taxpayer money. But Thursday, County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry came out against the idea because the county plan is almost finished. In 2001, the City Council voted to break away from the county's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan process, after city officials complained that county officials weren't listening to their views. County officials have pushed since 2004 for a conservation plan to save nearly 260,000 acres through land purchases and developer donations. They want federal approval of their plan next year. City officials hope to produce a plan covering 25,000 acres of city land holdings in the Avra Valley by mid-2007. They wish to produce a plan for 75,000 to 85,000 acres of other land south and east of the city's developed areas by 2010.

The city's slow progress is one reason Planning Commissioner Daniel Patterson says he wants a joint plan. While the county has interim land-saving guidelines for development until its plan is approved, the city has none, he said. "The status quo in the meantime is more and more sprawl," said Patterson, an ecologist for the Center for Biological Diversity. "You're talking about years and years of additional planning and millions of extra dollars that should be spent on other priorities." He and Commissioner Sami Hamed said recent voter approval of a half-cent sales tax for the \$2.1 billion regional transportation plan shows regional desert preservation can work.

But Commissioner Alan Lurie, one of the two "no" votes Wednesday, said comparing the Sonoran Desert plan to the regional transportation effort is a ridiculous oversimplification of a complex issue. Leslie Liberti, director of the city's Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development, said the city might not save much time or money if it joins the county plan, in part because much of the land it's working with is state land. It will take a long time to work out an agreement on that land with the State Land Department, and the county government has excluded state land from its plan, she said. Tucson's past leadership may not have pushed hard for such a plan, Liberti said, but she said that's changed since **Mike Hein** became city manager last year.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
April 2, 2006

Hein Gets Generally High Marks After First Year as City Manager

Author: Rob O'Dell

Business leaders, social service organizations, the Tucson City Council and Pima County typically aren't in unanimous agreement on much. Yet all are sold on the job Tucson City Manager **Mike Hein** has done in his first year at City Hall. **Hein** succeeded James Keene as manager. As much as Keene was described by many as controlling and distant, **Hein** has proven to be just the opposite. He is laid-back but engaged, according to community members and politicians who know and work with him. He's a delegator, not a micromanager, and is open and receptive to the public. They say **Hein** likes to be a consensus builder, although he isn't afraid to throw his weight around - but is more apt to do so in private. The biggest issue he has confronted so far has been the lagging Rio Nuevo, the city's Downtown redevelopment district that has shown little progress toward getting the conglomeration of museums, historic restorations, entertainment venues, shops and restaurants promised to voters when they approved the project in 1999.

Hein has breathed life into Rio Nuevo by shaking up the staff, admitting to Rio Nuevo's lack of progress and pushing an extension of the district from 10 years to 40 years - which would add an extra \$1 billion to redevelop Downtown. Legislation bumping up the life of the district for an extra three decades just passed the Arizona House and is on the brink of passing the Senate. Some of his only critics may be city employees whose jobs he has shaken up or eliminated. Councilwoman Carol West said some city employees feel **Hein** doesn't give them direction. But mostly he gets good marks. "There's a lot of promising signs," said Andrea Robson, co-chair of the Pima County Interfaith Council. "From PCIC's perspective, we're quite pleased." Mike Ebert, a broker for Trident Commercial Real Estate, agreed, calling **Hein** open and available. "He is good news for Tucson," Ebert said. It's the little things following Keene and his iron-fisted control of City Hall, **Hein** sought out his own more open and engaged course. In December, **Hein** eliminated the security at City Hall that forced visitors to sign in and show ID to security guards. **Hein** often leaves his office door open for people to simply poke their heads in. **Hein** said he and his wife joke about the first time she had to sign in at City Hall and his wife filled out that she was there for "fun." **Hein** said security guards had no idea what to do. In addition, he said, during his first week at City Hall he was given a schedule by his staff of daily meetings that basically consumed every minute of his time. He promptly junked it. "He's the direct opposite of Jim Keene," said Byron Howard, a former council aide who now works in the City Manager's Office.

Rio Nuevo revival - The biggest challenge **Hein** has confronted has been Rio Nuevo. He pushed out two of the top managers of the projects by eliminating their jobs from the budget, stripped it of its independent-agency status in the city and installed new leadership. His assessment that the city has "overpromised and under-delivered" where Rio Nuevo was concerned was refreshing to many in the community, after listening to years of city officials regurgitating lines of optimism and accomplishment for the project, while the discontent mushroomed. **Hein** said he has been accused of being exceedingly blunt, but noted, "I call it like I see it. That's how I saw it." Hotel Congress

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

owner Richard Oseran said the Rio Nuevo plan was being implemented in a top-down fashion that "was just dead wrong." Oseran said one of **Hein's** biggest moves was replacing Assistant City Manager Karen Thor-eson, who headed the project, which he said resulted in more openness, discussion and trust with the business community. "Trust is critical," Oseran said. Better relations - **Hein**, who was previously a deputy administrator with Pima County, came to the city amid hopes city-county relations would improve after decades of mistrust and bureaucratic turf battles. **Hein** is also a seasoned veteran of Southern Arizona government: He has also been town manager of Marana and worked in Nogales and South Tucson. He has succeeded in bettering relations, said County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry, as they have improved "100 percent or more."

Most of his City Council approves as well. "All signals are green on him at this point," said Councilwoman Shirley Scott, who applauded **Hein's** review of the city staffing levels and responsibilities, and his goal to save taxpayers' dollars. But city staffers may be one of the few groups who aren't thrilled with **Hein** at the top. West said city staff members feel rudderless and without direction. "Frankly, he's a deal maker," West said. "I wished he'd spend more time managing the city and city employees." Howard said **Hein** has high expectations for employees and doesn't micromanage them. "I don't think he knows the word," Howard said. Oseran cautioned that it's still early, but said **Hein** is definitely on the right track so far. "I'd give him a pretty high grade," said Daniel Patterson, an ecologist with the Center for Biological Diversity who is also a city planning commissioner. "I hope we can keep him here." **Hein** said he has no single long-term goal for the city, but if you ask him the question a half dozen times, it's clear his financial-sustainability program for the city budget is a main focus. The premise is to be financially disciplined enough that over the next 10 years the city can achieve all its goals in hiring police and firefighters, spending to improve parks, and upgrading the city's cracking streets. **Mike Hein's** report card from Tucsonans - Rio Nuevo given much-needed direction. "He's on the right track with Rio Nuevo and the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) extension because without money things can't happen," said County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry. City-county relations - Much improved over past, actually work together, some want more. "Obviously, they've improved," Huckelberry said. "One thing I'd like to see him embrace more is the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan," said Daniel Patterson, of the Center for Biological Diversity.

Openness and accessibility -Much improved over past administration; **Hein** can be reached and will listen. "He is accessible and he doesn't keep himself at the top of the glass tower at City Hall," Patterson said. "We feel we can develop a good working relationship," said Andrea Robson, co-chair of the Pima County Interfaith Council. The "model is 180 degrees different from the way things were," said Hotel Congress owner Richard Oseran. Relationship with business community - Businesspeople are his staunchest supporters. "He seems to be a promoter of free enterprise," said commercial real estate broker Mike Ebert. "Whenever you have openness and transparency, you can have trust," Oseran said. "The business community likes him," said Councilwoman Carol West. Management style - Hands-off, gives goals and is not a micromanager. Some criticize this as a lack of direction. "Here's the direction, here's the vision, here's the assignment and go do it," said Byron Howard in the City Manager's Office. "He lets them do their job," Marana Town Manager Mike Reuwsaat said of **Hein** with his staff. "Some city employees feel like they get no direction," West said.

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Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
September 2, 2005

Tucson City Government Employment
City Manager Makes Some Changes

Author: C.J. Karamargin

Five months after taking over as Tucson city manager, **Mike Hein** is putting his stamp on City Hall. One high-profile position will not be filled, a longtime assistant city manager is on his way out and a couple of people **Hein** worked with in Marana are following him to the city. The changes, **Hein** explained, are part of an effort "to tweak the organization" he took charge of in April. The position that will not be filled was occupied until September 2004 by Jay Gonzales, who worked as city spokesman for about two years under former City Manager James Keene. Gonzales earned about \$85,000, and at one point was among 54 city employees providing public information. Keene left the manager's post last year.

The assistant city manager expected to leave soon is Benny Young, who has held his current job since July 1996. "I'm weary and need a change, and I think the city manager's office needs a change," said Young, who oversees water, planning and development issues. According to **Hein**, Young likely will continue working for the city, but it has not been determined in what capacity. Young, 54 and a lifelong Tucson resident, has worked for the city in various jobs for 26 years, including a stint as head of the transportation department. He earns \$133,000 a year.

In his retooling of the manager's office, **Hein** has added to the payroll two familiar faces from his past, Jaret Barr and Leslie Liberti. Both worked with **Hein** when he was town manager in Marana. Barr, 30, is being paid \$84,700 a year as an assistant to **Hein**. On the job since June, his duties include representing the manager on issues relating to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and coordinating a task force dealing with Fantasy Island, a popular mountain biking destination threatened by urban development. As town manager in Marana, **Hein** hired Barr in 2002 as an intern. Barr, a native of Massachusetts, left the town as an assistant manager and said he earned about \$88,000 annually. Barr said he was willing to take a pay cut because he believes in what **Hein's** trying to do in Tucson. **Hein** is using the money allocated for the unfilled spokesman position to pay Barr.

Liberti, 31, started work Thursday as an environmental planning manager. According to a memo **Hein** sent to Mayor Bob Walkup and the City Council, she will be the city's "voice" on regional planning issues. She will earn \$65,000 annually. In Marana, Liberti worked as an environmental and special projects coordinator. Her duties included working on the town conservation plan. She left last year and went to work for a private environmental consultant. "Obviously I saw some merit in having them around," **Hein** said of hiring Barr and Liberti. In a related matter, **Hein** said a national search is under way for a human-resources director. Teri Traaen left the post in June after less than two years.

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Tucson Weekly (AZ)
February 24, 2005

Residency Riddle**If the City Council Forces its City Manager Pick to Move Inside City Limits, it Could be a Deal-Breaker**

Author: Chris Limberis

Tucson's City Council will chase off **Mike Hein**, the man it unanimously chose to be the next city manager after abandoning a national search, if it insists **Hein** and his family move from their Oro Valley home to a Tucson residence. The council's residency requirement--aimed exclusively at **Hein**--was a key issue that the council discussed, with and without **Hein**, behind closed doors last week. **Hein** has declined to discuss the matter, other than to say he never lived in the cities--South Tucson, Nogales and Marana--in which he worked. If pressed by the council and its lawyers, the requirement would be a deal-breaker. **Hein** and his wife are raising a child who attends a special-needs school near their home. The fiercest critics say the council's attempt to make **Hein** move is the same as telling **Hein** and his wife where their children can go to school. **Hein**, 38, also assists his father, who lives nearby. The city has flirted with residency requirements for its top appointees, as well as the bulk of its 5,900-person workforce, but has backed down each time. The most recent attempt, in an amendment to the City Code that would have required all new appointed officials and most other employees to live in Tucson, failed in October 1998.

While the council told **Hein** to move into the city, minutes later, it reappointed City Clerk Kathy Detrick by unanimous vote. Detrick and her husband, the powerful deputy city attorney Brad Detrick, have long lived outside the city in the Catalina Foothills. They are but two of many top city officials, including the command staff of the Tucson Fire Department, who live outside the city. S.L. Schorr, the Tucson lawyer who once was a city lawyer and administrator, expressed hope that the council would relent. Schorr noted that he lived outside the city while working for the city. "I could see if he were moving from Berkeley," Schorr said, referring to two managers, James Keene and Mike Brown, city recruiters plucked from the East Bay community. Schorr is a strong **Hein** backer, saying the former Marana town manager is "one of the most capable young men I've ever met."

Lawrence Hecker, another Tucson lawyer who supported **Hein**, is now assisting **Hein** in his contract negotiations with the city. Hecker said he could not comment on residency or other issues. While Tucson lacks the requirement, numerous cities--including Phoenix--have some form of residency rule for employees. Phoenix requires its top officials to live in the city and other employees to at least live in Maricopa County, not a difficult task given the size of Maricopa County and its huge variety of communities. Denver, a consolidated city-county government, allows its employees to live among six suburban counties.

Such requirements have been challenged in court, but have been upheld, according to a study by the Allegheny Institute for Public Policy in Pittsburgh. Fred Ronstadt, the second-term Republican who made the motion to select **Hein**, said he is hopeful that the residency issue does not devolve

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into **Hein** walking. How hard will he and the council push? "I don't know," Ronstadt said. "It will depend on what the majority wants. It is important to a lot of people. It's an interesting situation because of his personal circumstances. My sense is that it won't be a deal-breaker." Ronstadt, then in his first term, opposed the measure that would have required most city employees to live within the city. The councilman's father, Jim Ronstadt, lived in the foothills well outside the city during his 20-year reign as director of city parks and recreation ending in 1998. He hardly was--or is--the exception.

Voter registration and property records show that the list of city officials who live outside the city includes Jeff Sales and Joella Gonzales of Republican Mayor Bob Walkup's staff. Kenna Smith, a former mayoral aide who now works in information technology, does not live in the city. Nor does her soon-to-depart boss, Todd Sander. Tucson Water Director David Modeer lives near Sabino Springs outside the city. Karen Thoreson, the assistant city manager who has for several years described how the downtown area would be rehabbed with Rio Nuevo, lives in a central foothills neighborhood that the city has coveted but failed to annex. Kendall Bert, head of the city's economic development efforts, lives in the Tanque Verde Valley outside Tucson. Public Defender Charles Davies lives in the foothills outside the city, and Finance Director Scott Douthitt lives in Oro Valley.

Gary Oaks and Richard Nassi, two longtime traffic officials who have their stamp on where and how Tucsonans drive, do not live in the city. Purchasing Director Wayne Casper lives outside the city, as does Rick Singer, the director of the Tucson Convention Center. Sarah More, a planning administrator for the city planning commission, does not live in the city. Several city magistrates, including Kate Dawes, Mitchell Eisenberg and Eugene Hays, live outside the city. Liana Perez, the city police auditor and equal employment opportunity officer, lives outside the city. Fire Chief Dan Newburn lives in Marana. Deputy Chief Les Caid lives outside the city, as do assistant chiefs Ray Allen and Dan Larkin. "Good point," Councilman Ronstadt said. "Very good point."

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Tucson Weekly (AZ)
February 17, 2005

About Mike Hein

The Story Behind the Man About to Become Tucson's City Manager, and the Process that Led Him to the Position

Author: Chris Limberis

So complete is **Mike Hein's** lack of ego and presumptuousness that when it came to becoming the lone Tucson city manager "candidate," he didn't campaign for the job, didn't prepare a resume and had consolidated his retirement accounts into the state system to which Pima County employees belong. As a deputy Pima County administrator, **Hein** was content to guide the landmark transformation of the region's increasingly splintered, increasingly stumbling economic-development effort. He was pleased to work the details and handle the negotiations aimed at a full county takeover of the Tucson-Pima Library System, freeing up to \$10 million a year in city money. He was satisfied in his \$144,456-a-year job bringing--sometimes dragging--the county's economic development and community services into the 21st century. He was pleased, after moving from Marana city manager to the county post in August 2003, to be County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry's heir apparent. Now he will presumably be Huckelberry's counterpart, a near equal in the management of the region's other \$1-billion-a-year government. Supporters also hope **Hein** will take the openly obdurate city bureaucracy to create the first example of solid city-county cooperation--or at least a sharp reduction in the waste of money that decades-long turf battles have cost taxpayers. At 38, **Hein** would be the youngest man to take the top job at the city in modern history. Unlike Tucson Water Director David Modeer, **Hein** did not parade for the job. Unlike former IBM executive Rick Myers, **Hein** did not engage in an orchestrated movement to be considered for the position. City Hall insiders confirmed last week that Myers was but "a half-vote away" from becoming city manager late last year. Myers, the immediate past point man for the pro-growth Southern Arizona Leadership Council, rose like Icarus and rapidly fell. It is a pattern for many initial front-runners for municipal leadership. Even as they were touting Myers' ability to listen and build consensus, the influential players in this contest began talking up **Hein**.

Hein, an utterly humble Wisconsin native who worked in South Tucson, survived Nogales politics and led Marana government's efforts to grow up responsibly. He executes what Myers preaches. A registered Democrat who lives in Oro Valley, **Hein** was thrust into the lead position several weeks ago, when some at City Hall approached Bob McMahon, head of a Tucson restaurant empire, about the dawdling pace of the City Council's national search for a manager. McMahon needed little convincing of **Hein's** skills, and he began the push with help from his longtime friend, Joel Valdez, the former city manager and current vice president for business at the UA. Others included Myers' Leadership Council pal, S.L. Schorr, a Tucson lawyer; developer (La Paloma and Dove Mountain) David Mehl; and Larry Hecker, the lawyer who has aided local governments on commissions and committees for many years.

McMahon knows little about the details of city government, but he can host a sit-down at his steakhouse and has the ear of most council members. Fred Ronstadt and Kathleen Dunbar, two

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Republicans who will be fighting for re-election this fall, were particularly attentive; they dropped ideas of a national search. Steve Leal, the Democrat who is the council's senior member, also supported **Hein**. Leal is seeking a fifth term in the fall. Two other Democrats, Shirley Scott and Jose Ibarra, also supported forgoing the search in favor of **Hein**. Mayor Bob Walkup, a Republican, first said he supported proceeding with the search, then voted with five others to focus on **Hein**. Only Democrat Carol West protested. Valdez's support was key. He was an effective and powerful city manager for 17 years--longer than the combined tenure of his five successors. He also remains a key leader in Tucson's diverse Hispanic community. West has spoken for City Hall bureaucrats who adamantly opposed anyone from the county. She first gave voice to the city bureaucracy's dislike for all thing county when Dunbar and Ibarra floated the concept of luring Huckelberry to the city's top job.

Hein appeals to McMahon's hope for regionalism and greater, if not great, city-county relations. Democrats were always comfortable with **Hein**. It can be argued that he is their guy. He came out of South Tucson, the political turf of former powerful Supervisor Dan Eckstrom, and Nogales. Leal, Eckstrom and their colleagues in the southside Democratic power structure apparently got their man in the city's top job while Republicans did the heavy lifting. Ronstadt's motion last week to abandon the national search while interviewing **Hein** was quickly seconded by Leal, a supremely rare voting combination. So little did **Hein** covet the job that when the city's human resources people called for his resume, **Hein** said, "I don't have one." "If there is solid proof (that he wasn't eyeing the city manager position)--if you don't believe the resume story--I put all my retirement in the state system," **Hein** says. **Mike Hein** is a relaxed, fit man with a calm demeanor and self-deprecatory manner. A lifelong athlete, he is not too pious to have a cigarette. He is polite, but he isn't overly impressed. He is nice, but he isn't weak, and you quickly get the impression that he won't be the one to back down from a fight. He says he is "a little overwhelmed by all the positive expressions from such a wide cross section" that includes business leaders, developers and neighborhood and environmental activists. "It is gratifying to know people believe that I treated them fairly," **Hein** says.

Orphaned as a youngster, **Hein** was adopted and grew up in a loving foster family in Wauwatosa, on the Milwaukee line. His father was a mill worker in a lumberyard and his mother was a "loving and typical" Midwestern homemaker. His father was seriously and permanently injured when he was struck by a car. **Hein** was in middle school. His mother didn't drive and used city buses to ferry **Hein** and the other kids. "It wore on my mother," **Hein** says. She, too, was tough. "She was in and out of hospice four times before she passed when I was in high school," **Hein** says. **Hein** played basketball in high school. He fesses up that he and the coach didn't get along. He also concedes that he "never aspired to high education. I wanted a job so I could enjoy a six-pack once in a while." A Jiffy Lube seemed like a suitable place to earn that kind of money, but **Hein** saw some college literature that included partying. Bearable. Filling out financial aid papers, **Hein** says he asked his dad what the family's annual income was. "What did you make with that coaching job you had last summer?" his dad responded. That was it.

"Loaded," as **Hein** says, with Pell grants, he headed off to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He graduated in four years in 1988 with a double-major in public administration and political

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science, and a double-minor. He interned, in a bit of foreshadowing, for the city-county government. The kid who considered a Jiffy Lube career for beer money then was prodded by professors to go to graduate school. Money mattered. **Hein** said he would have loved Maryland for its joint law and master's in public administration program, but the school didn't offer assistantships. The University of Chicago had the prestige and assistantships, but horrid winters. The UA had both warm weather assistantships; **Hein** accepted a job as a dorm director. "I packed everything I had in an Army C bag, got on a plane for the first time in my life and came to Tucson. I landed with \$21 in my pocket," **Hein** says. "I put the bag in oleander bushes outside Apache-Santa Cruz dorms and went to a saw mill for a job. Where else is a kid from Wisconsin going to work?" Backing up, **Hein** notes that he borrowed the money for his plane ticket from his wife, Patricia. The two grew up on the same block and attended the same high school, but didn't meet one another until later. "She continues to remind me that she loaned me the money," **Hein** says.

At the UA's highly ranked MPA program, **Hein** flourished but baffled his professors. All of his classmates in the class of 1991 were bent on Washington, D.C., internships. **Hein** liked local government and its delivery of goods and services. Faculty eyes glazed over. What about government ethics, **Hein** asked. "You'll be unemployable," he was told. And then the Keating Five scandal broke out, with Arizona's two senators, Republican John McCain and Democrat Dennis DeConcini, having to defend their actions in sticking up for convicted financier Charles H Keating and his collapsed Lincoln Savings & Loan. "I had a sense of obligation," **Hein** says of his grant-supported education. He wrote to many Wisconsin politicians, from then-Senator William Proxmire on down to county executives (the mayors of some county governments), saying he would work for free. "No one called or wrote back. I must have written bad letters," **Hein** says. He stayed and worked an internship and several jobs in South Tucson. "I cherish that to this day," **Hein** says. "You get wide exposure and greater variety in smaller jurisdictions. I helped reformat the budget, worked with police, public works, the fire department. I encourage graduate students to go to the small communities. They need the help and you can do more." From the frying pan, **Hein** went to the fire when he joined Nogales city government as planning and zoning director, the first of several jobs that included finance director and assistant administrator from 1993 through 1997.

For all the rough and tumble of Pima County politics, it pales in comparison to Nogales, where political treachery has been both art and sport, particularly when the Nogales city charter guaranteed conflict with a strong mayor as the CEO. Continuity was out the window because mayors served a two-year term and were limited to just two consecutive terms. **Hein**, by all accounts, kept everyone happy. He served Jose Canchola, the businessman who owns several McDonald's restaurants in Tucson and Nogales, during Canchola's choppy tenure as mayor (during which he was blasted as a carpetbagger) and the more turbulent term of the boy mayor, Louis Valdez, just 20 when elected. "When I look back, I have no idea how I survived," **Hein** says. Valdez, ripped for his attention to MTV and his bar tabs covered with city credit cards, once presided over a meeting that produced a narrow vote to support a tight budget. Reporters captured Valdez saying all the right things after the meeting: the budget was a compromise, and no one got everything they wanted. But the next day, with **Hein** out golfing, Valdez exercised his right to veto the budget. Chaos ensued. The fiscal year began. Money wouldn't flow. The city was like the federal government, needing a continuing resolution to keep basic functions and services going. Out on the golf course, **Hein's** beeper

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wouldn't shut up. It flashed 911. **Hein** answered the summons and the mayor's office still wearing his spikes. Valdez was entertaining some federal big shot and was set to leave on an extended European trip. "**Mike**," he told **Hein**, "I've vetoed the budget. You've got to sign it." **Hein** refused, pitching the document back to Valdez. But he secured sufficient votes from the council to keep the city operating. That was, **Hein** says, a time when he considered himself fired. He went home and didn't answer any of the panicked calls. Cesar Rios won a heated election to succeed Valdez, but he didn't bother to await the official canvass of disputed results to call **Hein** and ask for office space. **Hein** finessed a way to get the mayor-elect space in City Hall, where Valdez still, if temporarily, presided. **Hein** considered himself on thin ice, but the new mayor called him to say, "We're going to keep you, but with a cut in pay." That changed to, "**Mike**, we'd like to keep you with the same pay." And that evolved into, "**Mike**, we want to keep you, but with a raise."

Hein brought financial reforms and stability to Nogales and tapped federal sources for the overstressed city's needs. He assisted in the rewrite of the city charter to eliminate that mayoral-council animus. Unruffled as he is, **Hein** and his wife spotted the ad for the Marana position for someone to succeed Hurvie Davis, a former Tucson transportation director who announced a long-range plan to groom a replacement. Some 200 people applied. The ultimate test for **Hein** and the few other finalists was a reverse field trip. OraHarn, then Marana's mayor and the embodiment of the town's country-bumpkin government, and Davis, a sharp and personable man, were to "observe" **Hein** in his Nogales environment. It worked. **Hein** started as an assistant manager in June 1997 and took over from Davis a year later. **Hein** picked up where Davis left off, forcing Marana to grow into its wildly expanded borders and to quit its practice of being the region's patsy for developers. Under **Hein**, Marana levied the highest impact fees in the county upon new construction. It pioneered the construction sales tax. And when it couldn't wait for county transportation bonds or hope that the money would ameliorate dreadfully congested roads, the town passed an increase in its sales tax for roads. Tucson and Pima County have failed to do so four times. **Hein** also got Marana positioned with Pima County for the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, and Marana, though it has big developments like Dove Mountain, began to demand set asides for open space and preservation. Environmentalists have been pleasantly surprised. Developers praise **Hein** for helping institute rules they all know. **Hein** gives the credit to his Marana councils for all progress, big or small.

An example of **Hein's** local and quaint focus is the time Marana government caught hell from a resident fired up about the lack of a traffic signal that would allow her and her neighbors to get on a main road safely. Her letter was nasty. All the bureaucratic studies--traffic warrants and the like--showed the light was not justified. Plus, there was the fail-safe excuse that the light was not in budget. **Hein** was determined to make it happen, considering not warrants and other bureaucratic hindrances, but the reality of access. He found out the woman's birth date and on that day had an aide arrange for a cake decorated with a traffic light to be delivered to the woman's home. It was attributed not to **Hein**, but to the Marana council. The light was recently installed.

Totally opposite James Keene, the city manager **Hein** will likely replace, **Hein** is best at building consensus among decision makers without alienating other players. He loves to dole out credit.

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His first test will be to uphold the proposal he marshaled for a county takeover of library funding and operation, a move that will require city funding for several years. **Hein** is a believer in contextual management. He combines art and craft. In Nogales, he says, he used more craft than art and the reverse in Marana. He blows off steam by "hanging with his wife and kids," by playing golf and "fat man's basketball." Indeed, he is part of the league run by Weekly columnist Tom Danehy. He's come, or slipped, a long way from the days when he was a graduate student playing regularly with members of the UA team. "Kenny Lofton (the former UA basketball, baseball and Major League star) was fast. Let me tell you," he reports.

Hein also attended a summer program in 2001 for government officials at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Now, he is about to move up to a premier municipal job as the CEO of one of the largest cities that is run by an appointed manager. He is grounded, forced to keep his head and humility by his wife and by his past. "I don't have as much stress as most people," **Hein** says. "You want a bad job, go be a fry cook. People hollering at you all day. My job changes every day. That's stress. And clearly I make in a few weeks what my family made in a year."

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The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
February 12, 2005

Tucson City Government Manager Employment Hein Wins Wide Praise, and Yet ...

Author: Tony Davis

If **Mike Hein** becomes Tucson's city manager, he will bring a reservoir of personal good will as deep as the public distrust of the process that the city is using to choose him. After working eight jobs in 14 years for four Southern Arizona government agencies, **Hein** has few obvious adversaries. He has built a reputation as a listener and a consensus builder who tries to find common ground. He is praised as a "doer," who as deputy Pima County administrator has helped create a regional economic development agency and a regional transportation authority. As Marana town manager for five years, he got credit for saving more open space and improving traffic flow in the state's fastest-growing community. Environmentalists who blast Marana's rapid growth are lavish in their praise of **Hein**. Yet the push for his candidacy came from the business community.

In an interview, **Hein** came across as a low-key candidate who would try to listen as well as lead, a contrast with predecessor James Keene, who some City Council members said was too domineering while others praised him as a visionary. Those who question **Hein's** appointment are primarily people who haven't worked with him but are angry at the City Council's decision to cancel a national search at the behest of the business-backed Southern Arizona Leadership Council. The council could vote Tuesday on whether to hire him at a salary that undoubtedly would top his county pay of about \$144,000. "If you want someone who has learned how to grow quickly and wisely, Mr. **Hein** is not perfect but is as good as you are going to get," said Christina McVie, a Northwest Side environmentalist. "He is the only one with a background to step into this position without a long, arduous, uphill educational process."

Real estate attorney S.L. "Si" Schorr said **Hein** set the agenda for cooperation among all elements in Marana's development conflicts. "His principal strength is his ability to make things happen properly with everyone feeling they came out a winner," said Schorr. A question about **Hein**, said one neighborhood leader, is if he can run a city of more than 500,000 people when he has not run a city larger than 20,000. "There is a whole different group of constituencies when you deal with the city. It may require a different approach. He would be highly visible in a way he perhaps hasn't been before," said Paul Mackey, a retired planner who sits on the Sam Hughes Neighborhood Association board. "What you hear, he has done reasonably well, but in taking a high-profile, visible role on a lot of issues, I think there is a question mark. "People say he is a consensus builder. The question is, how is that going to work on some of the key city issues?"

The biggest concern buzzing over neighborhood leaders' phone lines is that many Tucsonans know little about **Hein**, said activist Colette Altaffer. "This was sprung on the community. People are saying, 'Who is this guy?' They are not willing to form an opinion of him. Their anger is directed at the actions of the mayor and council," said Altaffer, active in the Neighborhood Infill Coalition. Joel Valdez, a former Tucson city manager turned University of Arizona vice president, said that in his dealings with **Hein** on economic development and library issues, he has been a good

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information provider without pushing an agenda. "You bet" **Hein** has the ability to stand up to various parochial interests or short-term political pressures when that's in the public interest, Valdez said. **Hein**, 38, acknowledged Friday feeling awkward and a little uncomfortable about being a center of controversy. A self-described introvert, he said he likes to avoid the front pages. He said he had not sought the manager's job during the national search because he was "quite comfortable where I am," but was willing to consider the job if asked. To avoid having his candidacy tainted by controversy, he said that if he becomes manager he would meet with citizens committee members who resigned to protest ending the national search. He wants to hear their views on city issues. Typically, he likes to find out what all the various sides are before taking a stand, he said. "I fall short of consensus in my business. I don't think you are going to make everybody happy all of the time. But you ought to make them feel like you took their thoughts into account," **Hein** said. "My goal is not to be liked. My goal is to be respected." And he said he would avoid laying surprises on other officials in the fashion of Keene last year, when he asked county officials to absorb the cost of running the library system to save money for the fiscally pressed city. "Elected officials don't like surprises," **Hein** said.

In his first career job as a city of South Tucson management analyst in the early 1990s, **Hein** helped set up a youth center and prepare for South Sixth Avenue reconstruction, said Dan Eckstrom, a former mayor of that city and ex-county supervisor. "Here in South Tucson, you've got some pretty ordinary folks, and he always had the ability to deal well with neighborhoods and community activists," Eckstrom said. In the mid-1990s, as Nogales' assistant administrator, he dealt with budget problems by getting the council to lease operations of a city golf course to a private contractor. He helped persuade the U.S. government to take on more of the cost of running the town's sewage-treatment plant because it also treated wastewater from Nogales, Sonora.

In Marana, he inherited a town with a reputation for unrestrained growth with the slogan "Come Grow With Us." Under his watch, the new slogan was "Committed to the Future, Inspired by the Past." He persuaded the Town Council to raise the construction sales tax and impose the region's steepest road-impact fee over developers' initial objections. He helped secure a lease of 2,400 acres of state land to protect pygmy owl habitat to compensate for the 5,600-acre Dove Mountain development in the Tortolita foothills. When growth brought traffic jams, the town raised the sales tax by a half-cent to pay for new roads. The money improved the long-jammed Cortaro Farms Road interchange. Trips along Cortaro Farms that once took 20 minutes now take three or four minutes, said Dan Sullivan, a neighborhood activist who first fought with **Hein** over development but grew to respect him. Although rezonings continued on cotton farms, the town down zoned several big projects in pygmy owl habitat and approved new ones with 80 percent open space. The town angered environmentalists by annexing 33 square miles of untrammeled, state-owned desert, but they said **Hein** would still listen to them when previous Marana officials wouldn't. But Helen Wilson, an activist who lives near Marana, questioned if **Hein** could make hard choices on tough issues, such as water, if it appears the supply can't keep up with growth. **Hein** said he will deal with that question by asking citizens to decide what cost to their pocketbooks and quality of life they're willing to pay for water. What he won't do is to try to create a bombshell about a water crisis to wake people up. "You do that when a community is ignoring a local issue," **Hein** said. "I don't think Tucson is that kind of a community."

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The Explorer (AZ)
July 10, 2003

Hein Leaving Marana: Mike Reuwsaat is Likely Successor to Marana Town Manager Position

Author: Patrick Cavanaugh

Mike Hein, Marana's town manager for the last five years, announced last week he will resign to take a higher paying job as a deputy Pima County administrator beginning Aug. 4. **Hein's** likely successor, former Marana vice mayor and current Assistant Town Manager Mike Reuwsaat, will be the only person considered for the position of Marana's top administrator, officials said. Reuwsaat's appointment is expected to be voted on by the town council at its next meeting. "Mike Reuwsaat will be following in **Hein's** place. That's already been established," said Jane Howell, Marana's human resources director. "It will go before the council July 15." **Hein's** reputation as an effective and innovative administrator had longed fueled speculation that he would leave for a better paying job in a larger government.

In February 2001, the council jumped his base pay 43 percent to his current salary of \$125,000 in part to try and retain him. Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry said **Hein** would be paid a starting salary between \$130,000 and \$140,000 annually to handle community and economic development issues. Reuwsaat, who resigned from his elected and unpaid council seat in 2000 to take the \$78,500 per year assistant manager position **Hein** created for him, has seen his salary rise to \$93,747 annually. His salary as manager, if the promotion is approved by council, has not yet been determined.

Hein's tenure brought significant growth, financial stability and a more sophisticated image to the town. He said he was leaving "simply because the opportunity presented itself." "There's not really a solid issue that you could point to. Clearly, it wasn't job satisfaction. I'm very pleased with the opportunity that Marana has given me. The mayor and council and the staff have been great to work with, and things are going reasonably well. "It's just a different opportunity. It's hard to say it's a better opportunity. It's certainly an opportunity that will present challenges to me. I'm reasonably young. I don't think anybody anticipated that I would retire in the town of Marana. I've always been the kind to try and leave when things are good. I think things are good," the 36-year-old **Hein** said.

Marana Mayor Bobby Sutton Jr. said there was no discussion of opening the town manager position to a search or a competitive application process. "We got to keep **Mike Hein** longer than we should have. With the talent that he has, we knew he was going to be moving on to something different to challenge himself, so Mike Reuwsaat has been primed to take over the helm. It's a natural transition and in my mind there's no need for a search because we've got someone who is just basically changing offices and titles. "(Reuwsaat) will be doing very similar things that he has already been doing plus a few new things that he's already accustomed to. So in my mind, and in the council's mind, there's no need for any type of search. If it gets to where (Reuwsaat) doesn't feel like he can handle it, he'll tell us to do a search. That's the kind of guy he is," Sutton said. Reuwsaat, 47, has overseen land use issues such as working with developers and the federal government on matters

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related to the designation of much of Marana as protected habitat for the endangered cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, handling the development of the town's airport, and expanding Marana's parks and recreation programs.

Hein's new duties in the county will focus on a wide range of areas that include the office of tourism, neighborhood reinvestment, community block grants and serving as a liaison to the Greater Tucson Economic Council, Huckelberry said. "Our activities in those areas have been scattered, and I want to bring them into focus and have one manager for the job. Mr. **Hein** has experience in community and economic development and planning in various communities. He also has an extensive background in border issues from dealing with the border community of Nogales. We're the county with the longest border exposure to Mexico. His recent experience with a rapidly growing smaller community also made him ideal to fill the position," Huckelberry said. A native of Wisconsin who now lives in Oro Valley, **Hein** received his master's degree in public administration from the University of Arizona in 1991 and began as an intern for the one-mile square city of South Tucson that same year.

Between 1993 and 1997, **Hein** served in the positions of interim finance director, planning and zoning director and economic development director for the city of Nogales. He was tapped to become assistant to Marana Town Manager Hurvie Davis' in 1997, and succeeded Davis to the top position a year later. **Hein** is described by many town employees as a casual, but smart and determined manager. He was selected in 2001 to attend a prestigious program for state and local leaders at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, but could just as easily loosen his tie and join council members and staffers for beer after council meetings at La Tumbleweed Lounge in rural north Marana. "He's been so quiet behind the scene, but he's had something to do with every minor or major project that has occurred during his time here," Sutton said. "He never takes credit for any of it. He always passes credit to his staff or the council. That's part of what made him the quality town manager he was. He wasn't in for the accolades. He was there to help us get to the vision of where we want to be."

Reuwsaat, 47, served as an assistant to the city manager and director of housing and community development in Corpus Christi, Texas from 1991 to 1994, and as a recreation director in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas from 1981 to 1991. His education includes a master's degree in recreation and resource development from Texas A& M University and a bachelor of science degree in recreational administration from the University of South Dakota. He moved to Marana in 1994 to work with relatives who own Kelly Green Trees nursery and quickly became involved in town politics. He was elected to the Marana council in 1997. In 2000, Reuwsaat was contemplating resigning his position on the council to relocate and look for another job after a dispute in the family business. **Hein** said in an interview at the time that Reuwsaat was "too valuable for the town to lose" and created the position of assistant town manager for him. Reuwsaat said if promoted to manager, he did not anticipate any major changes and did not plan to immediately hire someone to fill his old assistant manager position.

However, the town has created a new position of in-house attorney to help with some of the development issues previously handled by **Hein** and Reuwsaat. The new in house-attorney, Frank

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Cassidy, has more than 20 years' experience in civil law and has specialized in land use issues, **Hein** said. Cassidy served as assistant city attorney for the city of Tucson from 2001 until last February, and spent almost six years as a deputy attorney in the civil division of the Pima County Attorney's Office, according to a copy of his resume obtained from the town. Cassidy will be paid \$96,000 annually when he begins next month, said Diane Mangialardi, **Hein's** administrative manager. The town had previously used the law firm of Hochuli & Benavidez as its town attorney and prosecutor. **Hein** said the town will keep the firm on the payroll. With Hochuli and Benavidez, the town spent more than \$350,000 for legal services last year, according to the town's budget summary.

Hein attributed the recent increase in payments to the firm in part to protracted court fights over the incorporation of the town of Tortolita. He said in addition to Cassidy, the town plans to continue using Hochuli & Benavidez in a number of areas, including that of town prosecutor. "Some of the stuff that ballooned was as a result of the Tortolita litigation. The in-house attorney is not a cost-benefit issue. It's a delivery of service issue," **Hein** said. "The amount reduced to Hochuli & Benavidez is not anticipated to cover the full cost of the in-house attorney. But clearly, a portion of what Hochuli & Benavidez provide will be absorbed by the in-house attorney thus reducing their billable hours. But that coupled with my departure, provides easy budget capacity."

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Tucson Local Media: Your Community Delivered
August 6, 2002

MPD CHIEF CAUSE OF EXODUS OF OFFICERS, LOW MORALE, COPS SAY

Blunt allegations of dishonesty, favoritism, belligerency and vindictiveness are being leveled against Marana Police Chief David R. Smith by former and current police department employees, who claim Smith's management of the department has resulted in plummeting morale, an exodus of veteran officers and supervisors, and a rash of police misconduct that threaten the MPD's ability to protect the community. And while Marana Town Manager **Mike Hein** and members of the Marana Town Council say Smith enjoys their unqualified support, interviews with 18 current and former MPD employees and thousands of pages of documents obtained from the town reveal a police department shaken and operating on the brink of crisis. "There's always been a lot of problems in the department," said Matt Goldstein, who resigned in 2000 after helping establish the MPD's Office of Professional Standards, which now develops policies for the department and conducts internal investigations of officers, "and the biggest problem the MPD has always faced is the chief."

Bolstering the employees' accounts of the turmoil roiling within the MPD are employee surveys conducted by the town and MPD, exit interviews completed by Marana's human resources department, resignation letters and other documents. Others adding their voices to the rising clamor include the only two other police chiefs besides Smith who have ever led the 17-year-old department, and former Marana Town Councilmember Roxanne Ziegler. "One of the first things I was told by other councilmembers after I was elected was to watch out for that (police) department, that there was trouble over there," said Ziegler, who chose not to seek re-election last year. "But nobody ever does anything about it despite the fact that everyone knows there's been a real problem going on over there for years."

High profile incidents of misconduct in the department over the last two years have included almost the entire MPD patrol force and Smith himself working as paid off-duty security guards at a violent Marana nightclub while at the same time investigating deaths and shooting that occurred at the bar; an officer fired after being accused of repeatedly forcing a Marana motel worker to have sex with him; a drunk and partially undressed off duty officer arrested for burglary by the Tucson Police Department; and most recently, the firing of an officer in May for viewing pornography while on duty and showing nude pictures of himself to female MPD employees. That incident led to the suspension last month of the officer's sergeant and the resignation of another officer investigated for possessing pornography while at work. MPD employees claim Smith has covered for other officers who have been accused of serious misconduct and criminal behavior, ordered police reports changed, and harassed police officers he believes are "disloyal." (see related story page 7)

At least 13 people have left the 80-member Marana police department in the last nine months, and the vast majority of those employees resigned, according to records obtained from the town. The total doesn't include other employees who are unavailable for duty, such as a suspended patrol sergeant appealing the department's attempt to terminate him and a civilian employee who was recently placed on disability leave. The number of resignations and terminations balloons to 32

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civilian and sworn police officers who have left the department since January 2000, including two of the three lieutenant positions in the department and several sergeants, for a turnover rate easily exceeding one employee resigning or being terminated each month. During that 31 month period, 22 employees resigned, six failed their probationary periods, one entered into medical retirement, one took medical leave, and one record clerk's reason for separation couldn't be determined. Only one person, the officer charged with possessing pornography was fired, besides the patrol sergeant who is on suspension while appealing his termination, according to town records.

Employees on probation, such as the officer charged with forcing sex on a Marana motel worker, who was later cleared of criminal charges after a grand jury refused to indict him, were simply released after having failed the standard probationary period extended to all new employees. The drunk off-duty officer received a 10-day suspension without pay after the Pima County Attorney's Office withdrew the felony burglary charge. As of July 12, the MPD was operating with eight of its patrol officer positions vacant - slightly more than a fifth of its authorized strength of 42 patrol positions, according to staffing records.

Bill Conley, a reserve patrol officer who served six years with MPD, became the most recent person to leave the department when he resigned July 26. Conley was one of only two unpaid reserve officers in the department and performed the same patrol duties as regular officers and held the same state certification. He claims he resigned because Smith was intentionally endangering his life by refusing to issue him a bullet proof vest or replace worn equipment. He made do with an expired and oversized vest borrowed from another officer, and said Smith's reason for not issuing safe equipment to him was because Conley filed a complaint against the chief three years ago. "It is my opinion that the low morale within the department is due to your behavior, unwillingness to deal with valid officer complaints, your affecting department policy inconsistently, intimidation and harassment of personnel you believe are not sensitive to your management style, and your willingness to abuse and compromise the office of chief of police," Conley wrote in his letter to Smith.

Smith, who has led the MPD since 1991, has repeatedly declined to comment on the problems in his department and has a strict policy forbidding department employees other than public information officers from speaking to reporters. An MPD spokesman confirmed last month that officers accused of misconduct are also being questioned during lie detector tests as to whether they are speaking to the media. "The chief's launched a witch hunt because problems in the department have begun spilling out," Conley said in an interview after his resignation. "He knows it's out of control." All of the employees currently working for the department who agreed to speak to the Northwest EXPLORER did so only on the condition of anonymity. "The concern is not just that the chief will fire anyone he thinks is speaking out, but that he will try and blackball you from law enforcement jobs entirely," one currently employed MPD supervisor said.

Each of the current and former officers and civilian employees interviewed told startlingly similar accounts of problems in the MPD, with almost all citing Smith as the primary problem. The small balance of the employees who didn't blame him directly claimed he was at least ultimately responsible for the declining morale, turnover of employees, and increased incidents of officer

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misconduct. "My problem was more with other people who were out of control," said Carolyn Gomez, who became the department's first female sergeant, but resigned in September after she was demoted. She claims she was targeted for retaliation after complaining about the sexual harassment of one of her subordinates by another employee. Gomez, who served two and a half years with MPD and now sells real estate, was accused of harassing and presenting false information about the woman she accused of sexually harassing another officer, according to MPD internal investigation reports. Gomez said she resigned from a successful career as a Pima County Sheriff's Department detective to join the MPD in hope of more rapid promotions. Pima County human resources records indicate she left on good terms. Gomez said her demotion and subsequent resignation in Marana had as much to do with her voicing concerns that her married lieutenant was having an affair with the girlfriend of one of her female patrol officers. "But despite my problems with my immediate supervisors, yes, the chief is ultimately responsible for the department" Gomez said. "It's a good-old-boy network. The department is not operating as it should." Gomez said she is considering filing a civil suit against the MPD. Bruce Thomas, a police lieutenant who resigned last month, and who sources say endured years of harassment by Smith, is also considering filing a lawsuit against the department.

One former MPD supervisor, who asked not to be identified because he was considering returning to work in law enforcement for another agency, said he left because working closely with Smith was "causing me medical problems, I was having chest pains, and was convinced I was going to have a heart attack because of the chief." The former supervisor said Smith created constant shifts in policies that left subordinates confused, screamed and belittled them on an "almost daily" basis and frequently threatened employees' jobs. "The joke in the department was 'what's the policy of the day?' But it wasn't really a joke. People were terrified because if they weren't on top of whatever the new policy was, he would just cut loose on them. And it was never 'could I have a word with you.' He would just stick his head out his office door, scream your name at the top of his lungs and yell 'get you're f----- ass in here now!'" the former supervisor said.

Most galling to many of the MPD employees, several officers said, was the fact that **Hein** and the town council seemed to blatantly ignore what they say were clear signals of a department in distress. Former motorcycle officer Chet Babcock spent a decade patrolling Marana before he resigned from the department in May 2000. He cited Smith as his primary reason for leaving, but was "astounded by the refusal of anyone in town government" to look into police matters. "I just decided that I wasn't going to deal with it anymore," Babcock said. "But one of the things that really concerns me about all this was that nobody was asking any questions. I mean if I was a supervisor, mayor or a city manager and I had a 10-year veteran with a spotless record just walk off the job, I would want to know why."

Hein refused to say what mechanisms he relied on for monitoring activities in the police department or the performance of its chief. "I find that it's incredibly awkward to respond to that, because if I offer a response, I may violate some confidences, or appear to be disinterested if I respond another way. The fact of the matter is that when people make allegations that I am turning a blind eye, I would challenge them to say 'to what?'" **Hein** said. He relented that one method he uses to gauge the police department is monitoring exit interviews of departing police employees conducted by the

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town's human resources department. "We continue to look at the exit interviews, those that are provided," Hein said. "(There's) no real change, no change in pattern, there's no alarming accusations or innuendoes and certainly no specific areas of concern that are provided." While 10 of the 19 employees in their exit interviews obtained from the town expressed little opinion one way or another about the jobs at MPD or at most took issue with mundane matters such the hours officers were asked to work, the nine other interviews had specific complaints with the supervision of the department. None of the 19 interviews offered any praise for Smith, while several were explicitly critical of the police chief.

A human resources employee's comments after interviewing civilian employee Redonna Kadous in late 1999 contained the entry "Redonna seems dissatisfied with low morale in the police department. She feels that it stems from the chief. 'The town and department have outgrown him.' Redonna is reluctant to provide detailed information regarding her feelings, however (she) insists that most employees feel the same, but cannot say anything for fear of 'blackballing.' "She mentioned a possible meeting with **Mike Hein**. She says problems range from small to big, and that everyone is aware, including sergeants and lieutenants," the human resources employee wrote.

Officer Tim Hiatt placed his own entry in his exit questionnaire in September in answer to a question that asked "If I could change one thing, what would it be?" "The chief of police, his dishonest practices with officers. Lack of respect for his officers. The rules apply to everyone but him. The town overlooks what really goes on in the police department," Hiatt wrote.

Officer Wende Rosson wrote in March of last year of "multiple incidents" of sexual harassment by patrol sergeants, and answered the "what did you like least about your job?" question with "Unfairness. Blatant policy violations brought to attention and ignored/hidden."

A survey of police department employees' job satisfaction compiled in early 2000 came back with a large number of responses that also roundly vilified Smith. "Hope the town will realize that PD has serious morale issues (due) to its chief and will do the right thing in order to save the employees that want to continue working here. PD chief has destroyed morale, confidence and disrespects female employees," one respondent wrote on their anonymous response for the survey.

Hein, in an interview conducted shortly after the Northwest EXPLORER obtained a summary of responses from the survey, discounted it by suggesting the survey was rigged by a "handful of disgruntled officers who stuffed the survey ballot box." The University of Arizona graduate student from the college of business and public administration who conducted the survey for Marana said he saw no indications of "ballot stuffing," noting that they were all in different handwriting. Two years later, **Hein** said the town still had no immediate plans to conduct another survey of the police department's employee satisfaction. "We decided that surveys were not a proper venue," he said.

A veteran officer said that after years of being mystified by the lack of concern from town hall over problems in the department, he and several other employees had come to the conclusion that neither **Hein** nor the council wanted to be tarnished by the problems in the department. "They're just quietly trying to do damage control because they know when this whole thing blows up, it's going to land

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on them. The council, for the most part, is in the dark. Some of them just recently seem to be starting to ask questions, but that may have more to do with the fact that council elections are coming up. **Hein** seems to not want the career he's building screwed up by the blow back from this whole mess when the explosion does come," the officer said. "He's got this golden reputation that he would like to maintain."

Marana Mayor Bobby Sutton Jr. and Vice Mayor Herb Kai said in interviews July 16 that they were satisfied with Smith's handling of the department, but that they relied on Hein to oversee police matters and keep the council informed of problems. "I think the chief is doing a good job. I'm not aware of any significant problems over there, but that's more a matter that we rely on (**Hein**) to handle. When there is a problem, he makes us aware of it, talking to us individually and that type of thing," Sutton said. "We get monthly reports from the department, and Mr. **Hein** is the one that is more deeply involved in the police department and he and Chief Smith do a good job of overseeing the department," Kai said.

Other members of the council gave similar responses, except for Councilmember Carol McGorray, who refused to comment at all. "I don't get involved in police department matters. I have no comment," McGorray said.

The police department's standard report contained in information packets received by the council each month is in actuality the police department newsletter. The 12-page newsletter generally contains breezy sections on the children's police Explorer program, a humor column, a calender of employee birthdays and reprinted letters from citizens complimenting officers on their customer service or assistance. The only "hard" information contained in the newsletter is monthly crime statistics, which on average, are usually three months old.

Ziegler said, from her experience, police matters were handled almost exclusively by **Hein** and the council received little information about the police department. "Being a council member, you would think that you would hear things. But we're the last one to know," Ziegler said. "If you had enough smarts to say 'hey, we heard this guy got into trouble' and went and asked, they would give you the report. But would they give it to us as standard operating procedure? Hell no." Ziegler said she after the troubling results from the employee survey were released, she implored **Hein** to look into the department's problems and was rebuffed. "I don't know what it is between Smith and **Hein** with that department, but something is going on there," Ziegler said "They just seem to want to ignore the problems. (**Hein**) just turns a blind eye when it comes to that police department."

Hein, in an interview last month, said he was convinced there were no significant problems in the department, and that Smith enjoyed his total support. "I think that the Chief has done well from a management standpoint, I think that fiscally, he's very responsible. I think that he has good communication with the manager. I think that he has the good of the department and the good of the community in mind. I think that he has a good idea of where the community needs to go during the remainder of his tenure and even afterward. I think that he has a good vision and I think that he has the ability to implement that vision over time," **Hein** said.

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Hein said he had discussed the turnover and loss of several supervisors with Smith in July, and came to the conclusion that it was not indicative of an overarching problem in the department, but was rather simply a case of people leaving for a variety of reasons. "I think you have to in time you have to evaluate each individual set of circumstances. Have we lost some good people? Yes. Have we lost some people that probably needed to go? Absolutely," he said. When pressed if he believed there were any problems in the MPD, **Hein** said, "I think there are issues that I'm concerned about in the police department, but none that I would choose to air in the local newspaper."

Many of the MPD employees say the turnover would be worse if it wasn't for the fact that Marana's starting salary for patrol officers of \$16.77 per hour wasn't one of the best in the region, exceeding the \$16.34 starting wage paid to the much larger Pima County Sheriff's Department and the \$14.37 paid at the smaller South Tucson Department of Public Safety. MPD starting wages are competitive with the \$16.83 paid to new hires in the Tucson Police Department and the \$17 paid to Oro Valley rookies. Almost all of the current and former employees say despite the good pay, camaraderie, and the small town atmosphere that working for the MPD offers, Marana can expect a continued exodus of officers from the department under Smith's leadership.

David Holloway, who served as interim chief in Marana prior to Smith's arrival, sought out the Northwest EXPLORER to voice his concerns about the current state of the MPD. After leaving Marana in 1991, Holloway went on to a career as an officer with the Tucson Police Department before becoming the police chief of the Sahuarita Police Department in 1996. He was fired by Sahuarita's town manager in December after a letter Holloway wrote was published in the Green Valley News & Sun, in violation of the manager's orders not to write letters to the editor. "I'm still in touch with a number of people over there, and from what I'm hearing, this guy (Smith) is just ruining the department. You can't treat people like that and expect them to do their jobs. The reality of the situation is, it's just too easy for officers to go out and park in a hide away place rather than do real police work when they're that unhappy," Holloway said.

Lynn Radcliffe, who became Marana's first police chief in 1985, was fired by the town council in 1991 after it was found that he had falsified his job application. He said the charge was distorted and admits he still holds some animosity toward the town, but still maintains friendship with some of the MPD veterans and an abiding interest in the department he feels he helped create. After speaking with Marana officers about the turmoil in the MPD, Radcliffe sent word that he too wanted to be interviewed. "There was too much blood, sweat, tears, effort, joy and pain expended by too many people over the years that went into building the department for Smith to just throw it all away," Radcliffe said. "These are police officers, they put their lives on the line for the community, and they damn well deserve better than what they're getting."

EXIT INTERVIEWS

Beginning in December 1999, Marana's human resources department consistently began conducting exit interviews of all employees leaving the town's employment. Human Resources Director Jane Howell said before that date, her small staff was only able to interview a small percentage of departing employees, and police officers were hard to schedule for interviews because of their varied work schedules. The written and taped interviews included questions such as "What do you

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like least about your job?" and "Why are you really leaving?" The answers were recorded by human resources employees. Copies of the MPD exit interviews conducted between January 1997 and June 2002 obtained from the town included the following comments, all from different employees:

- Unprofessional supervisors doing things that get swept under the rug by (Marana Police Chief) Dave Smith, who is a poor example as a leader."
- "Blatant policy violations brought to attention and ignored."
- "Concern over chief's outbursts - not professional."
- "Officers aren't supported or rewarded for doing their jobs."
- "Dissatisfied with low morale, feel it stems from the chief. The town and department have outgrown him."
- "Would stay if there was more accountability in department."
- "I would have continued working for Marana had I not felt discriminated against, harassed and threatened."

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEY

In February 2000, Marana commissioned its first - and so far, only - survey of employee satisfaction in the Marana Police Department. The result of the survey, which involved MPD employees anonymously filling out questionnaires and mailing them to a post office box, was overwhelmingly critical of Chief David R. Smith and his management of the department. Town Manager **Mike Hein** dismissed the survey as being skewed by "ballot stuffing," saying he believed a handful of disgruntled employees may have been returning multiple questionnaires that were critical of Smith. The graduate student from the University of Arizona's College of Business and Public Administration specifically hired by the town to conduct the survey said he was confident no "ballot stuffing" had occurred.

According to a summary of the survey obtained from the town, individual responses included:

- "PD is suffering; afraid to talk."
- "Some employees are shown special treatment in the police department."
- "Low morale within PD. No support from department head. Town needs to seriously look at the job the chief is doing. There isn't a lot of employees of the department (who) feel he is supportive and being the (leader) he should be. Majority opinion."
- "Job would be very satisfactory if town management would take into consideration the wide variety of complaints against PD chief."
- "PD head is a major liability. He has no respect for employees. He is hostile, vulgar, unprofessional and embraces favoritism. (Human Resources)"
- "PD chief causes department issues, not the pay."
- "Morale at an all time low. Pay is the only thing that keeps officers here. (Human Resources Department) does not want to hear our problems."
- "All employees should abide by the same policies- not have them 'altered' because chief says so. Hiring process should be the same for everyone..."
- "Chief has lost (the) respect of the department. Unfairness in department. Officers and supervisors being mistreated."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
March 25, 1998

Marana Government Land Development
Marana Council Promoting Hein to Town Manager
Author: Edward L. Cook

Mike Hein, assistant to Town Manager Hurvie Davis since last June, will succeed his boss in May. The Marana Town Council voted 6-0 last week to promote **Hein** to town manager when Davis retires. Davis, 61, who has served as town manager since September 1992, plans to retire May 29. Council members also gave **Hein** a raise, from \$62,500 to \$72,500 annually, effective when he begins his new duties. He also will receive \$500 monthly for auto and other job-related expenses. Davis is paid \$75,000 a year. **Hein**, 31, a former assistant Nogales administrator, became assistant town manager June 16, under a plan to groom a successor to Davis. The Town Council established **Hein's** position in February 1997. The Town Council gave **Hein** a favorable job evaluation after six months with the town.

Mayor Ora Harn said Davis - the liaison between the council and town staff - has gradually given **Hein** more responsibilities. “**Mike** is doing better and better all the time. I think we're going to have an excellent town manager,” she said. **Hein**, in an interview last year, said he applied for the job because he was impressed with the town's long-term vision. He has indicated at meetings since then that the town should encourage more citizen participation in decisions that affect its future. “He is a little more active politically than Hurvie,” the mayor said. “The town is changing and **Michael** is going to bring the community together. I feel strongly that we need to build bridges and work with community leaders.” **Hein** earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of Arizona in 1991. He worked for South Tucson before going to Nogales as assistant city administrator in 1993.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Arizona Daily Star (AZ)
May 21, 1997

Marana Government Appointment
New Marana Official Brings Nogales Savvy
Author: PilaMart

As Nogales' assistant city administrator for the past three years, it has been **Michael Hein's** job to hear what the citizens and the elected officials have to say - and then figure out what they want. "One thing I've learned in Nogales, and I'm appreciative of, is people don't always say what they mean," says **Hein**, 30. "There's two things you listen to. One is you listen to what people say. And then you try to listen to what people really mean." He calls it being a "talented listener." And it's something he believes he can offer to Marana, where he will become assistant town manager on June 16 at a salary of \$62,500. "If you witness me in meetings or anything, you'll see that I'm the kind of guy who sits in the middle of the table, and not at the head, and listens for the most part. Until I hear somebody struggling or I believe it's time for me to interject my opinion."

That's not to say that **Hein** has been shy about saying what he thinks. One of the things he did best in Nogales was persuade the Board of Aldermen to take a sensible approach to issues, despite the fact that some of the aldermen were people who didn't make it a habit of listening to anyone, said Brendan FitzSimons, retired editor and publisher of the Nogales International. "Let's be frank. They weren't think tanks by any means," FitzSimons said. "I know he wasn't afraid to tell them the way it should be and what they should do."

In a city where most elected officials had the attitude of "What can I do for me? - the hell with the taxpayers," **Hein** felt accountable to the city's residents, FitzSimons said from his home in Clearwater, Fla. "I think he trained a lot of people in government. He told them how to get on the straight and narrow." What's more impressive is that he did that in a climate where he was an outsider who could have been fired at any moment for any reason. "Let's face it, he was a white man coming into a brown community. And sometimes in Nogales - not because you're white but because you're from outside Nogales - you were classified as an outsider," FitzSimons said. **Hein** eventually became an insider, working his way up from interim finance director to director of planning and zoning and then assistant administrator. In Nogales, the mayor holds the title of administrator.

Along the way, **Hein** earned the respect of the board, as well as state and federal officials. His candor could have backfired. Nogales' city charter allows the mayor to fire the assistant city administrator at will. **Hein** acknowledges that being subject to that kind of job insecurity was part of the reason he decided to leave Nogales. "I think it's a fantastic community with a lot going for it, but the political environment here is very difficult in a position like mine," he said. "It's just too tenuous of a situation when one individual has that much ability to fire an appointed position." **Hein** had a hand in making sure city personnel wouldn't be victims of such a system. Under his guidance, city personnel policies were revised and a policy that allowed the mayor and board to have the final say in city employee grievances was eliminated. The new policy gives the final decision to an arbitration panel. "It's a little more fair and less political," said **Hein**, who says the policy change is

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael “Mike” Charles Hein
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

one of his biggest accomplishments in Nogales. Also under **Hein**, the city sold a golf course that was a consistent financial drain and got the federal government to agree to take over a wastewater treatment plant that had been a regular source of headaches for the city.

Hein, who was born in Milwaukee, moved to Tucson after earning his bachelor of science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. After earning a master's degree in public administration from the University of Arizona in 1991, **Hein** worked for South Tucson for three years. He has worked in Nogales since December 1993. One reason **Hein** chose a career in government is because he believes it's more challenging than working in the private sector. “People kind of scoff when I say that, but if you're in a private enterprise and the customer's dissatisfied, there are two options really. Either you try to remedy the situation or the customer shops someplace else,” **Hein** said. “In the public sector, if the citizens are disgruntled or displeased with how things are going, very rarely do they move to another city,” he said. “It's your duty and obligation to work with them and try to harmonize expectations and goals.”

In Marana, **Hein** sees an opportunity to be in on the ground floor of shaping the expectations and goals that will guide the town. “The real reason that I applied for the position in Marana is that I was impressed with their long-term vision and some of the steps they're taking to ensure stability in the future,” he said. **Hein** already has attended a Marana Town Council retreat and plans to attend a few meetings before he starts his new job.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
 Colin Baenziger & Associates



Section 6

Yvonne Kimball

Cocoa Beach

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

YVONNE KIMBALL, ICMA-CM



June 23, 2025

Dear Cocoa Beach City Manager Recruitment Team:

Please accept my application for the City Manager position. I am currently the City Manager of Morro Bay, a small beach community on California's central coast. In addition to beautiful beaches and desirable weather, Morro Bay and Cocoa Beach share a similar community profile in terms of size, demographics, resident expectations, tourism-driven economies, and full-service municipal structures.

I began my city management career in Florida, interning with city managers in Brevard County. Over the past two decades, I have strengthened executive leadership skills by partnering with elected officials, leading teams and engaging community members to achieve the goals that my cities desired. The vacancy in Cocoa Beach provides an excellent opportunity to return home and continue my career path.

In Morro Bay, I have closely worked with the City Council to address challenges common to beach communities, including vacation rental and parking policies. I also assist the Council in influencing state and federal policies to protect city interests in emerging energy initiatives and oceanfront infrastructure. My responsiveness and empathy towards diverse interest groups has been critical in guiding the organization through controversies. Equally important is my hands on experience in fiscal management and core service delivery, both of which have been fundamental in advancing Morro Bay's evolving priorities as well as the cities I've served previously.

Prior to Morro Bay, I served for 6 years as the City Manager for Jackson, California. During my tenure, I tripled the City's fund reserves, quadrupled available cash, stabilized pension liabilities, led major land reuse efforts, and delivered vital capital improvement projects largely through grants. Before Jackson, I was the Town Manager for Dewey-Humboldt, Arizona for 6 years, where I became the longest tenured manager in the Town's history, established community partnerships to reduce wild fire concerns, advanced water quality research by engaging universities, and was appointed to a Governor's groundwater advisory committee. Earlier in my career, I was the City Manager for Bowling Green, Florida where I closed out hurricane claims and gained solid experience managing a full-service city by improving water, sewer, parks, streets and deciding on zoning applications. I remain grateful to each of these communities and have consistently emphasized customer service and team-driven success.

My education and experience are detailed in the enclosed resume. What my resume cannot fully portray is the depth of critical thinking I've developed over 19 years of leading cities and making decisions across all aspects of municipal operations. This foundation motivates me to return to Brevard County and approach the next Cocoa Beach CM role with adaptability, clarity and a steady hand. The prospect of moving back to Florida where most of our relatives live is meaningful. I look forward to discussing how I can contribute to Cocoa Beach's continued success. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Yvonne Kimball
Yvonne Kimball

YVONNE KIMBALL**PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY****19 Years of City Management Experience**

- Coastal & Full-Service City Executive
- Council & Community Relations
- Financial Management
- Staff Development & Labor Relation
- Grants & Legislative Advocacy
- Strategic Planning

EXPERIENCE**CITY Manager****City of Morro Bay, CA****August 2023 – July 2025**

Morro Bay is a scenic coastal city of 11,000 residents and nearly one million annual visitors. A four-mile coastline wraps around a harbor, a vibrant estuary, the Morro Rock and beaches. Known for its commercial fishing heritage & ocean recreation, it has been considered as a new hub for clean energy innovation. With a tourism-driven economy and a full-service operation structure, City operation budget totals \$68 million. Services include police, fire, harbor safety & enterprise, streets, utilities, land use, permitting, and recreation. City manages 50 ocean front commercial leases on State granted tidelands. As the City Manager, I led 117+ employees to oversee daily operations and advance council policy priorities.

Key accomplishments:

- Selected unanimously by Council and supported two distinct governing bodies in a political dynamic environment while maintaining high responsiveness, accountability and ethical leadership.
- Provided steady management through controversial issues including vacation rental regulations, responses to emerging energy projects of offshore wind development, reuse options of a closed school campus, and a 600 MW battery storage application which was the largest in the US at the time.
- Spearheaded the City's first legislative platform to advance local interests at the state and federal levels focusing on coastal development, energy, housing, and marine infrastructure.
- Produced consistent public outreach efforts including monthly City Manager updates, surveys, press releases and supported elected official's Town Hall events.
- Led Council strategic goal setting efforts that included extensive public input, and proposed action plans.
- Directed coordination with advisory boards, facilitated joint decisions across multiple committees.
- Provided executive oversight to prioritize daily maintenance while executing major capital projects, including the City's largest street paving effort, multiple stormwater system upgrades, \$160M water and sewer infrastructure improvements, and FEMA flood claim efforts.
- Proposed balanced budgets with strong reserves by leading a priority-based approach, adhering to back-to-basics fiscal discipline, and maximizing available financial resources.
- Strengthened organizational capacity: filled in key executive positions, addressed compensation study findings, negotiated three labor agreements, reduced staff vacancy rate to 4%.
- Championed economic vitality efforts such as parking management programs, waterfront master plan, signature events, and conducted a comprehensive portfolio analysis of City-owned property.
- Oversaw economic development contract with the Chamber of Commerce for business retention efforts.
- Supported Police and Fire on critical regional programs of animal control and ambulance services.
- Served on Visit Morro Bay Board and the San Luis Obispo County Tourism Board.
- Supported the City's Executive Team in the development and implementation of social service programs through regional partnerships and ordinances to address homelessness.
- Served on the California Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) Operation Board to advance regional renewable energy goals and reduce utility cost for customers.

YVONNE KIMBALL

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CITY Manager**City of Jackson, CA****August 2017– July 2023**

Jackson is the county seat of Amador County, near Sacramento. It is a regional hub for commerce, education and healthcare. The City provides full municipal services over an area twice its city limits. It serves 5,000 residents and a service population of 25,000. As the City Manager, I managed a budget of \$32 M, led a staff of 60, oversaw police, fire, public works, water, sewer, finance, engineering, planning, building/code enforcement, negotiated contracts, coordinated economic development efforts.

Key accomplishments:

- Established fiscal stability, advanced key infrastructure improvements and empowered staff through growth opportunities and accountability.
- Advised and partnered with Council to navigate through evolving priorities that impact community wellbeing, including pandemic policy shifts, school consolidation, and regional water policies.
- Served in the City Manager's capacity as the Director of Emergency Services. Had responded to wild fire threats, drought, flooding and earthquake. Supported Police and Fire with EOC activations, managed recovery funds, and coordinated policy updates.
- Tripled General Fund reserves and quadrupled available cash while completing over \$15M in infrastructure improvements.
- Directed multiple financial service and fee studies, audited reserves, restructured dormant funds.
- Completed long-overdue interior and exterior improvements to City Hall & Police Dept. buildings by leveraging grants and insurance funds, boosting employee morale and enhancing civic pride.
- Chief negotiator for all bargaining units, restructured departments for efficiency, implemented pension cost-sharing plan, and reduced personnel cost by 10%.
- Recruited and retained leadership positions across Police, Fire, Public Works, and Administration.
- Expanded sewer treatment plant capacity by 30%; oversaw discharge permit negotiations with State Regional Water Board; implemented sewer collection grant programs to reduce inflow and infiltration. Oversaw completion of a \$12 million sewer plant project.
- Prioritized road maintenance by aligning budget allocations and applying pavement management principles to resurface 20 miles of roads.
- Delivered milestone results to "brownfield" redevelopment projects. Work included concept plans, environmental studies, stakeholder engagement, federal and state compliance activities.
- Partnered with the Police Chief to launch a homeless outreach program which reduced service calls by 30% with sustaining results and modified ordinances.
- Evaluated aquatic program delivery models and led in-house operation by empowering staff to lead program design and budget development.
- Resolved complex liability claims, including a 10-year safety payroll issue.
- Served on the County Senior Center Board, strengthening interagency collaboration.
- Completed ICMA's High Performance Leadership Academy and earned a Master Certificate.

Town Manager**Town of Dewey-Humboldt, AZ****January 2012 - August 2017**

Dewey-Humboldt was incorporated in 2004, with a population of 4,000 and encompasses 20 sq. mi. The Town abuts to and contains state and federal land areas. Town provides in-house public works, zoning, building safety, code enforcement, and a municipal court. Police is provided by County Sheriff. I oversaw personnel, service contracts and led partnerships.

Key achievements:

- Served as the Town's longest tenured manager, earning trust across multiple Councils in a politically divided community.
- Strengthened civic trust and collaboration by implementing community connection programs, including "Coffee with the TM", and production of volunteer-led Town newsletter.
- Built a high-performing team from the ground up and reversed high employee turn-over.
- Guided the Town navigate EPA-led contamination remediation programs on two superfund sites.
- Instituted a well water testing program leveraging university resources. Participation rates near 100%.

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- Established Fire Wise Community Status through implementing defensible spaces.
- Planned for infrastructure expansion, prepared and implemented Town's first multiyear road improvement plan, obtained real estate, drafted facility plans for a new Town Hall.
- Formed a coalition consisting of activists, federal agencies and town officials to complete a trailhead.
- Performed duties of the Zoning Administrator. Oversaw an annexation process.
- Earned a gubernatorial appointment to the Governor's Groundwater User Advisory Committee, contributing to policies on groundwater recharge and balancing growth with rural water needs.
- Remained active on several statewide boards addressing municipal operations, risk management, and environmental policy.

City Manager City of Bowling Green, FL October 2008 – December 2011

Bowling Green is a diverse full-service city of 3,000 residents located in west central Florida. Municipal services include water, sewer, solid waste, public safety, and cemetery. Appointed by the Council, I oversaw all operations, personnel, contracts, and risk management.

Key achievements:

- Led post-hurricane recovery efforts, restored public safety buildings and other city facilities, prepared and closed out FEMA, State EMS aid and County reports.
- Navigated 10% budget shortfalls during the Great Recession without raising property tax rates.
- Strengthened community trust within underserved African American and Latino neighborhoods.
- Prepared Utility Asset Assessment. Expanded water system and updated sewer plant.
- Obtained a total of \$2.1 million in federal funds to pave deteriorated streets and improve sidewalk conditions. Additional million-dollar grants for parks and energy efficient street lighting.
- Introduced City's first website and modernized internal operations through job description updates and performance evaluations.

Various Internships January 2006– August 2008

- City Manager Intern (2006-2008): Assisted city managers across three Florida cities with special projects, participated in executive team discussions, gained early insight on municipal management, leadership dynamics and local governance.
- Intern – Orange & Seminole Counties, FL (2006): Supported Orange County's Health and Planning Departments on their strategic and growth management plans, and conducted GIS analysis for Seminole County's planning initiatives.

CURRENT PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & IMMEDIATE PAST BOARDS

- International City and County Management Association; ICMA- CM credential 2014-2023
- Florida City/County Management Association; California City Management Foundation
- California Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) Operation Board Member
- Visit Morro Bay Board of Directors; Visit SLOCal* Advisory Board *(*San Luis Obispo County Tourism Business District)*

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
Master of Arts in Public Administration

University of Central Florida – Orlando, FL

Graduate Certificate in Urban and Regional Planning

University of Central Florida – Orlando, FL

Bachelor of Arts in English

Tianjin Institute of Technology – Tianjin, China

Candidate Introduction

Yvonne Kimball

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL
Graduate certificate in Urban and Regional Planning, University of Central Florida
Bachelor of Science, English, Tianjin Institute of Technology, China

EXPERIENCE

City Manager, City of Morro Bay, CA	2023 – 2025
City Manager, City of Jackson, CA	2017 – 2023
Town Manager, Town of Dewey-Humboldt, AZ	2012 – 2017
City Manager, City of Bowling Green, FL	2008 – 2011
Tri-City City Manager Intern with the cities of Satellite Beach, Titusville, and Palm Bay, FL	2006 – 2008

BACKGROUND

The City of Morro Bay, California is a scenic coastal city of 11,000 residents and nearly one million annual visitors. The City is known for its commercial fishing heritage, naval industrial background, and ocean recreation opportunities. City's four-mile coastline wraps around beaches, state parks, a vibrant estuary, and a protected harbor that serves both as a coast guard base and a fishing port. In recent years, both California state and US federal clean energy initiatives have identified this area as a hub for floating offshore wind and renewal energy storage facilities.

The City provides full services and has a tourism-driven economy. Total budget is \$68.9 million, general fund at \$21 million. Key municipal services include police, fire, harbor patrol, streets, utilities, land use, building, and robust recreation programs. The City also manages 50 ocean front commercial leases. As the City Manager, I managed 117+ employees and oversaw daily operations to advance council goals and legislative priorities. I had a total of 10 direct reports.

The three most significant issues facing the City are:

1. Balancing residents' needs and the demands of a tourism-based economy. Like Cocoa Beach, tourism is a major industry in Morro Bay. There's an on-going tension between residents' expectations and the impacts of a steady influx of visitors. Residents rightly expect clean, safe neighborhoods, protection of the natural environment, and access to local amenities. Tourism while economically beneficial, can strain infrastructure, environment, and services. Increased traffic, trash and debris, and short-term rental related issues threaten quality of life. Balancing requires responsive policies, careful land use decisions, and effective communication. In Morro Bay, the city intentionally linked tourism promotion to community goals. Examples include policies and practices focusing on sustainable eco-

tourism, volunteer-led beach cleanups, prioritizing review and enforcement of short-term rental regulations, highlighting budget information on tourism revenue uses, and public workshops on tourism reports. These efforts help to build public trust, and reinforce tourism's role in community life.

2. Competing community visions on developments. Morro Bay residents and stakeholders are highly engaged in city affairs. Community passion is a strength, but it also brings heightened scrutiny and polarized views. There have been a few high-profile projects that deeply divided Morro Bay. For example, City received a proposal for a 600-MW battery energy storage system (BESS) at a retired power plant. While it was considered as a major economic and environmental gain for the region, the applicant ultimately withdrew the application facing community opposition. In another example, the City's \$160 million one-water project moved the old sewer plant out of an oceanfront flood zone and proposed to inject effluent for reuse as recycle water. Although this project has won technical awards, received major funding support from regulatory agencies, it triggered lingering questions from the community on the scale, location, and growth implications. In such a divided environment, both leadership and technical capacity are critical to combat mistrust. As the city manager, I approached the challenge with neutrality and a focus on process and facts. We held workshops, site visits, and open-house events. I met with concerned residents, and provided status updates in CM announcements and newsletters. At the same time, I remained mindful of the political landscape and worked to identify alternatives to reduce divisiveness. I also ensured other operational priorities, such as street paving and waterfront masterplan, to deliver visible results. My apolitical approach certainly did not win the debates, but centered on sustaining public trust.

3. Boosting revenue sources to support on-going demands. The three major revenue sources in Morro Bay are property tax, sales tax and transit occupancy tax. Although they remain stable, they are not keeping pace with rising demands for services, largely due to limited population growth and slow development. This reality creates long-term structural pressure on the budget. As the City Manager, I led a few strategic measures to address the challenge. For example, I encouraged the finance team to look at a 10-year forecast model, setting the tone for long-term fiscal planning. We also evaluated underutilized city assets, reviewed fee-based services, and continued to seek grants and leverage outside funding. Morro Bay has had successes in lobbying of federal legislators and partnerships with the Coast Guard. The city also engaged the citizen advisory committee to identify new revenue ideas. While the revenue challenges persist, these steps we took promoted community trust and positioned the city for long-term resilience.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

To the outside world, Cocoa Beach is a popular destination. At its core, Cocoa Beach is a tight-knit community with a focus on quality of life for generations to come. Cocoa Beach is well run

Yvonne Kimball

thanks to its talented councils and staffs. Yet the City is not immune to challenges brought upon by the evolving world, such as State's attempts to comprise home-rules, hurricane preparedness and recovery, and resource-sharing within the county. The City Manager is charged with taking on the challenges while preserving a high quality of life that its residents come to expect. I share this vision and appreciate the direction the City is headed. Supported by relevant skills honed through my 17-year city manager experience, I believe I am a strong fit here. Coming to Cocoa Beach would also bring my career to a full circle as I began my local government career in 2006 in Brevard County as an intern to three City Managers. Following that powerful experience, I became a City Manager and have served four unique cities in three different states. My last city Morro Bay, a coastal city on California's coast, shares profound similarities with Cocoa Beach in sizes, demographics, tourism-driven economies, and full-service structures. I would relish the opportunity to return Brevard County and serve Cocoa Beach.

As a leader, I see myself as a coach rallying the people around me; I look at their talents and empower them to give their best. This team value coupled with a "loose-tight" approach could describe my management style. I give ample room for employees to perform their tasks yet expect the team to stay within the perimeters set by council and myself.

I have found that tailoring my approach for individual employees is the most effective in motivating and building a high performing team. I am very aware that I am a role model for my employees and expect myself to lead by example. I feel most of my employees would say that I am a good boss to work for in that I am competent, compassionate, direct, and supportive of them.

I have worked with many elected officials across the country. I would imagine they would say that I am experienced, open-minded, team oriented, trust-worthy and that I am dedicated and responsive to them.

My greatest strengths are my expertise in running small cities. Fiscal stewardship, managing projects involving multiple stakeholders, and staff development are my strong suits. My leadership "strengths finder" identified me as a "team developer" and a "relation expert", meaning I genuinely enjoy working with people to accomplish common goals.

In terms of weaknesses, when I first became a city manager, water and wastewater operations were areas of technical weakness for me. Although I did not expect to be an operator, I decided to spend extra time at the treatment plants and learn some basics from staff. I also took technical trainings, and became a certified utility manager in Florida. In Arizona, I continued my involvement in the area of environment and water, and was appointed by the AZ Governor to serve on the Governor's Groundwater User Advisory Committee. In California where environmental regulations are robust, I've continued to build upon the experience and knowledge and leverage it in permitting negotiations and construction project discussions.

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In order to measure performances, I align our objectives with the organizational vision and goals. After the Council set the goals for me, I then delegate and provide objectives to employees. I monitor the progress throughout the year and provide feedback to my employees periodically. We conduct a formal performance evaluation using a standard form with rating scales and narratives.

One example of innovation I led involved modernizing the city's payroll process. In one city I was the city manager, payroll has been a manual process, which left room for mistakes. To change that, my original goal was to implement a comprehensive, turn-key solution to automate payroll. Early on, I encountered resistance from my Finance Manager, who had concerns about the risks and disruptions that would logically come with changing established systems. I chose to empathize with her concerns. I joined her in discussions with vendors, and empowered her and her team to conduct further analysis. I also facilitated communication with other departments. After extensive research, we discovered that available payroll platforms could not accommodate the City's unique needs. For example, Public Works, Police and Fire each had time-tracking complexities. The city also had a long-standing payroll reconciliation structure that no off-the-shelf systems could handle. Recognizing that a turn-key solution wouldn't succeed, the Finance Manager and I decided to narrow the scope to focus on improving the timekeeping component first. To evaluate options, I formed a cross-departmental focus group that included all level of employees. Through that process, a Public Works analyst proposed using Google Forms to create a customized time entry tool. It was flexible, no extra cost, and tailored to their operational reality. After trying it out for Public Works, I supported the analyst to adapt the tool for other departments. It was well received. This experience reinforced two lessons: first, that guiding change requires empathy and hands-on support to bring people along; and second, that innovation doesn't always require a big-budget solution. Sometimes, the most effective ideas come from within if you empower staff and create space for them to lead.

I am proud and humbled that in 2016 I was recognized by the former ICMA President, Lee Feldman, then Fort Lauderdale City Manager, at the 102nd ICMA annual conference. Before the thousands of conference attendees, Lee called me an inspiration for him and the profession. Lee recognized my unique career path, my passion for the profession and tenacity for excellence. Now reflecting on my 19 years in city management, I'm most proud of those positive, measurable impact that I made in each community. A standout example is my time as City Manager in Jackson, California. When I stepped into the role, the city was facing a severe financial crisis and was on the verge of bankruptcy. Within the first couple of years, I recruited department heads, worked with three labor groups, corrected financial oversights and looked for creative ways to enhance revenues. Within three years, the City was able, for the first time since the 2008 Great Recession, to see a fund balance equal to three-months of total expenditure. Within five years, its fund balance doubled, and cash balance quadrupled. While I'm proud of the results, I could not have accomplished the transformation without the talented team I had the privilege of leading.

Yvonne Kimball

One failure that occurred shortly after I became the City Manager in Jackson. As stated earlier, when I first came on board, the City was in poor financial shape. My priority was to turn this around and start implementing cost-saving measures. One initial measure I decided to do was to restructure the Public Works Department, which would eliminate a position after a promotion. This would save the City about \$100,000 a year. What I overlooked was the Union's reaction. My plan, although it would not decrease the number of employees, would eliminate a represented position. The Union filed an Unfair Labor Charge against the City. I stopped my implementation and went to the negotiation table to work things out. We were able to reach an agreement; I was able to implement the restructure plan and the Union dropped the charge. I came away with the knowledge that if I want to consider substantial measures like re-structuring again, I should involve the Union at the get-go.

During my tenures as a city manager, I have terminated employees in extreme cases. I value my employees and desire to take a progressive approach to employee disciplinary actions. If warranted, I am willing to do what is necessary. Before I reach a termination decision, I examine city policies very closely and consult legal counsel. I am cognizant about the potential impact of a termination decision in a small community; therefore, I also keep the elected officials informed to the extent possible.

The challenges I see facing the next City Manager of Cocoa Beach are:

- Assess organizational needs and inspire staff. It is challenging to follow the footsteps of successful city managers. However, building a high performing team for various organizations is my strength and I see myself fitting in nicely.
- Stay current with state legislative actions, leverage resources offered by the League of Cities, the city managers' association, and the city's lobbyists to protect home rule and Cocoa Beach's unique interests.
- Effective enforcement of vacation rental ordinance, and communicate processes with the community. The City has updated the vacation rental regulations to reflect community needs. Effective enforcement requires a team approach that all city departments should be part of. Communication of the results to the public would help building trust.
- Maintain fiscal stability. The above issues require considerable amounts of financial capital to resolve. While the City has been well-managed, the next manager needs to be mindful of long-term sustainability in today's volatile environment. I have always been financially prudent, and strategic in implementing financial measures. It is exciting that Cocoa Beach has an excellent financial team to partner with the city manager.

As Cocoa Beach's new CM, I plan to do the following in the first six months:

- Have meaningful conversations with the council, committees, department heads and staff members. I would prepare a report of my assessment of strength and weakness of the organization after my communication with all. This report would serve as a foundation for future strategic plans, and city manager's performance goal discussions.

Yvonne Kimball

- By December, I would like to prepare an annual report containing accomplishments for the Mayor to present to the community. I also would like to host a “state of the city” event for employees to showcase team accomplishment and inspire continued contribution.
- Following discussions with Council, I would like to proceed with goal setting exercises for departments. To kick off the goal setting process, it may include a department team building/ strategic planning session. I have done the same at in my previous roles.
- Possibly formulate a customer survey (including citizens and visitors) to form a baseline for future benchmarking.
- Collect data to informally review staffing level and operational capacity. This review helps to clarify where the city might streamline operations and restructure positions, where additional support may be justified, and how to position the workforce for long-term sustainability.
- Meet with area city managers and the (new) County Manager to explore partnership opportunities. I already know a few Space Coast managers from my intern days in Brevard. Reconnecting with them in a new capacity will be very rewarding.
- Partner with Chamber of Commerce to set up round table discussions with key businesses, including retailers like Ron Jon Surf shop, hoteliers like Marriott, and restaurants like pompano grill. This is an opportunity to review existing relations and explore future development opportunities.
- Become active in the community and find volunteer opportunities. My family and I enjoy volunteering together in the communities we live. In California, my husband and I volunteer to rescue wild animals. My sons and I also helped churches to prepare meals for underserved individuals. When we lived in Arizona, my husband and I were members of the Sheriff’s Air Group which conducted rescue missions using small airplanes.

In terms of media relations, I have been a primary contact for news media. I’ve maintained a positive working relationship with reporters. When approached by the media, I provide factual and easy-to-understand information. In some cities, I also appeared on local radio programs.

I do not anticipate anyone contacting the City with negative comments about me. I realize that I cannot please everyone due to the nature of my job.

I am familiar with Facebook and other commonly used social media tools.

I enjoy swimming and spending time with family. Perhaps I could join my husband to learn how to play golf in Cocoa Beach.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

*Dedicated * Responsive * Energetic * Trustworthy *Tenacious * Ethical

Yvonne Kimball

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

My departure from Morro Bay was a no-cause separation. As noted earlier, the city has long experienced political divisions. I was hired unanimously two years ago. After the 2024 election, new council wanted to pursue a different direction. Immediately after taking office, council let the City Attorney go. A few months later, I was the next to be released. No misconduct was involved and no specific reason was cited. The separation has been amicable.

Importantly, I had applied for the Cocoa Beach CM position prior to my departure. I see similar coastal city challenges that I'm prepared for and would enjoy taking on. What sets Cocoa Beach apart is its political stability and long-term vision that aligns closely with my professional philosophy. This prospect also allows my family to return to our home state, making it a meaningful transition both personally and professionally. I consider this role an excellent opportunity to make a lasting contribution until I retire.

MOST RECENT SALARY

My compensation at City of Morro Bay was \$245,436 plus supplemental retirement contributions.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
YVONNE KIMBALL**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Record Found
County	
San Luis Obispo County, CA	No Record Found
Amador County, CA	No Record Found
Yavapai County, AZ	No Record Found
Hardee County, FL	No Record Found
State	
California	<i>Records Maintained by County. See Above.</i>
Arizona	No Record Found
Florida	No Record Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
San Luis Obispo County, CA	No Record Found
Amador County, CA	No Record Found
Yavapai County, AZ	No Record Found
Hardee County, FL	No Record Found
Federal	
California	No Record Found
Arizona	No Record Found
Florida	No Record Found

Motor Vehicle

California	No Record Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Record Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

**Background Check Summary for
YVONNE KIMBALL**

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used be in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
YVONNE KIMBALL
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Yvonne Kimball

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ☐ No ☒
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes ☐ No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
 - A. While I was the city manager for Jackson, a former employee filed a gender discrimination lawsuit against the city and named me personally. He is a Caucasian male who left the City's employment voluntarily for a job out of the state. The case was quickly settled for \$22,000, in addition to a Worker's Compensation settlement of \$60,000 related to a prior work injury.
 - B. While I was the CM for Jackson, CA, I hired a Fire Chief whose employment I later had to terminate based on her conduct. Unfortunately, she then accused the City of firing her based on her gender and filed a lawsuit for wrongful termination. The suit is currently in litigation and as a result, I am unable to comment further.

**Background Check Summary for
YVONNE KIMBALL
Personal Disclosure**

Attested to: Yvonne Kimball
Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Yvonne Kimball

Wayne Garibaldi – Former Councilmember, City of Jackson, CA

Mr. Garibaldi met Ms. Kimball in 2016. When Ms. Kimball started in Jackson, it had suffered neglect by the previous City Manager. She corrected the necessary things and worked hard to get the city into a good position for continued growth. Her expertise with finance and her analytical approach were especially helpful.

Ms. Kimball helped in the labor negotiations with the city's union workers. Mr. Garibaldi had experience as a banker, and they worked closely during the process. They were eventually able to reach an agreement that was beneficial for both parties.

When making decisions, Ms. Kimball is not a risk taker, but she is a hard worker and dedicated. She will carry out the assignments of the council, even if she does not totally agree with their decided course of action.

Because of the small size of Jackson, Ms. Kimball frequently interacted with members of the public. She was able to help people understand what the government could help with and what they could not. She helped everyone feel heard and supported, even if she could not do anything to address an issue.

Ms. Kimball is a talented communicator. She is accessible and honest, not driven by her own agenda. She is a strong leader who values collaboration. She is quick in her decision making process and does not delay projects with indecision. When hiring personnel, Ms. Kimball made good decisions. Her employees liked and respected her. She was a good judge of character and had a teamwork approach. She hired people who reflected those priorities.

Mr. Garibaldi highly recommends Ms. Kimball. She is a highly competent and talented municipal leader. She fosters a community of respect and collaboration. There is nothing in her past or conduct that is concerning and she was never part of any controversy. She is an excellent manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Yvonne Kimball:

- Honest,
- Smart,
- Ambitious,
- Integrity, and
- Leadership

Reference Notes Yvonne Kimball

Strengths: Finances, even temperament, patient with the public, built rapport with the community.

Weaknesses: When faced with a situation, she had a hard time understanding calculated risks directed by the City Council.

Steve McLean – Mayor, City of Jackson, CA [REDACTED]

Mr. McLean met Ms. Kimball in 2020. At the time, he was running for City Council. After he was elected, they worked closely together. She had an excellent job performance, and he was sad to see her leave Jackson.

Ms. Kimball was able to maintain Jackson at a high-performance level. She has innovative ideas that she advocates for. When solving problems, Ms. Kimball is not afraid to bring in professionals if she does not feel comfortable managing a situation on her own. She identified a large discrepancy in the budget and worked with a budget team and City Council members to get it back on track. She identified the issue and spearheaded the effort to correct it.

Ms. Kimball was social in the community. She attended events and interacted with community members on a regular basis. She effectively interacted with both the press and the public. She can meet with individuals one-on-one and also be comfortable in front of a crowd. She has good written and verbal communication skills. She gave City Council members weekly reports of her accomplishments, activities, and issues. This was helpful in keeping everyone on the same page.

As a leader, Ms. Kimball was open but understood the importance of rules and procedures. She works effectively within the framework given to her. She does not show stress, even in difficult situations. She is calm and collected at all times.

Mr. McLean highly recommends Ms. Kimball. She helped correct the course of the City of Jackson and they have been better off since. He would hire her to work for him if he could. He is not aware of anything about her that is cause for concern. She has a wealth of experience in city management and is an effective municipal leader.

Words or phrases used to describe Yvonne Kimball:

- Consistent,
- Confident,
- Dedicated,
- Hardworking,
- Efficient, and
- Thoughtful.

Reference Notes Yvonne Kimball

Strengths: Dedication to the job, follow through, good with personnel, has a light personality, likes to joke and laugh in the right situations.

Weaknesses: Can come across as stiff but she is not.

Susan Goodwin – Former Town Attorney, Town of Dewey-Humboldt, AZ [REDACTED]

Ms. Goodwin was contracted to serve as the Town Attorney. She worked closely with Ms. Kimball from 2012 to 2017. Ms. Kimball's job performance was exceptional.

Ms. Kimball kept Ms. Goodwin well informed via emails several times a week, and regular monthly status calls. When the attorney's office was in need of information, Ms. Kimball provided better background than most managers. She knew what information Ms. Goodwin needed to give legal advice effectively and efficiently. Ms. Goodwin never had to ask Ms. Kimball to provide additional information.

The Town Council was extremely difficult to work with because they were divided on the issues and could not come to any type of agreement. Ms. Kimball did the best she could, given the circumstances. She provided them with unbiased research, but they were not willing to listen to her recommendations. The Town leased space in a shopping center for Town Hall. At the direction of the Council, she explored alternatives to leasing. The elected officials had all the information they needed to make a decision on the topic but were unable to compromise and in the end nothing moved forward.

Although Ms. Goodwin did not get involved in the financial aspects of the organization, she saw Ms. Kimball knowledgeably answer questions posed by the Council about the budget. Ms. Kimball is an intelligent person, and she can navigate or learn everything she needs to know.

Personnel issues decreased when Ms. Kimball was the Town Manager. She worked within the confines of the law to deal with hiring and firing. The Code Compliance Officer was not performing the duties of the position, and through appropriate disciplinary action she terminated their employment.

Ms. Goodwin was unhappy at losing Ms. Kimball. She is a great municipal manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Yvonne Kimball:

- Direct,
- Respectful,
- Honest,
- Knows her business, and
- High integrity.

Reference Notes Yvonne Kimball

Strengths: Detailed, puts interests of the Town first, and highly intelligent.

Weaknesses: Gets impatient when the difficult Council will not make a decision.

Fern Gibson – Former Vice Mayor, City of Bowling Green, FL

Ms. Gibson met Ms. Kimball in 2008. They have kept in touch even though Ms. Kimball no longer lives in Florida.

Ms. Kimball did a pretty good job. She was not familiar with every aspect of City government, but she was a very hard worker and put her all into it. She arrived at City Hall early in the morning and stayed after 5:00 pm. When she was hired, she really wanted to learn about City government. She rode the garbage truck for a day and picked up garbage.

Their Deputy City Clerk retired. Ms. Kimball went through several applications and picked the right person for the job. She was very thoughtful in hiring decisions. The new hire really knew the job and was a good employee.

The previous City Manager tried to work with the County to pave Main Street because it eventually became a County road but was unsuccessful. Shortly after Ms. Kimball was hired, she secured a grant and had Main Street professionally paved. This action might not seem like a big deal to another community, but for a small town like Bowling Green it was incredible as they did not have the funds to pave the road.

Ms. Kimball was also very good with the budget. She kept the rates down and handled the finances well. Also, when the City Clerk failed at completing an assignment, she was able to fill in and complete the task. She was a jack of all trades and willing to assist the staff to move things forward.

Ms. Kimball can be described as someone who maintains an organization at a high-performance level. She was not a change agent, but she was innovative. She kept the elected officials informed on everything and was available to discuss any issue. She was also very timely at meeting deadlines.

Ms. Gibson did not have a computer so before their monthly Council meeting Ms. Kimball hand delivered the minutes to Ms. Gibson. She never forgot or missed a day. She then waited for Ms. Gibson to review it and was available to answer any questions. She was also very involved in the community, and she went to every event. She wanted to learn and was very interested in what was happening in the community. She also wanted to make sure that things were done the way they should have been.

Bowling Green had many issues when Ms. Kimball was hired. One employee claimed a job injury. After some time off, she brought him back into the office on light duty. He claimed that

Reference Notes Yvonne Kimball

he was hurt again. She tried her best to accommodate him, but he wanted to sue the City for money and ended up receiving several thousand. Ms. Gibson believes that the lawsuit was unwarranted.

Bowling Green had never had a female City Manager before. Ms. Kimball was also very young and had an accent. She was not rejected by the community, but it took time for them to accept her. Once they got to know her, they really liked her. She is willing to talk to anyone, and she is always very personable.

During the vetting process they did not find anything of concern in Ms. Kimball's background, and nothing happened during her tenure that would embarrass an employer.

The City Manager retired and remained in the community. He interfered where he should not have. He is also very good friends with the Mayor and together they made things very hard for Ms. Kimball. She faced incredible opposition from people who supported her during the hiring process and should have been helpful to her. Though Ms. Gibson does not know for sure, she believes this could be the reason that Ms. Kimball left.

Ms. Gibson did not want Ms. Kimball to leave Bowling Green and would hire her again. She was the best candidate for the position and Ms. Gibson had hoped she would stay in Bowling Green for a much longer period of time.

Words or phrases used to describe Yvonne Kimball:

- Personable,
- Very friendly,
- Very interested in her job,
- Hard worker,
- Dedicated, and
- Smart.

Strengths: Mentally and physically strong, interested in all levels of the job.

Weaknesses: She did not cry when people acted against her, but it hurt her. In her defense, they were very hard on her.

Terry Nolan – Former Mayor, Town of Dewey-Humboldt, AZ [REDACTED]

Mayor Nolan was on the committee that hired Ms. Kimball in 2012. He was the Mayor her entire time as Town Manager. She did an excellent job, and she dealt with everything that came her way.

Reference Notes Yvonne Kimball

Ms. Kimball's staff was top-notch. She had a small staff and hired people that work well together and as a team. She strongly encouraged cross training, so that if an employee was out of the office for a day, work in that area could still move forward by another employee. She held regular staff meetings to keep everyone well informed. The personnel adored her.

Communication is key in management, and Ms. Kimball was a good communicator. She created monthly newsletters for the Council and answered any questions they had in between newsletters. During public meetings her presentations were well thought out and she got her point across. She worked with the citizens to accomplish their goals within the confines of the law.

Ms. Kimball had a number of good ideas to improve the organization. Unfortunately, the elected officials were at odds with each other and were rarely willing to make changes. She followed through on tasks given to her by the Council in a timely manner. In addition, she strictly adhered to the budget.

It was a loss for Dewey-Humboldt when Ms. Kimball left. She was well liked because she was fair and knowledgeable. She is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Yvonne Kimball:

- Goal oriented,
- Outstanding,
- Understands the issues,
- Positive,
- Forward, and
- Community oriented.

Strengths: Takes extra training to improve herself, personable, budget, and community development.

Weaknesses: Her accent is hard to understand at first.

Charles Fulse - Community Activist, Bowling Green, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Fulse was heavily involved in the goings on of Bowling Green, FL. He worked a great deal with Ms. Kimball when she was City Manager from 2008 to 2011. She likes to get things done, which is one of the best attributes of a manager.

Ms. Kimball worked well with her staff. They respected her and worked hard for her. She spoke frequently at public meetings, in which she was clear and able to express her opinions. She was also diligent in ensuring that the city funds were being spent properly.

Reference Notes Yvonne Kimball

Ms. Kimball was involved in the community. She listened to the concerns of the citizens and made attempts at resolving their issues. The elected officials were not easy to work with, and she was not able to accomplish as much as she would have liked. She did get the ball rolling on several items that were completed after she left. She was responsible for acquiring a grant for a new park. The building where Head Start was located did not have a sidewalk, which was a potential danger for the children, so she found funding for the project. Another issue was the lack of a stop light at an intersection that, while not very busy with traffic, was a high pedestrian area for elderly people and children. She again put together plans for the incorporation of a stop light.

The conflicts with the Council were extensive. While Ms. Kimball was always respectful and friendly, she became frustrated by their constant interfering. One time she was reviewing a bid, and they questioned why. Her hands were tied at every turn. Not long after she left the majority of the Council stepped down.

Mr. Fulse appreciated Ms. Kimball's enthusiasm and determination. She tried to make the position work, but unfortunately it was an impossible situation. She should be highly considered for a city/county manager position.

Words or phrases used to describe Yvonne Kimball:

- Fights for change,
- Diligent,
- Hardworking,
- Intelligent, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Change agent, willing to take chances, and wants to make a difference.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Scott Collins – Former City Manager, Morro Bay, CA [REDACTED]

Mr. Collins met Ms. Kimball in 2023 when she was hired as the City Manager in Morro Bay, CA. Mr. Collins was the City Manager before Ms. Kimball. When she was hired, he had moved to the Housing Authority and took on a peer role for her. They talked about specific challenges to the position, and he offered advice and friendly support. When Mr. Collins noticed issues in the community, he brought them to her attention. She was always responsive. She valued collaboration and frequently sought input from professionals.

Ms. Kimball has worked in small communities which face unique challenges. This allowed her to provide innovative solutions for difficult issues. She was able to make the best with the

Reference Notes

Yvonne Kimball

resources she had. While in Morro Bay, she worked on optimizing the waterfront. She worked with various organizations to change marketing strategies and maximize their budget.

As a community leader, Ms. Kimball was accessible. She interacted with members of the public frequently at council meetings and through letters. She gave prompt responses to questions and responded quickly to requests for communication. She is an articulate person and prioritizes understanding for all parties involved.

Ms. Kimball identified the need for a new finance director in Morro Bay. She found a qualified individual who helped her meticulously keep track of the city's budget. When it comes to budgeting, Ms. Kimball is detail-oriented. She understands the nuances of municipal budgeting and is skilled at managing money.

Stress is a given part of community leadership. However, Ms. Kimball never publicly showed her stress. She was open about it with fellow municipal leaders but never let it impact her job performance. She has a calm demeanor.

Mr. Collins highly recommends Ms. Kimball. She thrives in communities with clear priorities and motivated staff. She is highly qualified as a municipal manager. Nothing in her background or conduct is cause for concern.

Words or phrases used to describe Yvonne Kimball:

- Funny,
- Smart,
- Curious,
- Collaborative,
- Kind, and
- A strong leader

Strengths: Interested in the community's success, a hard worker.

Weaknesses: She is difficult to understand at first but she is worth the effort.

Michael Wombolt– Visit Morro Bay, Executive Director, Morro Bay, CA [REDACTED]

Mr. Wombolt met Ms. Kimball in 2023. They worked closely together in tourism endeavors for Morro Bay. Visit Morro Bay functions similarly to a chamber of commerce. They interacted in bimonthly board meetings and managed projects to enhance Morro Bay's essential tourism sector.

**Reference Notes
Yvonne Kimball**

Because of their limited interaction, Mr. Wombolt did not observe her on a daily basis, but he did witness her leadership and communication abilities. She is an effective delegator who trusts her team to rise to challenges. She communicates effectively with all parties involved.

Mr. Wombolt highly recommends Ms. Kimball. She was a pleasure to work with, and he would welcome the opportunity to work with her again. He is not aware of anything that would be cause for concern. She is highly qualified to be a city/county manager and will work hard to improve the community she works for.

Words or phrases used to describe Yvonne Kimball:

- Ambitious, and
- Kind.

Strengths: Budgeting, willingness to explore innovative solutions.

Weaknesses: Nothing identified.

Prepared by: Trieste Sessions
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune, The (San Luis Obispo, CA)
July 2, 2025

City manager dismissed from SLO County beach town

Author/Byline: Stephanie Zappelli

After almost two years of service, the Morro Bay city manager was dismissed from her employment this week. The Morro Bay City Council voted 3-2 to dismiss city manager **Yvonne Kimball** during a closed session meeting on Tuesday, according to interim city attorney Robert Schultz.

Mayor Carla Wixom and Councilmember Jeff Eckles cast the dissenting votes, he said. It's unclear why **Kimball** was fired, and she didn't immediately respond to requests for comment. **Kimball** started working for the city in August 2023 after undergoing a series of interviews with the city's executive team, community members and local city managers.

When she was hired in 2023, her annual salary was listed at \$217,474, along with a monthly \$600 car allowance, enrollment in full health care benefits and a California Public Employees' Retirement System pension fund. She was one of 41 people who applied to the position.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Morro Bay Life
May 3, 2025

City dancing the legal hokey-pokey
By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay's city attorney situation appears to be ironing itself out after the City Council changed up its contract with its old attorney and sets out on a path to find a new, permanent one. The City Council was slated on April 22 to address the situation with its legal representation, which has been in a somewhat chaotic transition since last fall, when it cut ties with the long-time contract firm, followed the former city attorney to his new firm, and then fired him too in short order. Last December, the council brought back the former city attorney, who had been forced out in 2013 after holding the job for over a dozen years. Rob Schultz was hired as city attorney in Los Gatos shortly after leaving Morro Bay and has since retired from public employment.

The city's roller coaster ride started two years ago, when Councilwoman Zara Landrum and Mayor Carla Wixom started questioning the monthly bills being charged to the city by its former firm, Aleshire & Winder, LLP, which had the contract since 2013. Attorney Chris Neumeyer from A&W had been the city's attorney since 2018, and left A&W last November for another firm, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP, and was able to bring Morro Bay along with him. But after the council majority changed with last November's election, the new council decided to end that contract, which was in effect for just a few weeks. Schultz came out of retirement to fill in and help the city look for new attorneys. Initially, he was hired for a flat \$200 an hour and under an independent contractor contract.

But legal waters are like Yoo-Hoo soda, and questions arose over whether he could work as an independent contractor under the retirement rules of CalPERS, the agency that manages the public employee retirement system. "Under the Public Employees' Retirement Law," reads a report from City Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, "whether an individual is an 'employee' or an 'independent contractor' determines whether a retired annuitant must be enrolled in CalPERS as a retired annuitant (employee) or can return to work with a CalPERS agency without being subject to post-retirement work restrictions (Independent Contractor)." Schultz reportedly wrote to CalPERS seeking clarification but hadn't officially heard back from the state, according to **Kimball**. "CalPERS has stated orally that CalPERS has determined that Robert Schultz is classified as a retired annuitant employee as opposed to an independent contractor and therefore must comply with CalPERS rules," she said. So the City Council was being asked to formally hire him as an interim to fill a vacancy while they recruit a full-time attorney, either a firm or a solo act and employee like Schultz was. It should be noted that the City of San Luis Obispo and SLO County are the only two government agencies that have in-house attorneys, all other cities have a firm under contract.

The city has hired retirees on an interim basis before, twice each for police chief and city manager. All four times, the interims went back into retirement when a permanent manager or

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

chief was hired. Fortunately for taxpayers, though perhaps not so fortunately for Schultz, his pay is getting cut nearly in half. Instead of a flat \$200 an hour he will be paid \$107 per hour, and that's it. "Robert Schultz will not receive any additional benefits, incentives, compensation in lieu of benefits, paid leave, or paid holidays unless required by state or federal law," Kendall's report says. "Since Robert Schultz did not submit any invoices and has not been paid until a determination was made by CalPERS, Robert Schultz will be paid as a retired annuitant retroactively from Dec. 19, 2024." The report did not list the exact amount of back pay. Under the CalPERS rules, Schultz can't work a minute more than a total of 960 hours within a fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). With the contract issue apparently now settled, Schultz was to present the City Council with a job description and pay schedule to be used in the recruitment for a new attorney.

At its April 8 meeting, the City Council directed Schultz to write up a job description and figure out a salary range for hiring a new in-house attorney, as the council apparently does not want to hire another law firm. Under A&W — and BWS for a short time — in 2024 the city's attorney bills totaled over \$692,000 (and it was \$971,302 in 2023). According to the report, it's not going to be cheap to re-establish an in-house legal office. "The fiscal impact of establishing an in-house City Attorney is estimated to be between \$550,000 and \$700,000 annually, including salary, benefits, support staff, office space, furniture, technology, and professional resources, such as a legal assistant," the report said. "The first year is expected to have a higher cost due to the need to acquire computers, copier, printer, scanner, and phones."

Pay is not going to be too bad. The salary range being proposed to the council started in FY 2024/25 at \$201,000 to \$222,000; FY 2025/26 at \$212,000 to \$234,000; and FY 26/27 at \$222,000 to \$245,000. These salary ranges are the same amounts as the city manager's contract. This salary would be augmented by a generous benefits package including insurance and retirement with CalPERS, into which the city (taxpayers) contributes mightily. Schultz also estimated it would cost up to \$5,000 to do the recruitment in-house; or up to \$35,000 "if a professional search firm is engaged, plus candidate travel expenses."

The recommendations as to qualifications are extensive. The job description reflects the experience needed: "The City must establish a job description for the City Attorney role that reflects the full scope of services required, including land use, real estate, harbor lease negotiation and administration, and public works construction legal support. This role is an executive-level position and is expected to perform commensurate responsibilities." Having to do legal work in so many areas of the law is one of the advantages of hiring a firm, such as A&W, which usually include lawyers with varying areas of expertise, each billing at a different rate. In the annual city budget, an amount is set aside for possible legal expenses, under what's called a "Risk Management Fund." From this pot of money, an in-house city attorney would be able to hire outside legal help if needed on any given matter. Assuming the City Council chooses to seek an attorney in-house, Schultz' report estimated it would take from eight to 14 weeks "depending on the volume and quality of applicants." A second option would be to find a recruitment firm to handle the screening of applicants or a combination of in-house and outside firm.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

KSBY California's Central Coast
May 1, 2025

City of Morro Bay looking to adopt new flagpole ordinance at city facilities

By: Sophia Villalba

The City of Morro Bay is one step closer to adopting a new flagpole ordinance. "I believe this policy represents a gross overreach of local government and by its very nature is divisive and not inclusive," said City Councilmember Jeff Eckles. "We need to be neutral," said Rigmor Samuelsen, Morro Bay resident.

The city's policy, which has been in place for the past three years, allows commemorative and non-traditional flags to be displayed at city facilities. Councilmember Eckles wants the policy to be changed to display only three flags at city facilities. "Which is the flag of the United States of America, the State of California, and the City of Morro Bay," Eckles said. "It's definitely moving us backwards in a way where Morro Bay was being more open and more welcoming of groups that have been underrepresented," said Courtney Shepler, Morro Bay resident. Eckles says he wants the city to remain neutral in its stance on any topic. "We are here to represent everyone, not to signal particular beliefs or causes, no matter how worthy they may seem to some," Eckles said. "In the old policy, city council, as long as they agreed, had the ability to display other commemorative flags, whether it's a POW, MIA, or Pride flag, they had the ability to do that. It's their ability to highlight issues that are of concern to residents," Shepler said.

The Pride flag was also brought up at the last city council meeting two weeks ago. "It just wouldn't be going up in June, and I want to make sure that I was conscious of what we do here tonight, and it indeed is not about the flag, but it is about the acknowledgment of anyone in this community," said Councilmember Cyndee Edwards. Eckles said it is not about denying expression. "People are free to fly any flag they wish on their own private property as they should be," Eckles said. "Do it on your own private property, and I love that flag with all those colors," Samuelsen said. "We also need to be sensitive to the fact that a lot of people did care about that policy and that change that Morro Bay made to fly the Pride flag during June," Shepler said.

City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** says a motion was made to direct staff to revise the current policy and bring back a new resolution at a future city council meeting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

KSBW Action News 8
April 19, 2025

Vistra withdraws application for battery storage project in Morro Bay

Vistra is withdrawing its application for a proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) facility at the old Morro Bay power plant. The company informed the City of Morro Bay of its decision in a letter dated April 4.

Back in October, a Vistra spokesperson told community reporter Sophia Villalba they had paused the application with the City citing “timelines and consideration processes that would add at least 18 months of municipal review before any preliminary vote.” At the time, the Texas-based company said it would submit the project to the state for approval under Assembly Bill 205.

Passed back in 2022, it allows energy companies to bypass local jurisdictions, like city councils, for approval of energy projects. The proposed project called for a 600MW lithium-ion battery facility, which would be enough to power 450,000 homes.

The City of Morro Bay is currently under a two-year urgency ordinance prohibiting the acceptance or processing of new BESS projects in the city. This urgency ordinance will give the City two years to develop a permanent ordinance. According to City Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, neither an urgency ordinance nor a permanent ordinance would prevent the California Energy Commission from approving a BESS facility in Morro Bay.

Vistra Energy is the company that owns the Moss Landing battery storage facility that caught fire back in January.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Linkedin
February or March 2025

Yvonne Kimball's Post

I'm deeply proud to share an update from Task Force 1474, our Morro Bay Fire Strike Team currently deployed to the LA fires. Despite facing strong winds, rapid fire growth, and chaotic conditions, the team worked heroically, saving many homes and lives. Cell service has been limited, but the crews are healthy, rested, and prepared to return to the field.

This is a powerful reminder that even small city fire departments, like Morro Bay's, play a crucial role in large-scale emergency responses. I saw this same dedication in my previous role as City Manager of Jackson, CA, where a small city fire department also participated in strike teams. Firefighters from smaller communities bring the same courage, skill, and professionalism as their counterparts in larger cities, proving their impact is anything but small.

Throughout my 16 years as a city manager, I've witnessed how mutual aid and emergency response systems bring communities together—not just in California but beyond. Whether it was supporting wildfire responses in Arizona or coordinating hurricane disaster recovery in Florida, these experiences have deepened my respect for first responders and their selflessness.

Today, we are wishing our Morro Bay strike team and all emergency personnel a safe and successful mission. Thank you to the first responders across California and the rest of the nation for working tirelessly to protect lives and property.

[While I don't have a picture of this deployment, I found a photo from last year when I first joined Morro Bay, standing alongside some of these incredible individuals. It is a reminder of their unwavering commitment day in and day out.]

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Facebook
February 11, 2025

City of Morro Bay's post

Mayor Carla Wixom, City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** and Harbor Vitality Director Chris Munson are advocating for Morro Bay while in DC at the California Marine Affairs & Navigation Conference (CMANC).

The City met with the US Army Corps of Engineers to promote our harbor interests and infrastructure needs. Mayor Wixom presented Congressman Salud Carbajal with a Morro Bay Fire Department Challenge Coin and urged earmarked funds for public safety. The delegation discussed regional impact issues with Congressman Jimmy Panetta. They also met with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and more advocacy meetings are scheduled for the remainder of the week, including visits with US Senators Padilla and Schiff.

A special thank you for the grant from the Central California Joint Cable/Fisheries Liaison Committee to attend the CMANC conference.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Estero Bay News
January 31, 2025

Council Attends Leadership Academy
by Neil Farrell

Morro Bay's City leaders were in Sacramento last week meeting with local State representatives and teams from key state agencies, to advocate for the City's interests. According to a news release from City Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, who also went on the junket, four of five City Council members were able to attend the "leadership academy." "Led by Mayor Carla Wixom," **Kimball** wrote in the Jan. 23 release, "this delegation includes Council Members Jeff Eckles, Bill Luffee, and Zara Landrum, along with City Manager **Yvonne Kimball**. Council Member Cyndee Edwards was unable to attend due to an out-of-town funeral." The multi-day event gave the council a chance to meet with Assemblywoman Dawn Addis and State Sen. John Laird and state agencies, "focusing on critical issues that are of high importance to the City, including development of large battery storage facilities, housing policies in coastal zones, offshore wind projects, environmental sustainability, disaster response, and funding for local governments." Mayor Wixom said, "Those meetings provided an invaluable opportunity to advocate for the needs of Morro Bay. "By building strong relationships with State officials, we are ensuring our community's voice is heard and that we're at the table for key discussions shaping California's future."

The group hit on some key issues when they met with Addis and Laird, as well as the Energy and Coastal Commissions. With the Energy Commission, **Kimball** said, "The delegation advocated for local involvement in the AB 205 process as related to Vistra's pending Battery Energy Storage System Project; offshore wind projects; and opportunities for potential local resources." AB 205 is a 2022 law that gives energy projects, such as Vistra Energy's proposed battery storage facility at the Morro Bay Power Plant, a permit work-around when faced with local opposition. AB 205 allows companies with renewable energy projects to apply with the Energy Commission directly for a permit. The Coastal Commission and State Lands Commission would have significant say in this process, but the City and local jurisdictions would mostly be cut out.

Vistra, last October, notified the City that it was "pausing" its BESS Project review by the City and planned to apply to the CEC under AB 205. The company has not yet done this and the project currently sits in limbo. Meeting with a team from the Coastal Commission, which has jurisdiction over much of the City, including original jurisdiction over half the Embarcadero, they discussed several important issues. "Conversations," **Kimball** said, "centered on collaboration between the two agencies, capacity-building opportunities for the city, and support for local governments. Impacts of state legislation in the coastal zone related to housing and Proposition 4 were also discussed." Prop. 4, which was passed by voters in the November 2024 Election and entitled: the "Parks, Environment, Energy, and Water Bond," authorized the sale of \$10 billion in general obligation bonds to be used for safe drinking water projects, wildfire prevention, and "protecting communities and natural lands from climate risks." When they met with Addis and Laird, the hot topic was of course the big fire at a Moss Landing battery storage

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

plant owned by Vistra, the same company trying to put a battery facility in Morro Bay. Discussions,” **Kimball** said, “included the City’s legislative agenda, responses to the Moss Landing fire, potential legislation impacting the City, and the volatility of the State budget.”

With four of five council members together in Sacramento, the issue of a potential Brown Act violation is ever present. **Kimball** addressed this, too. “To ensure compliance with the Brown Act, the Mayor and three Council Members were divided into groups with two members attending each meeting with State officials.”

With two days of meetings behind them, the council was slated to attend the League of California Cities’ Mayor and Council Members Academy last Friday. “The highly sought-after academy,” **Kimball** said, “covers legal, financial, and practical fundamentals for city council members. Mayor and council members will return with more knowledge, renewed energy, and actionable next steps to advance the city’s priorities.”

That may be well and good, but the City Council’s next meeting (schedule for Jan. 28) promised to be a doozy after the spectacular and destructive fire on Jan. 16 in Moss Landing at Vistra’s battery plant there (see related story, this issue). News of the fire, which blew up online and has prompted hundreds of calls and emails to the council from concerned Morro Bay residents, seems to have solidified opposition in town against Vistra’s project. Assuming Vistra follows through with its move to the CEC, the issue will be how can Morro Bay’s residents participate in this largely-untested process, when it plays itself out at the State Capitol, over 300 miles away?

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune, The (San Luis Obispo, CA)
July 17, 2024

Ironman Triathlon canceled after 300 swimmers rescued

Author/Byline: Stephanie Zappelli

The Ironman Triathlon abruptly terminated its contract with the city of Morro Bay a year early, canceling the race planned for next spring after hundreds of athletes had to be rescued from strong currents in the harbor. "Based on athlete feedback and further evaluation of the limited swim course options that have presented a variability of challenging conditions, we did not feel it was in the best interest to continue producing this event," Ironman wrote in a statement to The Tribune. "We understand the disappointment this may cause for participants who enjoyed this event and its beautiful location."

The World Triathlon Corporation hosted the race in Morro Bay two years in a row. In 2023, the 70.3-mile triathlon race went off without a hitch. In 2024, however, strong tides created challenging swimming conditions in the bay - which meant more than 300 athletes had to be assisted out of the water. On July 1, the company informed the city by letter that it would cancel the triathlon planned for next May. "The World Triathlon Corporation's decision to cancel the third year came as a surprise to us. We found out the information from a social media post. A day later, we received a letter," Morro Bay City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** wrote in an email to The Tribune. "The termination letter suggested that WTC made a business decision to cancel the 2025 event, which is not a reflection of the city's partnership with WTC."

The city of Morro Bay and the organization Visit Morro Bay held a joint contract with World Triathlon Corp. to host Ironman in Morro Bay for three years - in 2023, 2024 and 2025, **Kimball** said. To support the event, the city waived permit fees for use of the Morro Rock parking lot, Coleman Beach and the boardwalk, she said. This year, the city also spent about \$40,000 on staff time for event preparation and safety. Meanwhile, data from Visit Morro Bay projected that the event would generate about \$100,000 in tourism dollars for the community, she said. "It has always been the city's goal to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone involved. We have fulfilled our part of the event agreement the last two years," **Kimball** said. The city hadn't yet funded any planning efforts for the 2025 race. "One saving grace is that the termination decision came soon after the 2024 event and before city's planning for the 2025 takes place. Therefore, no financial obligation has incurred for next year's event yet," she said.

Ironman moved the swim course into deeper waters this year "to address sea otter and shallow water issues," Morro Bay Fire Chief Matthew Vierra said. Strong tides were hard on the athletes and caused emergency responders to rescue 187 swimmers from the water, while 121 others had to be assisted out of the water, Vierra said. "Ironman was considering moving the swimming course to the southern part of the bay in 2025, away from the current area," **Kimball** said. "But the logistics of transporting athletes to and from check-in locations might have become a challenge."

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Estero Bay News
December 4, 2023

City Hires Interim Assistant City Manager
by Neil Farrell

Morro Bay has hired a temporary assistant city manager taking over for the former ACM who left for the greener pastures and the same job in Sunnyvale. City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** pegged retired Los Gatos finance director, Steve Conway, as the Interim Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director, filling in for former ACM/ASD, Sarah Johnson-Rios, who left in early October after a couple of years on the job. She came here from Paso Robles and started in Sunnyvale as their assistant city manager on Oct. 23, making nearly three times as much money as she did in Morro Bay.

Under the current City Salary Schedule, the assistant city manager/administrative services director job pays from \$144,000 (at Step 1) to \$175,000 (Step 5), plus benefits and retirement. Conway was hired making “\$87.56 per hour,” **Kimball**’s report to Council said, “which is within the hourly compensation range for the Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director position. By law his hours are limited to no more than 960 per fiscal year.” That’s because Conway is officially retired and under the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) he is limited in the number of hours he can work in a government interim position like this and still collect his pension.

“Under CalPERS rules,” **Kimball** said, “the compensation paid to retirees cannot be less than the minimum nor exceed the maximum monthly base salary paid to other employees performing comparable duties, divided by 173.333 to equal the hourly rate” [\$182,118 a year divided by 12 months, divided by 173.333 hours a month = \$87.56/Hr.]. He will not be getting the insurance benefits of regular City employees, which will save the taxpayers a little bit of money. “Retired annuitants,” **Kimball** said, “cannot receive any other benefit, incentive, compensation in lieu of benefit or other form of compensation in addition to this hourly pay rate. Therefore, compensation will be no more than the hourly rate of the Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director position, and those amounts have been programmed in the current year FY 2023/24 approved budget.”

Kimball went looking for an interim ACM right after Johnson-Rios gave notice. “Following notice of Ms. Johnson-Rios’ resignation,” **Kimball** said, “Staff explored options for pursuing an Interim while we recruit for a permanent Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director. As of Oct. 5, 2023, the City is actively recruiting for this position.” Johnson-Rios helped find Conway to take over for her before she left.

Though readers might think an assistant city manager’s job is like the vice president with not much to do, this is a big job with a lot of responsibilities. According to the City’s website, the assistant city manager is “Under general administrative direction of the City Manager, plans, organizes, and directs the activities of the Administrative Services Department by developing

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

and implementing efficient and effective financial policies, plans and reporting systems to ensure the City's long-term fiscal health; oversees Information Systems and may oversee Human Resources; coordinating assigned activities with City departments and outside agencies; organizing and coordinating other programs and projects as assigned by the City Manager; and representing the City Manager as assigned." They also assume the manager's duties and responsibilities when that person is out of town. But the biggest job will be getting information together for the next City Budget, which is due to go to the City Council for approval by next June.

Meanwhile the City is advertising the position now and according to the notice on the City website, the salary ranges from \$149,829 to \$182,118 annually. The job flyer doesn't give a deadline date for applications.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Estero Bay News
August 25, 2023

New City Manager is ‘A Perfect Fit’ for Morro Bay
By Neil Farrell

Calling her a “perfect fit” for Morro Bay, the Mayor on Aug. 14 swore in a new City Manager, just the second woman to hold the City’s top spot in town history. A gathering of citizens and City staffers rolled out a welcome mat to new City Manager, **Yvonne Kimball**, who takes over for former C.M. Scott Collins who left in March to become the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo. The City Council had brought in Greg Carpenter as interim city manager and he’s been running the City for the past several months, while they searched for a permanent C.M. The brief ceremony, highlighted by a beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner by Morro Bay High School Choir President, Jocelyn Ocampo Mateo, gave Mayor Carla Wixom a chance to tell residents why they chose **Kimball**. Mayor Wixom said it was “a momentous day in Morro Bay,” and that **Kimball**, “brings a wealth of experience” to their leadership team. The Mayor said **Kimball** was “the perfect fit for our vibrant community.” **Kimball**, she said, acknowledges the challenges that lie ahead for the City, as they try to find a balance between “sustainable development and economic growth. We are thrilled to have you join our team.”

Kimball was given Resolutions and certificates suitable for framing from local State legislators’ staff reps. Clint Weirick presented her with a certificate from State Sen. John Laird’s Office; and Andrea Chmelik, a representative of Assemblywoman, Dawn Addis, who is from Morro Bay, presented a certificate from the State Assembly. **Kimball** seemed pleased to have gotten the warm welcome. “I really appreciate you,” she said to the crowd of well wishers, “and the staff and Mayor for all you have done for me. “Now, it’s time to roll up my sleeves and get to work, that’s all I have to say.”

Before being hired by Morro Bay, **Kimball** was the City Manager of Jackson, Calif., a small town in the northern foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. **Kimball** had led Jackson’s 5,000 residents since 2017 and has over 15-years of city management experience. **Kimball** was the Town Manager in Dewey-Humboldt, Ariz., from 2012-17, and was City Manager at the City of Bowling Green, Fla., from 2008-11. She earned a Master’s of Public Administration Degree with a focus on Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Central Florida. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business English from the Tianjin Institute of Technology in China. **Kimball** is just the second female city manager in Morro Bay’s history. Andrea Lueker, who worked her way up in the City hierarchy, held the top job for about 8 years leaving in 2013. **Kimball** joins an all-woman City Council — another first for Morro Bay. Also, the assistant City Manager, Sarah Johnson-Rios, is a woman, as are the Chief of Police, the City Clerk and Harbor Patrol Chief among others in the City hierarchy.

Kimball comes to Morro Bay having missed the sewer plant controversy, as that mountainous, \$170 million project is now completed. However, there is another battle on the horizon — Vistra

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Energy's proposed Battery Energy Storage System or BESS, a \$490 million project to build the largest (at 600 megawatts) battery storage facility in the world. But opposition to the BESS is strong and growing. On Aug. 9, the group "Citizens For Estero Bay Preservation" turned in over 1,400 petition signatures of voters supporting a ballot initiative that would require the City Council to seek voter approval for any changes in zoning needed to clear the way for the BESS. The City is currently in the environmental review stage of the project with a draft EIR expected to come out around the end of this year.

The City is also embarking on a study of road conditions in town with an eye to coming up with a plan to address whatever safety issues the study may identify. So while it may be the dog days of summer, there is no respite from controversy in this community.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City of Morro Bay
June 15, 2023

Morro Bay City Council Selects Yvonne Kimball as Next City Manager
Press Release

The City of Morro Bay is pleased to announce the selection of **Yvonne Kimball** as its next City Manager, effective August 14, 2023. The City Council made the appointment following an extensive recruitment process conducted by Mosaic Public, a public employee executive search firm. **Yvonne** will replace Scott Collins, who left the City in March 2023. A total of 41 applicants applied for the position, with six candidates interviewed by the City Council in closed session. The City Council selected two finalists after the first day of interviews. On the second day of interviews, the finalists participated in a series of interviews with different stakeholders who provided their feedback to the City Council. After an additional interview with City Council, and comprehensive background and reference checks, **Yvonne Kimball** was selected as the new City Manager by City Council. “I am delighted to welcome **Yvonne Kimball** as the new city manager of Morro Bay. Her impressive track record of success and her commitment to public service make her an excellent choice for this important role. I am confident that **Yvonne** will bring fresh ideas and a collaborative approach to our city government. We look forward to working with her to build a brighter future for Morro Bay. Please join me in congratulating **Yvonne** on her appointment and welcoming her to our community.” Mayor Wixom.

Yvonne Kimball brings 15 years of experience in city management to Morro Bay. She currently serves as the City Manager for Jackson, CA, a position she has held since 2017. The City of Jackson is a full-service city with a population of 5,000 residents in the northern foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. As the City Manager of Jackson, **Kimball** was responsible for overseeing all operations, implementing a \$20 million dollar budget of capital improvement projects, including a \$12 million dollar sewer plant improvement project, and a \$10 million dollar operational budget, negotiating and managing contracts, and coordinating economic development. Prior to her current role, Ms. **Kimball** was the Town Manager at the Town of Dewey-Humboldt, AZ, from 2012 to 2017 and City Manager at the City of Bowling Green, FL, from 2008 to 2011. Ms. **Kimball** holds a Master of Public Administration degree with a focus on Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Central Florida and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business English from the Tianjin Institute of Technology in China. “I am honored to have been selected to be the next city manager for Morro Bay. I’m humbled by the responsibilities and the enormous trust bestowed upon me. I pledge to lead this incredible team of city staff with exuberance, to support the City Council with a full heart, and to serve the community with dedication. My family and I are grateful for the warm welcome extended by Mayor Wixom, members of the City Council, city staff and the community. We look forward to calling Morro Bay our home.” **Yvonne Kimball**. The City Council looks forward to welcoming **Yvonne Kimball** to Morro Bay and working collaboratively with her to serve the community. The City Council expresses its gratitude to Greg Carpenter who has served as the Interim City Manager for the last several months.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Ledger Dispatch
June 14, 2023

Jackson City Manager submits letter of resignation

By Staff writer

This article was updated on Thursday, June 15 with more information on **Kimball's** resignation as well as information about other business covered at the Monday, June 12 Jackson City Council meeting. The City of Jackson is on the hunt for a new City Manager.

At the latest meeting of the Jackson City Council on Monday, June 12, current City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** announced that she will be stepping down from her position at the end of July and taking a position as City Manager with the City of Morro Bay. **Kimball**, who has been with the City Manager of Jackson since August 2017, tendered her resignation letter a few days prior to Monday's meeting and stated her last day with the city will be July 31. During **Kimball's** tenure, she helped lead the City of Jackson through the COVID-19 pandemic and oversaw a series of capital improvement projects in the city, including water and sewer improvement, major bridge and road projects and repairs to the civic center.

City of Jackson Mayor Steve McLean was saddened by **Kimball's** decision to leave. "She has done an outstanding job for Jackson and will be missed," McLean said. He added that **Kimball** provided thoughtful leadership and strived to foster a high-performing team of city employees. Her hard work also set the stage for many more exciting projects to be completed in the future.

In her resignation letter, **Kimball** stated that becoming the City Manager of Jackson was one of the best decisions she has ever made.

The City of Jackson will be conducting a search for an Interim City Manager to take over in August and interested individuals are invited to contact the city for details.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Ledger Dispatch
January 28, 2022

Turnover and ‘turmoil’ cause concern in City of Jackson
by Jack Mitchell

It’s not every day that you have employees of the City of Jackson come into your office with a letter outlining grievances to City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** and the Jackson City Council. But when they do – and ask you to “take on City Hall” – it gets your attention.

The City of Jackson employees’ letter states:

City of Jackson staff are enduring a divisive and destructive environment, walking on eggshells unable to work in a supportive environment. Staff works so they can provide for themselves and their families. We do not work as a hobby, politics or socialization. We need our job, it is not an option that we work. This is our livelihood and we have the right to work in a hostile free work environment. Mayor Bob Stimpson is asking employees to call him and go around their supervisors causing division between supervisors and staff. Mayor Stimpson has targeted the women who work for the City of Jackson. He has gone to the subordinates of Police, Fire, Public Works and Water Treatment and requested they call him and report on their Supervisors. He is the Mayor and has specific duties. Mayor Stimpson and the Jackson City Council need to be educated on their responsibilities and limitations as a public official. We are requesting that this situation be investigated.

Sincerely,
City of Jackson Employees

The Ledger Dispatch was aware of a number of personnel issues, or had heard of items and rumors going on. In an effort to get to the bottom of those, we reached out to the Jackson City Manager, the Jackson City Council and even Amador County District 1 Supervisor Pat Crew. “First, regarding organization stability, I have been with the City for over 4 years,” said **Yvonne Kimball**, Jackson City Manager. “Although a newbie, I can attest that Jackson has a rich culture of caring for its employees and their families. The City values stability. That was why I chose to uproot my family and come to work for Jackson.” “As the City Manager, I can also share that when we hire positions, we focus on proper fit and strive to find those who are willing to commit to the City’s long-term well-being. We take care of our employees. We train employees and provide them opportunities to grow. We also offer the richest benefit package among all public agencies in Amador County, perhaps even the best in the entire state. At the same time, we recognize that circumstances change and life evolves; consequently, employees are not refrained from making choices that they believe would better suit their needs. As an employer, we must remain nimble and support employees’ decisions to do what is best for themselves and their families.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

A number of positions at Jackson City Hall are being vacated. Some leaving their jobs after decades of service to the City of Jackson. “You specifically asked about the Planning Consultant’s departure,” **Kimball** said. “As you’ve noted, Susan Peters has been providing the City Planner services for the past 26 years. I have deep respect for her. Ms. Peters’ contribution to the City of Jackson is significant. She was also the Interim City Manager during a very difficult time in the City’s history. She is not only an accomplished planning professional, but also an avid community leader, including being an elected official serving on the AWA Board of Directors. Upon receiving Ms. Peters’ announcement to leave, the City has been actively looking for a new Planner. We appreciate that Ms. Peters is staying on until the end of February for the transition. We wish her nothing but continued professional and personal fulfillment as she moves on to other pursuits.”

Peters confirmed that she has had issues with the City of Jackson and the Jackson City Council that led her to terminate her professional relationship as City Planner, issues similar to those outlined by the employees in their letter. “The current City Council has created a divisive and fractured work environment, publicly challenging the professional integrity of its staff and creating a work environment that is neither productive nor in the best interest of the community,” said Peters. “I will not, and cannot, continue to provide professional planning services to the City of Jackson due to the current work environment.”

Another rumor or issue revolves around public safety, specifically the City of Jackson making changes to the Jackson Fire Department. “The folks at Hospice were looking at options to demolish an old house and asked to be put in touch with Walt White, the Amador Fire Protection District Chief,” said Pat Crew, Amador County District 1 Supervisor. “White inspected the building and reported it was not feasible. Mayor Stimpson asked AFD Chief White to give him a cost estimate for administration services on a temporary basis similar to what AFD and Sutter Creek tried several years back as a cost saving measure. Chief White did that, and nothing further has happened at the city level that I know of.”

“Concerning the Fire Department, Jackson has an awesome department,” **Kimball** said. “The department is made up of both volunteers and full-time personnel. Many of our dedicated firefighters have been with the department for over a decade, well before the beginning of full-time staffing. Measure M revenues enabled the funding for the full-time fire personnel. The future of Measure M and options of countywide fire services, including consolidation, unification and/or merger have been in discussions before Measure M was enacted in 2008. The discussions seemed to have become noticeably contentious in recent years. While the discussions about fire services will continue, there is no Council action to change the current way of fire service provision. In other words, Jackson Fire remains a City department. To ‘unify fire protection’ countywide would require careful consideration and essentially be a joint action. ‘Unification,’ by its meaning, cannot be accomplished through a ‘forced’ action by any party.”

At the same time of these discussions about changing the Jackson Fire Department and making changes to save money for the City of Jackson, Jackson Fire Chief Deborah Mackey was asked to vacate her office at City Hall, a decision that is not related to Mayor Stimpson’s request to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

quietly look into changing Jackson Fire, according to **Kimball**. “Regarding the office space in City Hall that is next to the Civic Center, it was occupied by Assemblyman Bigelow and Senator Borgeas staff members for almost 20 years until 2019,” **Kimball** said. “Their staffer for Amador County, Mr. Jorgenson, was situated in that office space until he found a new office in Sutter Hill and moved away. Shortly after Mr. Jorgenson’s departure, the Fire Chief decided to leave her Main Street office and use the vacant room as her office at City Hall. Having a third work station might have been convenient in some ways; it created adjacency concerns on the other hand, as the Chief was away from fire personnel at both fire stations. While the Chief had three workstations to travel back and forth from, councilmembers sometimes could not find a room in City Hall to meet with residents and had to meet in the parking lot. To accommodate all needs, Fire Chief Mackey moved out of the City Hall space. Moving back to one of the fire stations allows the Fire Chief to be with the firefighters at all times. It did not occur to us that this move would have been newsworthy as it is common that the department heads, especially in the public safety arena, including the Chief of Jackson Police Department, are usually stationed together with their crew.”

“I have heard rumors of a new AFPD station on Argonaut, but have not seen any details,” said Connie Gonsalves, Jackson Vice Mayor. “Also, I am not aware of any ‘plan’ for the Jackson Fire staffing. That again would be a personnel matter and we do not have any agenda item before us. I have not been asked to step down from the Amador Fire Protection Authority (AFPA), but heard that a Supervisor from another District mentioned it to a fellow Councilmember that it is time for a change. Again, a rumor.”

While a number of questions and rumors revolved around personnel matters, and as such could not be addressed or answered, clearly the City of Jackson is going through some difficult times. Department heads, supervisors and employees have voiced that the city needs to be investigated and fixed. A total of eight staff members at Jackson City Hall are leaving, with more than half stating it is due to the working conditions.

“I am very concerned about the city and never during my time on the Council have I ever gone through this much turmoil,” said Gonsalves.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Ledger Dispatch
September 3, 2021

AWA Directors vote to raise wholesale water rates
City of Jackson threatens action for ‘unconscionable’ rate hike
Author: Craig Baracco

Just weeks after approving a rate hike for retail customers, the Amador Water Agency Board of Directors voted during its meeting on Thursday, August 26 to approve an increase to wholesale water rates as well over the next five years. Currently, AWA provides wholesale water to the cities of Jackson and Plymouth, as well as community service districts in Pine Grove, Drytown and Mace Meadows. The wholesale water rate increase will initially be 30 percent, with a 20 percent increase in fiscal year 2023, 10 percent increases for 2024 and 2025, and finally a 5 percent increase in 2026. The increases are equivalent to those AWA passed last month for retail customers.

The AWA Board first discussed the wholesale water rate increase in a special meeting on Friday, August 20, but continued the issue to its regular meeting on August 26 to address some technical challenges to the rate study used by AWA to justify the rates. This review did produce one change in how water service to Mule Creek State Prison was calculated, resulting in a small decrease in the rates, amounting to a 0.3 percent cut. The Board also delayed the implementation of the rate increase from November 9 to December 1 at the urging of the City of Plymouth, giving the affected jurisdictions more time to increase their own rates to cover the increased costs.

The final vote was 3-1 in favor of the increase, with Paul Molinelli Jr. the only no vote and Gary Thompson, Rich Farrington and Randy Livingston all voting yes. Molinelli said he supported the rate increase, but wanted a longer delay in its implementation. Board President Susan Peters, who also works for the City of Jackson as City Planner, recused herself from the discussion and vote to avoid a potential conflict of interest.

The City of Jackson had protested the proposed rate hike prior to the August 26 vote in a letter from Mayor Robert Stimpson to the AWA Board of Directors, going as far as to call the proposed rate hike, particularly at a time when Amador County was struggling to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, “unconscionable.” Stimpson concluded in his letter that the City of Jackson would consider taking some form of action if AWA voted to move forward with the proposed rates.

After the rate hike was approved, Jackson City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said she planned on discussing the issue with the Jackson City Council to figure out the city’s next course of action.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Ledger Dispatch
August 27, 2021

City of Jackson upset with county over the way clearing of homeless encampment was handled

Author: Craig Baracco

City of Jackson officials are upset with the way the county cleared this homeless encampment on Wicklow Way, saying the county did little to provide services or shelter for the displaced, instead passing the burden on to the City of Jackson. On the agenda was a report from the city's Homeless Outreach Coordinator, and while the Council did hear a report on the efforts to find and connect unhoused residents with aid, jobs and shelter, the discussion quickly turned to the recent clearing of homeless encampments from a county-owned property on Wicklow Way near Walmart.

According to city officials, the county clearance of the Wicklow Way property resulted in an influx of new homeless people into the City of Jackson, placing an additional burden on the Outreach Coordinator and law enforcement. Jackson Police Chief Christopher Mynderup was critical of the efforts of the County Homelessness task force, saying that the county, despite having more personnel and resources than the City of Jackson, did little to provide services or shelter for those on the Wicklow Way property and instead just focused on relocation, shifting the burden on the City of Jackson. Mynderup went on to blame the political leadership at the state capitol for the homeless problem and even endorsed the recall of California Governor Gavin Newsom. "Unfortunately, we live in a blue State," Mynderup said.

City staff urged the Council to seek help from the county and other cities. "We are the only jurisdiction that cares," said Jackson City Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, who mentioned the City of Ione's rejection of a proposal to use the old Preston School of Industry campus as a facility for the homeless.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Yvonne Kimball** is listed below.]

<https://fccma.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-Service-Awards-1.pdf>
June 2021

2021 FCCMA Service Awards

15 Years of Service

Yvonne Kimball
City Manager
City of Jackson, CA

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/on_the_vine/city-of-jackson-welcomes-first-energy-efficient-vehicle-to-city-s-fleet/article_c6403d7c-b3fd-11eb-8513-ab39e288af6a.html

May 13, 2021

Energy Efficient Vehicle to City's Fleet

Via Press Release

On Thursday, May 6, the City of Jackson received a hybrid (gas/electric) 2021 Toyota RAV-4. This is the first energy-efficient vehicle the City has owned. This purchase was made possible by the grants from Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC) and Amador County Air District (ACAD). ACTC had a program called Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Fund, which was originated by the Federal Highway Administration. ACAD has long supported programs and purchases that intend to reduce pollution and improve air quality. The City of Jackson applied for both grants and was awarded with enough funds from both agencies to purchase two energy efficiency vehicles. City Planner Susan Peters, Public Works Superintendent Bree Wilder, former Superintendent Max Godde, former Councilmember Keith Sweet and Mayor Stimpson were instrumental in securing the grants for the city.

The new RAV4 replaced the Building Department's 2005 Ford Ranger. Building Inspector Michael Hooper has been assigned to the new Hybrid RAV-4. Michael said he is proud to be the first employee driving a green vehicle. The RAV-4 Hybrid averages 41 miles per gallon of gas, while the 2005 Ranger gets 14 miles per gallon of gas. Being a gas/electric hybrid vehicle, RAV-4 Hybrid only produces 1,317 pounds of carbon dioxide. Replacing the Ford with the RAV-4 Hybrid cuts the annual carbon dioxide production by 2,540 pounds. This purchase achieves the goals of increasing renewable energy and reduction of air pollution. Due to COVID-restrictions and shortages of steel and auto parts, it took a long time to locate a hybrid vehicle. "When it finally arrived last week, it felt like a celebration," City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said. "This is the first energy efficient vehicle for Jackson. I believe this might be one of the first for all four Amador municipalities and Amador County." **Kimball** wants to thank ACTC and ACAD for the funds and continued partnerships.

Jackson has been at the forefront of cutting-edge energy efficient programs. The city has earned the California League of Cities Beacon Awards for implementing energy efficiency measures. The city adopted an Energy Action Plan in 2015 with goals to increase renewable energy use and energy efficiency. Since the adoption of the plan, the city has replaced the majority of city owned light fixtures with LED fixtures. The city also owns and operates two level-2 electric charging stations – one located in the lower-level City Hall parking lot and one at the 49er parking lot. The City is leveraging other ACTC and ACAD funds to upgrade those municipal charging stations soon. In addition to municipal charging stations, Jackson is also a home for Tesla supercharging stations, which are located at the Busi parking lot behind Mel & Faye's Diner. Jackson's Energy Action Plan can be found on the city website under the Planning Department. If you would like to learn more about Jackson's initiatives to promote energy efficiency measures, contact City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** at (209) 223-1646.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://amadorbusiness.com/index.php/2020/11/29/how-tesla-came-to-jackson/>

Amador Business Ticker
NEWS
December 6, 2020

How Tesla Came to Jackson

Author: Eric Butow

Our article about the new Tesla Supercharger station in Jackson elicited more than a few comments in Amador County Facebook groups about the station and how it came about. So, I talked to the Jackson City Manager, **Yvonne Kimball**, about the process for securing the Supercharger station and plans for more Level 3, or fast charging, stations in the city.

The process began in May 2018, when **Kimball** said that a Jackson city councilmember brought the opportunity of having a Tesla Supercharger station to her attention. The City Council decided the station was consistent with the city's economic development and tourism efforts, and so they directed **Kimball** to pursue the Supercharger station. **Kimball** contacted the county and learned that other places in the county were also vying for the Supercharger station, and the Tesla site selection team met with Jackson city staff in August 2018. "Although this was a county-wide search, County officials were very helpful and some even openly supported the site being in Jackson," she said.

Jackson is Awarded

The August 2018 meeting was the only contact the city had with Tesla for over a year, which **Kimball** said was not surprising because she knew the competition was fierce and Tesla would take its time to decide. In October 2019, Tesla informed her that they chose the Jackson location for their new Supercharger station. The City Council approved a five-year agreement in March 2020. Though construction was slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the station was operational on November 5. The station is the third electric vehicle charging station in the city. The other two are located at the Holiday Inn Express on the corner of Highway 49 and Clinton Road, as well as in the lower-level parking lot at the Civic Center. Unlike these other two stations, the Supercharger station is only available for Tesla vehicles.

Jackson Civic Center EV charging station

The city parking lot was the logical choice for the Supercharger station, **Kimball** noted. "The parking lot is the largest public parking facility the city has. It is rarely full and has always been free parking for anyone who uses the lot, Tesla customers or otherwise," she said. Though the city parking lot is large, the city owns only the back half of it, and that back half leads to the city sewer treatment facility. The forward half is owned and operated by Mel and Faye's Diner, though when the diner is busy, their customers park in the city portion of the lot. "We have a sensible relationship and there is never a problem," **Kimball** said. "In fact, Mel and Faye's Diner welcomes Tesla's project." Before the Tesla Supercharger was installed, **Kimball** said that there were some problems in that location. "Its quiet and relatively remote location, coupled with lack

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

of streetlights, had generated concerns from local businesses,” she said. “The City’s sewer plant was broken into a few times before Tesla’s Supercharging station project, and homelessness had also been observed at that location.”

But Wait, There’s More

The new Supercharger station is not just beneficial for the environment and for tourism. Tesla also agreed to pay for several improvements in the city’s portion of the parking lot. Three groups of motion sensor lights are not only bright and energy-efficient, **Kimball** said, “there have not been any break-ins yet since the project was completed.” Tesla also paid \$20,000 to add a layer of crack seal and striping.

Tesla Megapack in Jackson

Tesla installed a solar battery megapack next to the stations soon after they installed the stations. This megapack looks like the size of a shipping container and is covered by plastic. “The megapack is a solar battery backup to use during power outages and the PG&E Power Safety Power Shutoffs that we have been experiencing,” **Kimball** said. She also noted that even though the Supercharger station has taken up a few spaces, there are still over 30 parking spaces available, which is 85 percent of the total lot. “If, at some point, parking spaces become an issue,” **Kimball** added, “the city can certainly consider partnering with Mel’s Diner and other nearby businesses to see about additional parking.”

More to Come

Jackson is not done upgrading its electric vehicle charging capacity. **Kimball** said the city has obtained grants to upgrade the charging stations in the lower level parking lot at the Civic Center. These grants came from the Amador County Transportation Commission and the Amador County Air District. The charging stations will be upgraded from the current Level 2 stations provided by ClipperCreek of Auburn to Level 3 stations. Because ClipperCreek does not provide Level 3 stations, the current stations will be replaced by those from another manufacturer. The upgrade is planned for completion sometime in 2021.

All these efforts, **Kimball** said, not only helps boost the local economy but also supports the city’s green energy initiatives. “This is one of the small acts that the City can do to reduce our carbon footprint and mitigate the impacts of climate change.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/roots/hometown-heroes-jackson-historic-cemetery-makes-improvements/article_997216dc-1491-11eb-b5b1-7f07f514d2dd.html
October 27, 2020

Hometown Heroes: Jackson Historic Cemetery Makes Improvements

Author: Jack Mitchell

Pathway signs, ground base — packed and smoothed — for safer travel, and a GIS project among the new and exciting upgrades

The Jackson Cemetery Committee are pleased to announce the installation of pathway signs to help direct visitors around the grounds and more easily locate family and loved ones. In addition, new rule signs and other signage have been, or soon will be, installed. “The Committee came up with the names using the various gold mines in our county,” said Steve McLean, Jackson Cemetery Committee Chairman. “More improvements are on the way, using donated ground base — packed and smoothed — to make pathways safer to travel.”

In addition, thanks to the support and help from City Planner Susan Peters and her husband Robin, the Jackson Cemetery Committee are working on a GIS project which will be interactive with the cities computer system and greatly help identifying where available grave sites are located and who’s in what grave at the click of a mouse.

“These projects would not have been possible without the support from City Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, the City Council and Mayor Stimpson with basically a zero budget,” said McLean. “This year weed control was hampered when COVID-19 hit in March when weeds start growing and getting volunteers was difficult, I guess the weeds forgot to quarantine.”

If you wish to get involved and are interested in history, join the Jackson Cemetery Committee team. Contact the City of Jackson at (209) 223-1646.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/news/jackson-dismisses-threat-to-pull-gym-s-business-license/article_0612897c-acee-11ea-9e08-47b73f9c2975.html
July 23, 2020

Jackson dismisses threat to pull gym's business license
New York Fitness opened ahead of Phase 3, which is now in effect statewide
Author: Jeremy Malamed

While large groups of people gathered at various sites throughout the county over the past week to peacefully protest against police brutality, another large group gathered at the Jackson City Council meeting on Monday, June 8 in support of a local business. Gyms across the state have been given the green light to reopen for business starting Friday, June 12 as California moves into Phase 3 of its COVID-19 recovery process. New York Fitness of Jackson, however, didn't wait for the OK from the state to reopen and has been operating in defiance of state-wide health directives, which have prevented gyms from being open prior to June 12.

New York Fitness owner Shawn Karai previously stated in a message on his Facebook page: "I didn't open my club to be defiant. I opened my club because I need to make a living." In response, the Jackson City Council had threatened to pull the gym's business license, but ultimately decided against it thanks in large part to an overwhelming show of community support at Monday's city council meeting. The turnout of people in support of New York Fitness was so large that the public comment portion of the meeting had to be moved outside to accommodate the crowd. "Thank you city council and city staff for allowing me to speak and thank you to our members for the peaceful protest," Karai posted in a message on Facebook earlier this week.

According to Jackson City Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, the matter of New York Fitness' business license was on the agenda for discussion in closed session at the end of Monday's meeting, but was dismissed, adding that the issue is basically moot now that the state has released guidelines for gyms to reopen this Friday.

Gyms aren't the only things getting the green light to reopen this Friday, June 12, as California moves into Phase 3. Also OK to reopen, with modifications, are bars and wineries, campgrounds, RV parks, public pools, movie theaters and museums, among other sectors. Nail salons, tattoo parlors and live theater are among the things still not approved to reopen.

The number of positive COVID-19 cases in Amador County remained at 10 this week with no new cases reported as of Wednesday, June 10. All 10 cases have fully recovered.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/partnership-provides-path-to-improvement/article_c8a48932-0d74-11ea-ad80-77b2f8344351.html

December 5, 2019

Partnership provides path to improvement

City of Jackson, Jackson Rancheria celebrate completion of New York Ranch Road Rehabilitation project

Author: Jack Mitchell

The City of Jackson hosted a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the partnership with the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians for its generous funding for the New York Ranch Road Rehabilitation project. The ceremony was held on Tuesday, November 19, at 11 a.m., on the west side of New York Ranch Road, between the entrance of the Amador Senior Center and Quail Hollow Professional Center. The New York Ranch Road Rehabilitation project improved approximately 1,760 feet (1/3 mile) of roadway on New York Ranch Road. The improvements consisted of road widening, storm drain reconstruction, construction of concrete curb and gutter, placement of block retaining wall, installation of new water mains, pavement overlay and miscellaneous striping on New York Ranch Road in the City of Jackson and were completed by Campbell Construction General Engineering of Sutter Creek. The project began in early 2017 and was completed in October 2019. The \$1.8 million project was fully funded by the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians. The Jackson City Council expressed sincere appreciation to the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians.

“Over the years, the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians has made a variety of generous contributions to the city,” said **Yvonne Kimball**, City of Jackson City Manager. “To name a few: installing an industrial backup generator at City Hall and Police Department; providing for eight police vehicles; rehabilitating Detert Park, including swimming pool, tennis court, playground repairs and other facilities in the park. The City of Jackson, its residents, businesses, visitors and Amador County will benefit daily from these projects for years to come. The City of Jackson is grateful to the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indian’s generous contributions.”

“Members of the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians are proud to have funded this very important project,” said Crystal Jack, Chief Executive Officer of Jackson Rancheria. “The Tribe is intent on assisting repair, upgrading, and restoring the communities of Amador County. This project speaks to the generosity of Adam Dalton, Chairman of the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians and the Tribe.” “Our Tribe is happy to have partnered with the City of Jackson on this project,” said Adam Dalton. “Projects such as these are funded directly from the pockets of our Tribe as a gift to the community. We are not required to make such investments, but do so because we know that it’s the right thing to do. The Tribe feels blessed to be in the position to help improve the lives of the people of Amador County and we take great pride in contributing to our community. We celebrate the partnership with the City of Jackson, a strong relationship that hopefully will continue for many future generations.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/news/the-homeless-crisis-city-of-jackson-learning-to-cope-with-new-realities/article_e3b1a24e-d59a-11e9-bfae-13b728add8f6.html

October 3, 2019

Jackson learning to cope with new realities

Author: David McNaughtan

Part 3 in a series on the homeless crisis in the region

The City of Jackson isn't ruling out much in its search for a resolution to the local homeless issue, including safe parking and low-barrier shelters. While no location has been formally chosen, nor any decision made, city officials are diligently pursuing funding and information while clean up and outreach efforts remain ongoing. Two locations up for consideration for low-barrier shelters and safe parking are the Oro de Amador property, owned by the City of Jackson, and the Wicklow Way area, owned by Amador County. The low-barrier shelters would only be temporary mitigations for the homeless population in and around Jackson.

"We are looking at all options," said Jackson City Manager **Yvonne Kimball**. "I don't think there's going to be a single solution; one thing can't address it all." **Kimball** went on to state that the Public Works Department and Jackson City Police Department have been heavily impacted by the overall homelessness issue, citing longer hours for cleanup and a heavy volume of calls for service. The City of Jackson has even started using a separate code for homeless-related expenditures to track the fiscal impact of the additional workload.

"There's never going to be a solution to homelessness," said Jackson City Mayor Bob Stimpson. Stimpson continued, stating homelessness can't be solved, but it can be mitigated. The issue is too far reaching and complex to be completely eliminated. As a result of the limitations imposed by California, the options are limited for Jackson and Martell – the heaviest impacted areas – in terms of immediate relief.

The low-barrier shelters and overnight parking areas would provide a safe space to send homeless, instead of parks and other public areas. Stimpson stated there would have to be additional patrols for the shelters and rules regarding drugs and alcohol. Additionally, funding through available grants would be key to any potential solution, since the city's budget doesn't have much room to address the problem. "It's going to take everyone working together," Stimpson said. "It's not just a Jackson problem."

The Jackson Police Department reportedly responds to two to three homeless-related calls per day. On average, the department responds to 15 homeless-related calls per week. Those calls took up approximately 8.5 percent of the department's total call volume from January 1 to June 30. For a department of Jackson's size, this equates to a much heavier workload for officers on duty. "We're contacting (the homeless) on a daily basis," said Jackson Police Chief Christopher Mynderup. "It's rough because California is tying our hands on what we can do. If there's no room in the shelters, we can't remove them from public spaces. Society as a whole has to come

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

together to find a solution. They are people and they have rights.” While there are no current plans to expand the police department due to budgetary constraints, the city may seek funding in the future to accommodate additional staff. However, where that funding may come from is not yet known and grant money will likely be key in any expansion efforts for the department.

As far as how many homeless are in the city at any given time, some estimates place the number at a mere 20 to 30. Stimpson believes that number is low given the number of camps that have been discovered and the constant sightings. However, due to difficulties in obtaining an accurate count for a variety of reasons, the full scope of the issue is difficult to pin point. Information collected by JPD supports the Amador County Homeless Task Force finding that many of the homeless are from the county. Mynderup stated that, due to the size of the community, officers are able to talk to the homeless and gather more information about where they are from. “No one is bussing people here,” said Mynderup. “Because this is a small community, we would know if they were.”

The ACHTF meets the fourth Thursday of each month at the Amador County Health and Human Services building, 10877 Conductor Blvd. Sutter Creek, at 3 p.m. The next meeting will be held on September 26, covering No Place Like Home funding.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/news/abandoned-property-is-a-longtime-headache-for-neighbors/article_fd9e8a52-5a2d-11e9-ad8d-5f6db104d0bc.html
April 15, 2019

Abandoned Property is a Longtime Headache for Neighbors
Author: Jack Mitchell

John Kern is a patient man, but his patience is wearing thin. For eleven years he's dealt with the house next door. The past three years, an abandoned, boarded up house — which would be fine, except the backyard has become an illegal dumping ground by the previous owners, homeless, vagrants and disrespectful citizens. They say a picture is worth 1,000 words, but no picture or video can really capture the image of the illegal dumping site. Even more amazing is the fact it is located on Main Street, Jackson. Nestled back up on the hill across from the closed Gold Pan Saloon & Grill (Bonanza Steak House Bar & Grill, at one time) few may have even noticed the boarded up house at 842 North Main. From the looks of the boarded up front of the house, it doesn't look too bad, just a boarded up vacant home — but then there's the backyard. "It's been a problem for over a decade," said Kern. "But the last three years things have gone from bad to worse, and I am tired of not getting anywhere with the City of Jackson to fix the problem. Folks are using it as an illegal dump site, driving by in the middle of the night and throwing items in the yard. Homeless have found the site from time to time. There's rats, a nasty odor. I could go on and on, and actually have at city council meetings but nothing is ever done about the issue." Standing with Kern looking over the backyard, it's easy to see why he is upset. One is immediately reminded of Mount Crumpit, a steep high mountain just north of the town of Whoville, where the Grinch lives. Mountains of trash of every type, size, and shape. Furniture, appliances, boxes and boards. Trash and more trash. Is that a dress? The Grinch himself would be impressed with this crazy, Main Street, Jackson mess. But this isn't a lighthearted, whimsical book. It's real, and it's a problem.

The Amador County Assessor's Office lists the home owners as Jessie, James and Melinda Hendrickson. Jessie and Melinda are known to have passed away, which means there could be issues regarding ownership of the property and legal rights. Additionally, property taxes have been in default since 2014, for a total of \$8,418.91. All the notices that have been mailed have been returned. The owners have until June 30 to institute a payment plan for redemption. If that does not occur, Amador County will file the Power of Sale. That will give the homeowners until March of 2020, the right of redemption. If that does not occur, new owners will purchase 842 Main Street, Jackson.

As for the City of Jackson, the home has been the perfect storm. "I understand that the Hendrickson family went through some tough times with serious health issues and even an unexpected death in the family," said **Yvonne Kimball**, Jackson City Manager. "The City of Jackson chose to show compassion and decided to continuously work with the family. Small progresses have been made over the years. Yet it is unfortunate that the property is in today's condition. This is a unique case because of its extenuating circumstances. The City is looking into all options to resolve the issue as quickly as possible." The property does have a colorful

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

history of activities at the location requiring law enforcement to step in from time to time. The need for code enforcement actions came about in 2016 when law enforcement agencies had a drug raid at the property. Following that, the City of Jackson was able to legally enter the premises and board up the house as it was found to be uninhabitable due to years of neglect. The City of Jackson then followed procedure issuing a Nuisance and Abatement Health & Safety Order which aimed to take care of the situation.

“We issued a Nuisance and Abatement Health & Safety order following the drug raid in 2016, which aimed to take care of the situation of the house and property. There were four abandoned cars, an RV, and a flatbed trailer in the yard that the City removed at that time,” said City of Jackson Building Inspector, Michael Hooper. “In December of 2017 some of the owner’s children, Jessie’s grandchildren, began cleaning the yard. That stopped in January of 2018. This, in a way, put the Nuisance & Abatement order on hold, or stopped the clock for any other action to be taken for a bit. The City of Jackson has been making an effort to work with the Hendrickson family to clean up the property, as we would with any property and property owner. We care about the rights of our citizenry and their property rights. We try to find a way to work with people, avoid legal action, and find resolutions. The City has continued, and will continue, to monitor the property, keeping the house secure from trespassers,” said Hooper. “Currently, with the environmental clean-up required, the added expense it would cost the City of Jackson, and in light of tax issues — we know we will see a resolution to the issue when the Power of Sale is issued. We certainly empathize with Mr. Kern and the neighbors, but the solution is coming — though not as quickly as I am sure was hoped for.”

As for Kern that Power of Sale can’t come quick enough. “I think it is a health hazard,” said Kern. “I am surprised at how long this process has been. I also am shocked the City of Jackson has not stepped in or attempted to clean this property. I’ve been patient, and will continue to do so. However, the public needs to be aware — I mean, if it can happen right off Main Street in your own small town — it could happen anywhere. My property value has been affected. While all the government agencies say they have done, or are doing their job and are giving us their word that they will fix the issue, take a look. A long look. Their word on this problem belongs in this yard with all the other garbage.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/news/local_news/city-of-jackson-talks-tourism-budget/article_02284e6a-5190-11e9-a56b-333587936387.html
March 30, 2019

City of Jackson Talks Tourism, Budget

Author: Craig Baracco

The Jackson City Council talked tourism and promotional events, and reviewed the city's budget, at their meeting Monday night.

The council reviewed a report on publicity efforts by its consultant, Lucy Hackett, which includes coordinating and promoting public events in the city, social media outreach and commissioning a video tour of the city. The council also approved two new expenditures for tourism promotion: \$2,150 to the "Days of 49" Wagon Train Parade at the end of April for both general event sponsorship and to commission a City of Jackson wagon, as well as just under \$3,000 to the Amador Council of Tourism to pay for Jackson's part in ACT's advertising and promotion efforts. The council had also approved the "Days of 49" parade permit earlier in the evening under the consent agenda.

The council also reviewed the city's budget. With two thirds of the fiscal year gone, the city's expenses and revenue are generally where they are projected to be in the city's budget, with a large expenditure on the repair of New York Ranch Road that had yet to be reimbursed as the only notable exception. While the road repairs are currently showing as over a million dollars in deficit, city staff expects the city to be fully reimbursed on the project. City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** struck a tone of cautious optimism on the state of the city's finances in both her written and verbal report on the budget.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/news/local_news/city-of-jackson-receives-energy-efficiency-award/article_ccc8474c-9f08-11e7-9aa0-0f1148b9bd22.html
September 23, 2017

City of Jackson Receives Energy Efficiency Award

Author: unknown

On September 14, 2017, Jackson City Mayor Connie Gonsalves and City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** attended the Beacon Spotlight Award reception in Sacramento. The City of Jackson received four Beacon Spot Awards for its effort to save energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt sustainability practices.

The Beacon program is sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and the State Energy Efficiency Collaborative. Under City Council's direction, the City of Jackson took part in the Statewide program. The City installed LED lights in city hall, the police station and the civic center. The City also participated in a regional Energy Action Work plan. City staff members Michael Hooper, Susan Peters and former City Manager Mike Daly were instrumental in those projects which earned the City four Beacon Spotlight Awards.

A total of 128 cities and counties statewide competed for the awards. The City of Jackson received a total of four awards. The City of Plymouth received two awards in the categories of the "Community Greenhouse Gas Reductions" and the "Agency Greenhouse Gas Reductions." Jackson and Plymouth were the only municipalities in Amador County that won the Beacon awards.

"The City of Jackson is proud to be a leader in our region in addressing the global issue of climate change. I thank the council and staff for a job well done," Mayor Gonsalves spoke of the awards after the ceremony.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://www.ledger.news/news/new-city-manager-for-jackson/article_ae056370-8e83-11e7-b37f-d3df32290af4.html

September 2, 2017

New City Manager for Jackson

Author: Craig Baracco

The Jackson City Council welcomed a new city manager on Monday night, and approved funding for a number of community organizations. New Jackson City Manager **Yvonne Kimball** was sworn in at the beginning of Monday night's meeting, followed by a reception to allow city resident to meet the city's new head official. **Kimball** was previously the town manager for Dewey-Humboldt, Arizona.

When the council returned to business, they voted to award Measure E transient occupancy tax money to three organizations that promote or encourage visits to the city. \$28,000 was awarded to the Chamber of Commerce and \$5,000 each was given to the Amador Tourism Council and Main Street Theater Works. In separate items, the council voted to award \$5,000 to the Kennedy Mine for help in cleaning up after the recent fire and \$5,000 to the Amador County Recreation Agency to support ACRA's after-school program at the HUB on Main Street.

The council overcame the objection of a store owner to approve an event permit for the inaugural Historic Downtown Criterium, a bike race that will run through the city's historic streets on September 9. The store owner objected to traffic restrictions on Main Street on Saturday, but citing the need to hold more events to attract visitors to the city, the council voted unanimously to approve the permit.

The council held a second and final reading of an ordinance that bans commercial marijuana shops from the city, and voted to approve a new fee for business licenses in the city. It will now cost \$30 to apply for a new business in Jackson, and cost \$15 dollars a year to renew a license. The new fee is expected to raise \$9,000 per year for the city.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.dcourier.com/news/2017/jun/29/dewey-residents-get-evacuation-warnings/>
June 29, 2017

Dewey residents get evacuation warnings
Folks prepare to flee Goodwin Fire just in case
Author: Sue Tone

Wind chimes clanged with a desolate echo in the hills of Dewey-Humboldt Wednesday afternoon as pieces of ash drifted from the smoky sky. Residents on the east side of Highway 69 watched from their porches or hillcrests along Foothills Drive as slurry bombers flew past one after the other, dropping their loads in the Blue Hills west of town. About noon on Wednesday, residents in the upper Blue Hills area west of Highway 69 received mandatory evacuation orders. Pre-evacuation notices went out for all residents of Dewey-Humboldt late Tuesday evening, including as far south as Prescott Golf and Country Club. Those east of Highway 69 remained on pre-evac status throughout the day.

“We want to stay calm, but we want to be prepared,” said Dewey-Humboldt Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, soon after she posted notices canceling the special council meeting set for Wednesday evening.

Resident Mark Sinclair was checking his mail at the Humboldt Post Office, the back seat of his car loaded with photo albums and heirloom items. “I have sprinklers set up on my roof ready to turn on if I have to evacuate. I have been out trimming trees all day, and I have three cars packed and ready to go,” he said. People approached Sgt. Jason Tarr, Department of Public Safety, with questions about evacuation notices and his thoughts on the Goodwin Fire. “Yesterday we were concerned about the fire jumping across Highway 69 and running all the way to Cottonwood. Today, the focus is there,” he said, pointing southwest from Town Hall. Asked about the chances of the eastside needing to evacuate, Tarr said he thought chances were about 50/50. Even though they live off Foothills Drive on the eastside, Sandra and Earl Goodwin are staying home until notified otherwise. They transported their two horses to a friend’s property north of Prescott Valley earlier in the day, and then tried to help those with horses in the Blue Hills, but were not allowed in. “We’ve got boxes of stuff loaded or ready to load here. Unless the fire crosses 69, I don’t anticipate needing to evacuate,” Earl Goodwin said. He said there are only two roads leading in and out of the Blue Hills, and thought it smart to get residents out so firefighters and vehicles could move quickly and safely into the area.

Orme School, located between Mayer and I-17 south of Highway 169, has no students on campus, but they are conducting a summer camp, said Jessica Calmes, director of admissions. “We will evacuate to Camp Verde Middle School if it comes to that, but we are hoping it doesn’t. The fire is still a ways away from us,” Calmes said, expressing her gratitude to the men and women fighting the fire. The Dewey-Humboldt Historical Museum remained closed today, said Director John Young, “for obvious reasons.” He, too, lives on the eastside, and is not feeling frantic. “I’m a realist. I don’t get that excited about anything. I mean, what are we going to do?” he said. Evacuation will just be “one of those things.” A tile roof, cement around the house,

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball*****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)***

gravel in parts of the yard, and a “sensible perimeter” keeps Sue Nystrom feeling calmer than most. She has everything packed and ready to go. She can put the cats and dogs into a camper along with emergency supplies, clothing and valuables and drive the half mile out to the highway. She and her husband will head out Highway 89 down to Phoenix to family if they need to get out of town.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.dcourier.com/news/2017/apr/26/dh-council-votes-extend-town-hall-lease/>
April 26, 2017

DH Council votes to extend town hall lease
The first of two one-year extensions

Author: Jason Wheeler

Though there was a motion on the table to go into executive session to discuss extending the current lease on Dewey-Humboldt's town hall at the town council meeting on Tuesday, April 18, Councilmember Jack Hamilton said he didn't believe there was a need to go into executive session. "I think this is pretty well open and done and just address it," he said. "It's something we need to do, I don't see why we need to do an executive session on it."

After Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said she wanted the council to make sure they know all the options available to them, the council voted against an executive session and Councilmember Mark McBrady recused himself from the discussion as he owns the property.

The council really didn't have much of an option at the present moment, Hamilton said, stating his belief that the council should approve a one-year extension for a lease of the town hall. The rental amount for the property is \$4,418 per month along with local sales tax for rental of commercial property.

With the council just learning to gel and work together with the new councilmembers there's not enough consensus on the council to figure out whether the town should buy the building or continue to rent it, said Councilmember Doug Treadway. Further, if the council decides to build it would only have eight months to figure out what the body wants and to come up with the finances. "Taking that into consideration, I think the best thing to do is extend the lease," he said.

Another option would be to negotiate with the leaser to purchase the property said Mayor Terry Nolan, with Hamilton stating that all that was on the agenda was whether or not to approve an extension.

After this one-year extension, the town has one more one-year extension, **Kimball** said. The council voted unanimously to approve the extension.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
January 28, 2017

Only three D-H residents applied for water grants
Council wants to hand out more money to improve quality
Author: Jason Wheeler

The Dewey-Humboldt Town Council appropriated \$10,000 in its Fiscal Year 2016-17 Budget for a grant program providing individual awards of up to \$100 for property owners to reimburse for water quality improvement measures they have invested in, said Community Planner and Code Officer Steven Brown. “The grant application required the applicants to make a direct connection between measures taken and improvement in water quality,” he said. “There were three applicants who sought out grants.” The first applicant spent \$225.16 to install point of use arsenic filters in a kitchen, three bathrooms, utility sink and refrigerator, the second spent \$2,127 to install an arsenic filtration system to the whole house and the third spent \$549.95 to install an under-sink filter for drinking water, Brown said.

Councilmember Jack Hamilton said he was confused as to why the matter was coming back to the council, noting the money should be awarded until it’s gone. “Run it until the new budget, until the money’s used up,” he said. “We want the people in town to use this money to improve their water system.” Initially, the thought was there would be overwhelming response for the program and more applications than the town had money for, said Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, also reminding the council the grant didn’t have stringent requirements because it was council’s goal to do something to give back to the community.

It hasn’t been taken far enough, said Councilmember Victoria Wendt, stating many residents are still not aware of the grant. “I think we need to make sure it gets plenty of publicity not only through our newsletter, but through our community event boxes so that the town residents are actually aware of it,” she said. “You could have something as simple as a Brita water system attached and be able to apply for the grant. Something that simple, I don’t think the town residents are aware it’s out there.” When the program gets more publicity and it’s found there are more applicants than the town has money for, it should be awarded on a first come, first serve basis, Hamilton said. “If we find out we have more demand out there than what we have, then next year, we’ll put it in the budget to extend it for next year,” he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Yvonne Kimball** is listed below.]

azleague.org

<http://www.azleague.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/270>

Winter 2016

The Men and Women of Arizona's Cities and Towns

Like any business, organization or level of government, it takes many people to make a city or town run successfully. From large cities with several thousand employees to small towns where a handful of people take on multiple tasks, Arizona's cities and towns couldn't run without the people behind the curtain. And it takes all kinds of people to make the show work. There are well-known city employees like librarians, police officers, fire fighters and garbage truck drivers. And there are lesser known, but equally important, positions like plans examiners, streets supervisors, intergovs and public information officers, to name just a few. All of these people, working together, are what make a city's day-to-day operations successful.

Did you know that most of Arizona's cities and towns have a city manager who serves as the chief administrator of the organization or that there are people whose job is to keep drinking water safe? There's also a person who manages elections, responds to public records requests and maintains records of city council meetings, and another who oversees the management of programs that keep children active and healthy. There are city attorneys, recreation coordinators, judges, street workers, economic development specialists, finance and accounting departments, and even gravediggers serving in cities and towns — not to mention the countless volunteers and board and commission members who serve to help better their communities! There are more positions than possible to count, but each person plays an integral role in making his or her city or town work. Arizona is lucky to have professional, hardworking and caring individuals who keep our local governments working effectively and efficiently. These individuals have dedicated their careers and lives to public service. They are passionate about the work they do and are adamant about providing a quality community to the residents who live in their areas. Each person is unique, and every position is important. But it is all of these hardworking and committed individuals who ensure that we are safe, have the resources we need, and enjoy a quality of life only Arizona's cities and towns could provide.

Yvonne Kimball

Town Manager, Town of Dewey-Humboldt

Born and raised in Tianjin, China, **Yvonne Kimball** saw firsthand what life was like without democracy, as she grew up during the latter part of Chairman Mao's dictatorship era. From an early age, she was exposed to the Mao regime's altered version of communism. "There was no democracy. People were — and still are — afraid of speaking the truth," **Kimball** said. When **Kimball** was a teenager, she got her hands on a banned book of great speeches from the Western world. In it was Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. He spoke of "government of the people, by the people, for the people." "I was stunned but deeply inspired by the concept and wanted to become a part of such a noble institution one day," **Kimball** said. In 2003, she

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

immigrated to the United States and enrolled in the University of Central Florida's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. Her graduate studies equipped her with skills and knowledge covering a broad range of topics and disciplines relevant to working in and managing the public sector. She knew she wanted to become a public servant. Because of her international background, **Kimball** initially wanted to work in the federal government and had her sights set on the Department of State. While in graduate school, however, a few internships led her to positions within Florida county governments, and it was there that **Kimball** realized her enjoyment for working with people at the local government level. "Local governments are much closer to the citizens than the federal government," **Kimball** said. "I knew I would have a better chance to make a difference by working for local governments."

In 2008, a few years after graduation from the MPA program, **Kimball** received a city manager job in Florida. As her family had always been drawn to Arizona's beauty, **Kimball** found a position as the town manager of Dewey-Humboldt. Since her appointment in 2011, **Kimball** has now served as the town's longest-tenured manager. As one of Arizona's newest incorporated municipalities, Dewey-Humboldt appointed **Kimball** to continue to build the organization and establish procedures from scratch. Because of the town's youth, **Kimball** spends much of her time moving the town forward, overseeing the day-to-day operations and implementing the Town Council's directives. "On top of that, just like most managers for small towns, I wear many other hats," **Kimball** said. "I am the town's zoning administrator, the human resources director, the chief finance officer, the public information officer and, sometimes, the receptionist!"

In her spare time, **Kimball** whips up home-baked goodies for her young sons. Before coming to the United States, she had never used or even seen an oven. Once she learned its capabilities, she started baking desserts almost every weekend for recreation and still takes satisfaction in her boys enjoying her concoctions. **Kimball** now feels like she is finally home in Arizona. She positively touches the lives of those in her community daily and, in that aspect, finds working for a city the most rewarding job one can find. "In retrospect, I was glad that I embraced the opportunities I had and was able to make the most of them," **Kimball** said. "I am making a difference every day within the community in which I work and live."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott E-news (<http://www.prescottenews.com/>)
October 10, 2016

Bill's Newscast: Time for Flu Shots!
Regulations and flu shots in today's update.
Author: Bill Monroe

The Prescott City Council meets at 1 tomorrow afternoon to discuss regulations for vacation rental properties. According to Interim City Manager Craig McConnell, the current City Land Development Code prohibits rentals of residential units for less than 30 days. Earlier this year, the Arizona State Legislature adopted a new law that prevents cities and towns from prohibiting vacation or short-term rentals in residential zones. As a result, the Prescott City Council will see 3 ordinances regarding these rentals. The first ordinance will mainly revise definitions in the Land Development Code. The second one would be a minor revision to the Building Code that would require inspections of the rental units. The third ordinance would provide operational regulations and performance standards for the rentals. The new State Law goes into effect on January 1st. The Prescott City Council's study session will be held at City Hall on South Cortez Street.

A Nuisance Abatement Ordinance could soon be coming to the Town of Dewey-Humboldt. According to Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, the Town doesn't have a clear mechanism to address nuisances, but State Law authorizes towns and cities to adopt certain procedures. Nuisances include blighted conditions, dilapidated buildings and trash or debris. **Kimball** adds Town Code has provided an adequate means to impose a fine or even jail time, but correcting violations is the responsibility of the property owner. In other words, the Code violation would continue to exist unless the property owner takes steps to fix the problem. The Dewey-Humboldt Town Council will discuss a proposed abatement ordinance during its study session at 2 tomorrow at Town Hall, located on Highway 69.

Three more opportunities to get your flu shot this week. Yavapai County Community Health Services is hosting free flu shot clinics tomorrow at the Congress Fire Department on Santa Fe Road, at the Seligman Library on Floyd Street Thursday and at the Prescott Valley Fire Station on Valley View Drive Friday. Yavapai County Community Health Services spokesman David McAtee explains the flu season is coming earlier this year, and it could be severe. McAtee says getting vaccinated could save the life of someone who can't get the shot. The Congress and Prescott Valley flu clinics run from 10 to 2 while the Seligman Clinic runs from 10 to 1.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
September 26, 2016

Dewey-Humboldt Town Council approves buying old bank/museum building

Author: Sue Tone

The Dewey-Humboldt Town Council, after two years of discussion, approved at its Sept. 20 meeting a resolution to buy the 1918 bank building on Main Street that currently houses the Dewey-Humboldt Historical Museum. The museum has leased the building for about four years from its owners, the Gateway Baptist Church. The town gives the Dewey-Humboldt Historical Society (DHHS) an annual grant to cover the rent totaling \$7,200. The purchase contract sets the price at \$120,000, although in 2014, the sale price was \$175,000.

Council member Dennis Repan said the council could not agree on meeting with the church officials and museum members for possible solutions. Time was of the essence, as he understood a note was coming due for the church, and the council needed to make an offer soon. Vice Mayor Doug Treadway agreed. "I think we'll miss the boat on this if we don't act," said Treadway, mayor pro tem in Terry Nolan's absence. He supported the purchase, saying it would enhance the town's fiscal assets.

The council voted 4-2 for the purchase, with council members Nancy Wright and Jack Hamilton opposing. Wright said the council was in agreement with the purchase of the building, but not with its intended use. Some want the museum to remain, others want the building for the town's courtroom, council chambers, and much-needed office space. The town currently pays council member Mark McBrady to rent space in his commercial property near Highway 69 and Main Street, Humboldt. "We spend \$50,000 a year on rent with nothing to show for it. It is also a problem having the landlord as a council member," Wright said. She would like the museum to stay for the remainder of its lease, then find another space, perhaps renting from McBrady.

Hamilton expressed concerns over the town's future expenses, including liability insurance and future repairs. He said nobody wants to kick out the museum, but according to the town survey six months ago, only 28 percent backed using tax dollars to support the DHHS. "The only way we can tell what the community wants is to put it on a referendum," Hamilton said. He filed a referendum the day after the council meeting and has collected 45 signatures as of Sept. 25.

Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said the town is in good shape financially, and the purchase money will come out of the general fund cost overrun. "Unlike how many other cities would approach a real estate purchase, I do not foresee Dewey-Humboldt would need to borrow for this purchase," she said. The town has 30 days for the resolution to take effect. Staff will set up surveys, inspections and title reports in the interim, **Kimball** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
August 3, 2016

Dewey-Humboldt Council passes its budget
Positive forecast for next fiscal year
Author: Jason Wheeler

After months of work and preparation, the Town of Dewey-Humboldt passed its budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017. Totaling \$4,182,302 for all expenditures and funds, the budget passed with no public comment and all councilmembers voting for it. The financial forecast for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 is positive wrote Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** at the beginning of the budget packet, also noting the three funds Dewey-Humboldt has: the General Fund, the Highway User Revenues Fund (HURF) and the Grant Fund. General Fund revenues increased by 4.6 percent from the last fiscal year and are \$1.68 million and HURF revenues are \$343,843 including a transfer from the General Fund to fund additional road projects over the year, **Kimball** wrote.

“We also expect about \$300,000 community development block grant money and \$60,000 from Yavapai County Flood Control in FY 16-17. These two funding sources are planned to complement HURF and be used towards roads and drainage,” **Kimball** wrote, stating that public safety, supporting public health and welfare programs and road maintenance are priorities. “We are planning to utilize some HURF fund balance to pay for additional road maintenance projects.”

Included within that \$4,182,302 is \$406,804 for public safety, \$287,625 for community development, \$84,224 for public works engineering and \$645,061 for public works maintenance. The Town of Dewey-Humboldt’s financial status is solvent, **Kimball** wrote, noting that with sufficient contingency and reserve funds, there is \$2.79 million in the unassigned fund balance. Further, the Town is debt free, she wrote.

However, while the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 is \$4,182,302, that’s misleading, said Councilmember Jack Hamilton. “That’s what we can spend. We’re only spending somewhere like \$2 million or something,” Hamilton said. I wish it would really reflect what we’re actually spending than what it could be because a lot of people that are familiar with our budget, they look at that \$4 million and say ‘you’re spending a lot, what are we getting for it?’”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott E-news (<http://www.prescottenews.com/>)
May 23, 2016

Bill's Newscast: Raises for Dewey-Humboldt Employees?

Author: Bill Monroe

The Dewey-Humboldt Town Council will hold a special meeting at 9 tomorrow morning to discuss employee compensation and health benefits

It has been proposed Town of Dewey-Humboldt employees receive a 4 percent raise, which includes Cost of Living adjustment and merit increases. It has also been proposed a 6 thousand dollar deductible health plan be offered. However, Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** has found the 26 hundred dollar deductible health plan, which has been available since at least 2010, offers the best value to employees. **Kimball** is suggesting the Town implement a 3 percent raise and continue other benefits at a cost of more than 757 thousand dollars. The special Council meeting will be held at Town Hall on Highway 69.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
June 24, 2015

Roads still a focus for Dewey-Humboldt council
Town manager explains FY2016 tentative budget
Author: Sue Tone

Dewey-Humboldt town council approved its 2015-2016 fiscal year tentative budget of \$3.98 million earlier this month, and has set a public hearing on the matter for July 7. Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said the state imposes an annual expenditure limitation on each municipality; for Dewey-Humboldt, the limitation is \$4,228,381. The town is not permitted to exceed that amount. **Kimball** recently explained that considerable discussion has gone into council's decisions to allocate its resources to protect the community's safety, enhance citizens' quality of life, and maintain and develop the town's infrastructure. The town does not impose property taxes; most of its revenues come from income tax, sales tax, state shared revenues, permits, investment interests and fines. **Kimball** said the town has seen a slowly increasing revenue stream as the economy recovers, and she expects about a 7 percent increase in general fund revenues. Those revenues pay for public safety, public works (facilities and roads maintenance), community development (building, zoning and code enforcement), municipal court, and all administration functions. One of the largest town expenditure is with the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office at \$381,884, which pays policing and animal control services. Council increased its legal allocation from \$36,000 to \$46,000.

Roads and maintenance

The town continues its focus on roads - maintaining its 38 miles of paved roads and 10 miles of unpaved roads. The Highway Users Revenue Fund and reimbursement funding by Yavapai County Flood Control District pay for all road maintenance. In addition to continuing the 6-year paved road maintenance plan, the town will also implement a 5-year unpaved road maintenance plan in the coming fiscal year. Currently, the town grades unpaved roads twice a year. **Kimball** said this will continue, with about one mile receiving a higher level of service each year, such as applying some road base materials. "Both paved and unpaved road plans are designed to maintain town roads in a systematic and cost-effective manner," she said. Following the 2015 New Year snowstorm, the town purchased a snowplow and developed a snow removal plan to better prepare for future snowstorms.

CDBG money

The town expects to receive a Community Development Block Grant of \$260,000, used only for specific projects to improve neighborhoods that meet income eligibility requirement. In FY2016, the CDBG money will pay for improved drainage in Blue Hill Farms #3 area (the area behind the Dewey Texaco gas station) and maybe a sidewalk on Huron Street near Humboldt Elementary School, **Kimball** said.

Survey, museum, water tests

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

About \$15,000 is allocated for neighborhood outreach efforts. This will pay for a community-wide citizen survey to gauge residents' satisfaction of town services. Council is helping with the survey design and hopes to implement it in late 2015 or early 2016. Council members also decided to continue their financial support to the Dewey-Humboldt Historical Society for its museum. Since July 2012, the town paid the museum's full rent at \$600 a month; beginning July 1, council voted to reduce this to \$480 a month. Council also allocated \$10,000 to consider a private well-testing kit program for residents in response to the area's environmental challenges.

Public works, building services

This past fiscal year, the town brought back its in-house building safety services from Yavapai County. All town departments and its ten employees have been involved in, and affected, by the transition, **Kimball** said. Service expansion and some organizational restructuring resulted in adding one additional employee to the budget. Council also added additional seasonal help to the public works department budget due to the focus on road maintenance. The operating revenues in the general fund pay for all personnel costs.

Tax collection fees

The state continues to pass on expenditure mandates to the municipalities, **Kimball** said. "Beginning in fiscal year 2016, Dewey-Humboldt needs to pay the Arizona Department of Revenues approximately \$8,500 in order for ADOT to continue collecting the Transaction Privilege Taxes on behalf of the town," she said, adding that the majority of Arizona municipalities are in the same boat. This coming year, all of those who use ADOT to collect TPT are subject to a fee.

Possible property purchases

Council has indicated its desire to continue considering real property purchase should the right choices come up. "As many may know, in 2015, council accepted a property donation on Main Street. The Peters family donated their property located at 12938 East Main Street for general governmental uses," **Kimball** said. The property is currently vacant. Any purchase of real estate property will come out of the fund balance.

Budget reserves

The budget allocates \$210,350 to the contingency account, which is part of the general fund expenditure. In addition, based on the town's financial management policy, \$744,182 is allocated to the overall reserve to ensure the town has enough fund in the case of an emergency or unexpected events. With the total expenditure of \$3,978,062 and the reserve being set aside, the town sees an unassigned fund balance of \$1.8 million. "Unlike other governmental agencies, the Town of Dewey-Humboldt does not have any debt," **Kimball** said.

Adoption of the annual budget is the most important policy action the council takes each year. Once adopted, the budget sets the direction of all town programs and services for the coming year. A public hearing on the budget will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 7, during the council meeting in Town Hall, located at 2735 South Highway 69 in the Humboldt Station.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott E-news (<http://www.prescottenews.com/>)
February 2, 2015

Bill's Newscast: Budgets, bicycles and broken taillights

Author: Bill Monroe

It's budget season in Dewey-Humboldt. Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** has stated she sees a slight overall revenue increase in the coming fiscal year. Income and state shared sales taxes are likely to see an increase as well, possibly as much as 5 percent. **Kimball** is optimistic about permit fees, but there are unforeseen variables in the building in-house safety operation. She may take an ultra-conservative approach in estimating permit fee revenues for Fiscal Year 2016. **Kimball** also points out the Town Hall lease expires in December. That lease costs nearly 46 thousand dollars a year. A new budget must be in place by July 1st. Town Council will review the budget calendar and process during its voting session at 6:30 tonight. The meeting will be held in Council chambers on Highway 69.

Bicycle issues will be back before the Prescott City Council. Two weeks ago, Council had approved support of a new bicycle route through Arizona and Prescott. Traffic Engineer Ian Mattingly says this project is in the preliminary stages. Councilman Greg Lazzell has voted against that support. Councilwoman Jean Wilcox has suggested bicycle safety enhancements along the route be discussed. Bicycle advocate Jim Knaup explains he's glad these discussions are taking place. State Route 79 would go through Prescott on Willow Creek Road, Whipple and Montezuma Streets and White Spar Road. Council will discuss bicycle facilities during a workshop at 3 this afternoon. The meeting will be held in Council chambers on South Cortez Street.

A broken tail light has resulted in the arrest of a Clarkdale woman on alleged charges. Sergeant Tod Moore explains a Cottonwood Police officer had made a traffic stop on a vehicle on Willard Street. The vehicle had been towed from the scene and the 56 year old Osborn had been cited for driving on a suspended license. The officer had offered to give her a ride home due to the cold and rainy conditions last Friday night. Moore says Osborn had drugs on her. Moore adds more drugs had been located at the Camp Verde jail. Moore says Osborn is facing numerous alleged charges.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
January 7, 2015

Dewey-Humboldt to reach grant, code decisions as it shifts into 2015

Author: Sue Tone

Dewey-Humboldt Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** updates readers with an assessment of what's ahead in 2015 for Dewey-Humboldt. The town is considering projects on which to spend about \$266,000 in Community Development Block Grant money to benefit the community. The council will conduct a public hearing on potential projects at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan.

20. CDBG funds can be spent on projects that will benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevent or eliminate slums or blight, or address community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community for which other funding is not available. The town will look at four proposals:

1. Kachina Place Sidewalk Improvement for about \$99,300. The sidewalk along Kachina Place from highway 69 to Horseshoe Lane will create a safe area for residents to walk.
2. Huron Street Sidewalk extension for about \$78,600. The extension near Humboldt Elementary School will serve as a safe path to school.
3. Blue Hills Farm #3 Road and Drainage Improvements for about \$175,600. This project will rebuild roads and drainage in an older neighborhood of Dewey.
4. Housing Rehabilitation Program for the entire grant, \$266,693. This will pay for housing rehab for about 12 owner-occupied housing units whose owners are low-income senior citizens. The project can be combined with any of 1-3 above.

Looking ahead to other plans for 2015, the town will continue the in-house operation of building inspection and permitting it began in July when it brought back the operation from Yavapai County with which it was using contract services. **Kimball** reports that, thanks to the talented staff and council support, everything has been running smoothly. Town staff also is preparing the path for adoption of the 2012 International Code Council code series it began looking at in 2014. A combined effort between the council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, town staff and the community will continue in the following months regarding land use related codes, both the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance and the review and possible revisions of the town code sections related to animals.

And lastly, **Kimball** reports that the federal Superfund project continues its slow progress toward resolution. "I hope that the Environmental Protection Agency will be able to bring some closure to this project which has been impacting the community since 2008," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Icma.org (Leaders at the Core of Better Communities)
December 2014

What's One Thing Your Job Doesn't Allow You to Do That You Wish You Could Do?

Yvonne Kimball, ICMA-CM
Town Manager
Dewey-Humboldt, Arizona
yvonnekimball@dhaz.gov

Being a city/town/county manager demands time and mental capacity. I find my devotion to my job constantly competes with my desire to spend quality time with family, especially my children. I wish I could help my school-aged children with their homework every day after work.

But very rarely am I able to do so. On those days I do happen to leave the office on time, once I arrive home, I often find myself either still having numerous things to process for the next day or having already reached my limit for any creative thinking or productive discipline. As a result, I completely rely on my supportive husband to fill the void.

Competing needs of my career and family seem to create a Catch-22 situation. Because of the demands of my job, I feel that I have to neglect my family from time to time. Yet, they provide motivation for me to become a better manager.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
November 5, 2014

Council, P&Z to review accessory dwelling code

Author: Sue Tone

In preparation for a joint meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Dewey-Humboldt Town Council looked at proposed changes in its Accessory Dwelling Units code at the Oct. 21 council meeting, spending about a half hour in discussion and listening to public comments. The council tasked P&Z commissioners in April 2012 with reviewing and simplifying the town codes regarding medical dwellings, guest houses and accessory units. After several meetings and public hearings, a proposed document came back for council review and discussion. Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said proposed changes in zoning of accessory dwelling units in various zoning districts has not raised many objections. In three zones - residential and services (RS), commercial 1 and 2 (C1, C2), and residential camping district (RCD) - the P&Z Commission recommends not allowing accessory dwelling units. In the remainder of the zoning districts, the proposed ordinance remains the same (allowed or allowed with the same stipulations). The current code makes no mention of Secondary Medical Dwelling units. It does allow mobile homes in R1 (residential, single family), RMM (residential, multi-sectional, manufactured homes), and RS, but not in R1-L (residential, single family limited). The proposed code allows SMD in the zoning districts where mobile homes currently are allowed.

The current code allows for roomers, boarders and paying relatives or guests (not to exceed two for any one dwelling unit). P&Z disallowed roomers and boarders in its proposal because of concerns about the rural and single family character in R1 zoning. "Staff have heard much input from the community that the 'roomer and boarder' regulation should stay the same," **Kimball** stated in her documentation to council. She believes this is reasonable because of older residents who own large properties. Rental issues, such as sales tax and licensing requirements, are complex issues the council may need to determine later. In the current code, bathrooms are required in accessory dwelling units if guest houses are detached from the main structure; kitchen facilities are optional. P&Z's proposed requirement of both received objections from the public; staff recommends kitchens remain optional.

ADUs in the current code can be detached or attached to the principal structure. The proposed ordinance, while it does not prohibit attached room additions, does specify that an ADU must be detached. The definition of ADU currently reads that it is not to exceed 750 sq. ft. in size or 25 percent of the total square footage of the primary structure, whichever is greater. The only change in the proposed ordinance is to move the same language from the definition to the charging language. Existing guest homes, medical dwellings and accessory structures that may not comply with the proposed ordinance may continue as lawful use. If such use is discontinued on a continuous basis for 12 months, any subsequent use would fall under the proposed requirements once they are approved by council.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Yvonne Kimball

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

P&Z commissioners and some residents had concerns whether the proposed ordinance would diminish property values. The town attorney advised that would not be the case, nor would the proposed ordinance violate state statutes, particularly Prop. 207. The council met yesterday evening after the Tribune's deadline to set a date for a future meeting with the P&Z Commission. Check the town's website for more information at www.dewey-humboldt.net.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
October 29, 2014

Town on track to repair, pave Old Black Canyon Highway in Dewey-Humboldt

Author: Sue Tone

The fate of Old Black Canyon Highway through Dewey-Humboldt is marching forward with council's approval - and permission from adjacent property owners. Residents will be happy to hear the town has begun a three-year project to properly maintain and pave the 1.2-mile stretch of roadway. The council voted 5-0 at its Oct. 21 town council meeting, with Vice Mayor Arlene Alen and council member Nancy Wright absent, to direct town staff to send letters to property owners along OBCH from Prescott Street to Highway 169 asking their permission to be access the rights-of-way in order to restore the road to the same - or better - standard for town roads.

Council has struggled with this stretch of road for at least five years, with ownership of rights-of-way a lingering crucial legal point. If the town does not hold the right-of-way, that particular segment is considered private property. This calls into question whether the town can use public money to benefit private property. However, if Yavapai County maintained the road prior to incorporation when Dewey-Humboldt took over, the town could be held liable if it ceased maintenance altogether.

Council member Jack Hamilton promoted the fixing-up of Old Black Canyon Highway during his campaign. He is one of the property owners living on the road, and its repair, or lack of, has been a concern for him. At this past Tuesday's meeting, Town Attorney Susan Goodwin reiterated that an engineer's survey is the only way to determine the legal boundaries of the roadway. Hamilton said he has several maps dating to 1888 that prove the road has been there for a long time. He brought up federal statute RS 2477 enacted in 1866 that reads, "...the right-of-way for the construction of highways across public lands, not reserved for public purposes, is hereby granted." Although repealed in 1976, no existing roads could be closed.

Goodwin agrees with Hamilton that OBCH is an RS 2477 road and that it has existed for many years. "We just don't know where the road is," she said. "It is a road, but you can't establish where it is." In an August 2012 legal opinion, Goodwin's firm recommended the town conduct a survey to determine legal descriptions of all properties along the roadway, after which the town could acquire those that do not already belong to the town. "Although this approach would pose minimum risk, I, as the town manager, do not believe that the cost and time involved in this solution is practical," Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** wrote in her memo to council. In 2013, the town obtained an estimate for engineering services for \$67,670; acquiring clean titles for rights-of-way would involve additional prohibitive legal and consultant fees, she said. "You need an engineer to do that. We are lawyers; we can't tell you where the road is," Goodwin repeated. "Your first goal should be to do that."

Town staff has been "pot-holing" and mowing along OBCH several times a year, as a temporary measure directed by council. Now, however, the roadway has deteriorated to such a degree that

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

pot-holing is no longer efficient or effective, **Kimball** said. In addition to the cost of materials, it is a daylong project for the three employees in the Public Works Department. To properly maintain the road, the town needs to work on drainage issues and install a culvert as preparation for chip sealing. **Kimball** estimates the cost over three years to be \$99,329.

Since the town has been filling potholes, it cannot quit, as that would result in health and safety issues for the roughly 500 cars that traverse the road daily. "To the extent you are maintaining it now, you must maintain it in a non-negligent manner," Goodwin said. The significant health and safety problems on OBCH that has been used and treated as a public road would probably stand up in court if anyone were to question using public money to benefit private property owners. "I think most of them will go along," Hamilton said. "It removes their liability, plus it makes us (town) maintain it better than we are now.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott E-news (<http://www.prescottenews.com/>)
June 24, 2014

Towns and Cities are finalizing their budgets

After months of discussions, the Dewey-Humboldt Town Council is expected to put the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget in place. According to Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball**, the budget totals just under 4 million dollars, which is lower than the current budget amount. Council has held 5, 3 hour long discussion sessions and final changes have been made following a meeting 1 week ago. With adoption at tonight's Council meeting at 6:30, the budget would go into effect on July 1st. Also during the voting session, Council will consider 2 agreements with Yavapai County. The first one involves elections service while the second deals with emergency management. The meeting will be held in Council chambers on Highway 89.

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
April 9, 2014

Yvonne Kimball earns international town manager credential

Dewey-Humboldt Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** earned an international credentialed manager designation as one of the best town managers in Arizona - one of only 27 active town managers to receive the title through the International City/County Management Association. Josh Wright, town manager of Wickenburg and ACMA president-elect, appeared at the April 1 D-H Town Council meeting to announce **Kimball's** achievement. Wright said it takes a real sense of investing in one's career to go through the process to become a credentialed manager.

Kimball, D-H town manager since 2012, has seven years of professional local government executive experience and a Master's degree in Public Administration. To receive the prestigious ICMA credential, a member must have significant experience as a senior management executive in local government; have earned a degree, preferably in public administration or a related field; and demonstrated a commitment to high standards of integrity and to lifelong learning and professional development. "**Yvonne** has gained a tremendous level of respect," Wright told the council members. "This is a lifelong commitment." Only 40 city or town managers in Arizona hold this credential; only 27 are still active in the profession, Wright added.

In addition to qualifications of education and experience - including providing three demonstrations of high standards of integrity - candidates also take an applied knowledge assessment, commit to 40 hours a year continuing education, and provide an annual report. Another reevaluation assessment takes place at five-year intervals. "My understanding of the real purpose is to make you be a better manager all the time through education and communication with your peers," **Kimball** said. "I heard a lot of positive things, like becoming a better manager, and felt it would help me. It really validates the hard work I put in for my chosen career, so I was pleased." ICMA notified **Kimball** of her achievement this past month and will send out her certificate next month.

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
February 12, 2014

Outback Road dilemma occupies Dewey-Humboldt council

Author: Sue Tone

Fourteen residents who drive Outback Road to get to their homes north of State Route 169 near Dewey-Humboldt filled the chairs at the town council meeting this past week to find out what will happen to their road. Council member Dennis Repan brought the issue to the council's attention to consider removing Outback Road from the town's maintained road status. The road extends north from SR 169 through state land, which is inside the Dewey-Humboldt town boundaries, to a small residential area just outside town limits. Repan said no D-H residents reside along the road, and taking it off the maintenance list could be in the town residents' best interest by saving money. Several members of the council stated their opposition to the idea, as did audience members. Mike Gibson has used Outback Road for 25 years to reach his property. "We were not allowed to vote (for/against incorporation) because of that red line," Gibson said, indicating the town boundary. "Dewey-Humboldt took it and didn't ask us. We weren't able to vote and it just took the road." The map shows 19 parcels surrounded on the east and north side by the Town of Prescott Valley to the west by state land within Yavapai County, and to the south by state land within D-H. Before the town incorporated in 2004, Yavapai County maintained the roads by grading them twice a year. Since 2004, the town has provided that service to all public unpaved roads with town limits. The town has been blading Outback Road twice a year with the occasional touch-up after heavy rains, said Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball**. "It's no worse than others, and in some cases better," **Kimball** said about the condition of the road.

Mayor Terry Nolan opposed abandoning the road. He said the people residing just outside the town boundaries had no vote when the incorporation question came on the ballot, and the town now should give the property owners an opportunity to discuss annexation into the town, if they should want that. Council member Jack Hamilton has brought up the road maintenance plan in previous meetings when the council discussed maintenance of Old Black Canyon Highway, of which ownership still is unclear. Hamilton said the council decided it could not add or delete roads from the maintenance plan. "We are also supposed to minimize the risk to the town," he said. "We assumed all county roads; we can't abandon it." Hamilton advised that the amount spent on grading the road far outweighs potential liability should the town stop its maintenance and an accident results. He estimates the cost of the 1.5-mile road at \$3,000 per year. Additionally, abandoning the road would create property with no ingress or egress, he said, which is against the law. **Kimball** offered four options: do nothing, look into providing less maintenance, abandon the road, or annex the parcels into D-H. Property owner Gerard Kaur offered a fifth option. "You can relinquish that section back to the county; let it go," he said. Council member Nancy Wright wasn't convinced there was a problem, and wanted to hear from the town's attorney. The council eventually voted 7-0 to have the attorney present at a future meeting to answer questions.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
December 31, 2013

Ethics code approved after 10 meetings of Dewey-Humboldt council

Author: Sue Tone

A 45-minute discussion on a proposed Code of Ethics and Conduct Dec. 17 led to the Dewey-Humboldt town council's 5-2 decision to approve a 9-page ordinance setting forth responsibilities, conduct, compliance and enforcement of council and town official conduct. Councilmember Mark McBrady strongly objected to the Code on several points. He said he thought the proposed ordinance was the strictest in Arizona, calling it "so severe, so restrictive, so subjective, that it will cause problems in the future." He also wanted the council to print the proposed ordinance in its entirety in the newspaper so residents and also councils in neighboring towns and cities would have a chance to comment.

Council member Jack Hamilton pointed out that the public has had an opportunity to provide input. Council first discussed the need for a code of ethics in May, and also on nine more occasions leading up to the council's most recent meeting. Hamilton said, if someone were to break the Code of Ethics, they correct it and it's no longer a problem. "If you refuse to correct it, and say, 'I'm not going to do it,' that's when we have a problem," he said.

Town attorney Susan Goodwin clarified that the Code does not govern violations of the regular town code until a council member is found in violation, at which time the ethics code might come into play. McBrady said the Code of Ethics was brought up by four council members, and said he didn't like the idea that four people could "push this through." Council member Arlene Alen pointed out that the Code is designed to be educational, and that McBrady was present at the prior meetings and didn't speak up at a lot of them, with which McBrady disagreed. "I have spoken at these meetings, but I have not been heard," he said.

Council member Sonya Williams-Rowe said the Code gives council an option to levy a fine. "But the person is given four opportunities to fix the behavior. That is the purpose - to bring it to your attention so you can fix it," she said. A motion to publish the Code in the newspaper for public comment failed 2-5, with McBrady and Mayor Terry Nolan voting affirmatively. Council approved the Code with a 5-2 vote, with McBrady and Nolan voting against.

The Code of Ethics and Conduct can be accessed through the D-H website, www.Dewey-Humboldt.net, Dec. 17 council meeting packet information. The ethics committee could, after finding a town official or council member in violation of the Code, recommend public censure, public sanction, removal from the board or committee, or a fine up to \$500. **Kimball** said it would be up to the town council's interpretation of the Code to decide whether it could find McBrady in violation of the Code. "Council member McBrady's code violation occurred in 2010; the Code of Ethics is adopted through an ordinance in December 2013," she said on Monday. Section A(1) of the Code requires town officials and council to "...comply with all applicable laws, whether local, state or federal..." Town officials cited McBrady in June 2010 after an

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

inspection by the town code enforcement worker, Central Yavapai Fire District and the Yavapai County Inspection Division for not meeting building requirements on the Town Hall. McBrady objected, the case went to court, and Hearing Officer John Edman upheld the violations and issued a \$100 fine in October 2010. McBrady refused to pay the fine and was assessed a \$1,600 penalty.

Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said the fine went to a collection agency in 2011; McBrady paid the agency \$100 toward the balance in March 2013. The Town has not received any payment from the collection agency. McBrady said earlier this year the fine is included in the reorganization plans under his bankruptcy proceedings, which includes the Town Hall buildings.

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.dcourier.com/news/2013/apr/24/mcbrady-signs-document-amid-haggling-over-sanctio/>

The Daily Courier Logo
April 24, 2013

McBrady signs document amid haggling over sanctions

Author: Sue Tone

Efforts to sanction a Dewey-Humboldt council member for failure to sign the town's Code of Conduct led to an argument between the mayor and town attorney on April 16. Mayor Terry Nolan questioned town attorney Phyllis Smiley, with Curtis, Goodwin, Sullivan, Udall & Schwab, PLC, eight times whether she found it proper to discuss council member Mark McBrady's alleged violations of the Code of Conduct, and whether McBrady should recuse himself as council member for the discussion. McBrady informed the council and audience at the April 16 council meeting, that he signed the Code of Conduct the previous Friday, April 12.

Vice Mayor Dennis Repan, who placed the item on the agenda, said his reason for the agenda item was to figure out how the council could "bridge this from happening in the future." "We still have a code infraction. How do we handle this?" Repan asked the council.

Mayor Nolan asked Smiley five times if discussing alleged violations of McBrady was legal as stated on the agenda. Smiley said each time the agenda item was fine as written, and the council could discuss the matter in public since McBrady requested it heard in public and not executive session. Nolan also protested the decision of council and attorney to have McBrady step down as council member during the discussion, even after Smiley assured him that McBrady could answer any allegations as a private citizen. Nolan promptly declared a recess and left the room. The attorney, after consulting Robert's Rules of Order, said the mayor was out of order, and the council continued the discussion without him.

Council member Nancy Wright brought up McBrady's previous code infraction, court hearing and fine, to which Smiley said the council could find a violation of the Code of Conduct. When Nolan returned to the dais, he cited a previous town Code of Conduct that the council "extinguished" in its entirety in August 2011, replacing it with the current shorter version.

Repan said he appreciated McBrady signing the Code of Conduct, and asked whether to move forward with sanctions. The attorney said the Code of Conduct does not give a procedure for this, and all the council could do, if there was a violation, was to censure McBrady. "You cannot impose a fine or remove him from council," she said. "That's the point. How do we handle this?" Repan asked. "To me, this is a learning session. Do we want to do anything with this? That's the question I had for council."

McBrady, speaking as a citizen, explained how the council approved the new Code of Conduct in 2011, but it was a year later that staff placed it in his and other council members' box for

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

signature. At that time, he was dealing with health issues and said he didn't remember if staff told him about it or not. He had been concerned about the language and intent of the new Code at the time council put it together. He asked at that time that it not be used to censure, and that the council remove the section about violating town ordinances. McBrady also explained his previous violation and fine, and said the collection agency "didn't do a very good job." The \$1,600 fine he owes the town is included in the reorganization plans under his bankruptcy, he said. "This is a way of discrediting me," McBrady told the council. "If I had known about it earlier, I would have signed it (Code of Conduct)."

Repan said the issue was cloudy, as stated by the attorney, and asked to move forward. Council member Nancy Wright said council members' behavior should be above reproach. "When we have someone on the town council and there are violations, we need a process to say 'Straighten up and fly right.' If we have a Code of Conduct, we should obey it."

Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said her staff provided McBrady with the unsigned Code of Conduct several times since she was hired 15 months ago. McBrady said he didn't remember if staff had told him about the papers.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Daily Courier
July 25, 2012

Humboldt: Water company's warning came 2 months late

Author: Sue Tone

A state environmental agency is requiring the Humboldt Water System to conduct quarterly testing of its nitrate levels after test results in March revealed higher than maximum contaminant levels. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality placed the water company on a more frequent testing schedule after finding nitrate levels of 11 milligrams per liter (mg/L) in samples pulled March 15. The maximum level allowed by federal and state law is 10 mg/L. On Monday, ADEQ sent the water company a notice of violation, noting seven code violations, including "distribution of water in excess of the MCL for an inorganic chemical," nitrate, and failure to provide public notice of the excessive chemical in a timely manner. In fact, it wasn't until May that some customers found out about the high levels in March. Although further tests on April 17 showed the nitrate levels had dropped to 8.7 mg/L, HWS posted a warning notice at the Chevron Market and the Humboldt Post Office on May 15, which warned that giving water to infants six months old and younger could cause serious illness and, if untreated, could lead to death.

The two-month delay in notification is leaving customers of the Humboldt Water System - about 323 service connections on a 300-meter distribution system - wondering whether the water is safe to drink or not. Tim Kylo, president and owner of Humboldt Water System, told the ADEQ that he provided his water users with an individual customer mailing about the high nitrate level, but at least two customers said that never happened. Rose Eitemiller said she saves all her water bills and she did not get personal notice of the warning on her billing statement. What she did see at the bottom of her April-May statement was "Important nitrate drinking warning is available online at <http://www.utilitybillingonline.com/sites/hws/>." The link took her to the water company's 2011 Consumer Confidence Report, which indicated the highest nitrate level for the 2011 reporting period was 6 mg/L.

The billing statement included no mention of the recent high levels of nitrates. Thirteen days after ADEQ notified Kylo of the March 15 test result of 11 mg/L, the company retested its water. The March 28 test came back with a slightly higher nitrate level at 11.4 mg/L. But by the third test on April 17, ADEQ found the level had dropped to 8.7 mg/L on total nitrate, which is below the exceedance level. Kylo said nitrate levels fluctuate naturally and he doesn't use any process to lower levels. "If they remain over the maximum contaminant level, a filtration system would be necessary to maintain lower levels," he said. Nitrates occur naturally during erosion of natural deposits. It also happens with runoff from fertilizer use, septic tank leakage, and sewage. Dewey-Humboldt has no wastewater treatment facility; homes and businesses operate with their own septic system. Ken Johnson, project manager for the Humboldt Unified School District, said to his knowledge the Humboldt Elementary School, one of the water company's customers, did not receive a public notice either. "It would have been brought to my attention," Johnson said.

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The school district recently put in a \$350,000 filtration system on the school's septic operation, based on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requirements to lower nitrate levels in its outgoing wastewater. Johnson said the neighborhood's older septic systems could contribute to nitrate leaching into the water table and causing problems for the Humboldt Water System. Most of the homes are not in compliance, he said, and the owners don't have the money to do anything about their septic systems. D-H Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** confirmed that all town residents and businesses are on individual private septic tank systems, which is monitored by the Yavapai County Environmental Services. As to the 11 mg/L nitrate levels, Johnson said, "That's awfully close; it could have been in the instrumentation, or maybe the filtering system needed service."

The HWS 2011 Consumer Confidence Report indicates the highest nitrate level detected in 2011 was 6 mg/L. It also states, "High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause blue baby syndrome. Nitrate levels may rise quickly for short periods of time because of rainfall or agricultural activity. If you are caring for an infant, and detected nitrate levels are above 5 ppm (parts per million), you should ask advice from your health care provider." Mark Shaffer, public relations officer with ADEQ, quoted state law relating to public notice requirements in a July 9 email: "Pursuant to § 141.202.c, the public notice shall be served within 24 hours in a form and manner reasonably calculated to reach all persons served. The form and manner used by the public water system are to fit the specific situation, but must be designed to reach residential, transient, and non-transient users of the water system."

ADEQ is requiring quarterly sampling at the Humboldt Water System at the main well, backup well and booster station. The April 17 inspection report states that all three were in compliance with nitrate levels of 8.4, 6.7, and 8.7 mg/L respectively. Shaffer said ADEQ contacted HWS on July 2 to get the second quarter water results. "The certified operator there was instructed not to sample unless ADEQ told them to do so," Shaffer said in an email on July 16. On Tuesday, he confirmed the system's certified operator tested the water on July 17, and ADEQ expects to receive the results "within the next week or two."

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.dcourier.com/news/2012/jul/18/dewey-humboldt-some-programs-positions-eliminated/>

The Daily Courier Logo
July 18, 2012

Dewey-Humboldt: Some programs, positions eliminated; staff receives COLA, merit raise
Author: Sue Tone

A shrinking budget, decrease in number of employees and number of services, salary adjustments, and a smaller operational deficit are all part of Dewey-Humboldt's 2012-2013 budget. The town's main revenue source for its \$4.1 million budget comes from state-shared allocations, which provides funding for more than 60 percent of its operations. Other sources include local sales tax revenues and permit fee incomes. The town does not impose property taxes.

The 2012-2013 budget grew from \$3,998,000 this past year, but is less than the 2010-2011 budget of \$4,591,000. The town council approved increasing the contingency fund to 30 percent of its general fund, and the Highway User Revenue Fund to \$508,652, up from \$134,000 in 2011-2012. It decreased the unrestricted fund balance from \$1,737,000 this past year to \$996,814.

Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** said several events this past year were significant to the town and led to budget changes. Cities and towns balance their budgets by increasing revenue, decreasing expenditures, or both. The council cut its expenditures by eliminating its Citizens Academy program and contribution to the Agua Fria Festival, and decreasing the Roving Dumpster program from six to two times a year. This freed up money to where the council was able to support the D-H Historical Society's museum program by paying the first year's rent, and make a sizeable donation to the D-H Little League.

The town also lost some personnel during the past fiscal year and some positions remained vacant for months, which helped save money. Through attrition, the town eliminated one full-time accountant position and a part-time community development coordinator. The new budget provides for 10 employees, two of which are part-time. The town hired a new town manager, administrative assistant, accountant and public works operator within the past six months. It reclassified the community development coordinator's position to include duties of town planner. **Kimball** has experience in planning and will provide oversight for the planner and also help with finance duties together with another staff member.

The budget has included two accountants since FY 2009-2010, but has operated with one accountant since late 2010. **Kimball** said this person has been busy, but the workload is manageable. She plans to provide some cross-training for employees to increase accountability and accuracy this coming fiscal year. She recommended, and the council approved, a cost of living adjustment of 2.3 percent and a merit increase of up to 1.7 percent for town staff. Merit

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

increases occur after an employee has completed a probationary period. **Kimball** called the town's personnel situation "very unique." Almost 70 percent of the current employees are new to their positions and were hired within the past six months. As a result of this past year's salary study, the council filled the positions, including the town manager's, at salary rates 10-30 percent lower than the predecessors' pay rates. Also, the town's workforce was reduced 20 percent by eliminating the one fulltime and one part-time positions. "Even with the raises, the total salaries expenses (salaries and payroll taxes) are 16 percent less than last year, from \$486,000 down to \$418,000. Two years ago in FY 2010-2011, salary expenses were about \$546,000," **Kimball** said.

When the council hired her as town manager, **Kimball** said she had faith in herself and the council. "Six months into the job, I think I'm right. We have a nice group with people who work hard and care about the town," she said, adding that she does get frustrated from time to time. "The council, in general, has supported me."

The town plans to increase road maintenance, both through chip and crack sealing, fog coating, and grading of dirt roads. The council increased the budget for the Kachina Road project from \$40,000 to \$70,000 because of delays and extension of the original scope of work. The main source of money for the town's roadway improvement and maintenance programs, HURF, has seen gradual reduction over the past two years. The drop in funds is a great concern, **Kimball** said, "because roads maintenance and improvement is one pivotal service the town provides to the citizens."

Remaining solvent is another concern. The past three years' budget indicates a deficit in the operational budget, which doesn't include contingency fund expenditures, of \$36,642 in 2010-2011, \$115,550 in 2011-2012, and \$63,000 this fiscal year. "Deficits occur when the total operational expenditures are more than total operational revenues. In order to balance the operational deficits, the fund balances have to be tapped into," she said. "In other words, we've been planning to spend more than what comes in every year and have to use the savings."

Most of the deficits revolved around the high cost of ongoing road maintenance or improvement projects. Even with the expenditures on roads, the town's road situation is probably still considered less than adequate by many citizens and some road-paving professionals, she said. "Hypothetically, at this rate of spending, if revenues remain the same - which is unlikely - in about 20 years, the town's savings will be depleted," **Kimball** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Prescott Valley Tribune
June 13, 2012

Dewey-Humboldt budgets for Museum, Dump Day, Little League

Author: Sue Tone

On Monday the Dewey-Humboldt Town Council approved a line item in its 2012-2013 budget that will cover one year's rent for the Historical Society's future museum building, give \$2,700 to the D-H Little League, and increase the popular Roving Dumpster program back to twice a year. During the budget meeting, council reviewed changes and cuts it made on May 29, which decreased total expenditures in the budget. The proposed \$4.1 million budget decreased to about \$3.9 million. One of the cuts involved decreasing the Roving Dumpster program from twice a year to once a year.

The most recent dumpster event cost \$3,500 for the one day, Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** reported. Anticipating greater demand if the council cut the program to once a year, she budgeted \$5,000 for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. As part of a motion that included giving the Historical Society \$7,200 and the Little League \$2,700, the council voted 5-2 to set aside \$8,000 to cover two Roving Dumpster events. Council member Nancy Wright voted against the motion, saying, "I vote because of what I believe is the responsibility of the government. It isn't to provide for all of our wishes."

Council member David Hiles said he is not against the museum. "If it's so much needed and wanted by the community, they will come forward at fundraisers. But to have the town give a grant to do that and other things is just beyond me for a community of this size." One council member changed her mind, previously having voted against giving money to the Historical Society. "I've been happy to see the actions they've taken recently," Denise Rogers said. "Initially, it looked like they didn't know exactly where they were going or what they were doing with their ideas and proposals. I see they are doing their part to help get it going. I think it is something that will benefit the community, and I will change my vote."

In other action, the council cut an unfilled second accountant position. **Kimball** said she and current staff could pick up some of the duties, as she didn't feel there would be enough accounting work for a fulltime employee. The Council also approved a 2.3 percent cost of living raise for town employees beginning July 1. Council members also increased the town's contingency funds from 10 percent to 30 percent of its expenditures, from \$136,000 to about \$400,000. The final budget review is on the June 19 council meeting agenda, and budget adoption takes place on June 26. Both council meetings take place at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 2735 South Highway 69.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Daily Courier
June 13, 2012

Dewey-Humboldt Town Council opens dialogue on disincorporation

Author: Sue Tone

"Disincorporaton" is a word floated by dissatisfied Dewey-Humboldt residents since the day 72 percent of the community voted to incorporate. But when a councilman puts it on the council agenda nearly eight years later, it's bound to raise hackles. An open-to-the-public council discussion spearheaded by Councilman Dennis Repan on de-annexation, disincorporation, and implementation of property taxes drew a small number of residents to the June 5 meeting. "I was hoping, with a little 'shock and awe,' to open the dialogue," Repan said. In his opening comments, Repan said he sees how people come before the council with their requests, and how it comes down to expenses versus revenues, with dwindling reserves in the town's budget. "I came up with imagining different scenarios to try to move the town along," he said, and listed de-annexation as the first scenario. Disincorporation is a little more complicated, he said, but when the community was in the county, "they left us alone."

Repan and other council members have been working on the 2012-13 budget and are realizing the expenses of running a town could deplete the reserves in 5 to 10 years, according to Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball**. By law, the town can levy property taxes for its infrastructure needs that include such things as staff salaries, roads and sidewalks. "Maybe that's what we need to do to survive. I couldn't come up with any other way. We want all these things. Do we want to be proactive now while we still have reserve funds? Or sit on our hands for the next four to five years until we run out of funds?" Repan said. He estimated that a tax of \$20 per month for property owners, or \$240 per year, could generate about \$300,000.

Resident Cathy Jackson said she understood what Repan was suggesting, but "what makes you think the people can afford it?" "That's my point here. The town has been pretty conservative with its money," Repan said. "I don't want property tax as much as anyone else." Former mayor Bob Greene said, in previous years, a former council cut the sales tax in half, from 2 percent to 1 percent, which didn't help with revenue. "The last two councils have been anti-business. We need businesses. Let's go to work," he said. Greene said Prescott Valley would annex the town, take its water, and then "bleed this town dry." He urged the council to put their minds together and quit fighting. "Make our town want you, because we want this town."

Resident Jerry Brady suggested putting more effort into finding grant money, and also said the county has new standards and would require D-H to be in compliance with those standards before the county would take it back. Former councilman David Nystrom advised the council to look at the county budget. "The last thing they want is to take on Dewey-Humboldt with infrastructure needs and no way to generate any revenue," he said, and suggested using some of the town's reserve money to hire a consultant grant writer.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Kevin Leonard, president of the Dewey-Humboldt Historical Society, urged the council to have a little faith and give the people a chance to do something to help bring business into the town. He again asked the council to help support the Historical Society with the purchase of the museum building. Repan apologized for causing people's blood pressure to rise, but said sparking a debate was good. This past week he said he wondered what might happen if the town used up the reserve funds and could no longer support the town or staff. "Our only way out, if that happens, is to put the burden on the residents of our community. I do not want to see that happen," Repan said. "My hope and intent was to open a creative dialogue as to what is really important for the future and survival of this town."

The council met Tuesday afternoon in a special study session in which Repan challenged the council to rethink its philosophy of road repair and maintenance as the town's first, and perhaps only, priority. For nearly an hour, residents and council talked about the reality of bringing new businesses into the town limits, the small population base, location of commercially zoned property, and the town's General Plan. Resident Hamilton said Prescott Valley's success came from putting in water and sewer systems, which attracted people and businesses. "Most people here have their own water and sewer. The philosophy is to be rural and not have dense housing. That's what drives the town. Without dense housing, you're not going to get the businesses here. They don't last because they don't have the customers," he said.

Mayor Nolan said he would continue the discussion at another time in a month or two. The council will give its final budget review on June 19, and budget adoption takes place on June 26. Both council meetings take place at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 2735 South Highway 69 in Humboldt Station, Humboldt.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.dcourier.com/news/2012/mar/14/dewey-humboldt-historical-society-council-wrangle/>
March 14, 2012

Dewey-Humboldt Historical Society, council wrangle over bank building

Author: Sue Tone

When Gateway Baptist Church decided to build a newer, larger building and put up for sale its property, a former bank building on Main Street, Humboldt, enthusiastic members of the Dewey-Humboldt Historical Society looked into acquiring it for a local museum. They would like the town to purchase the building. If that's not possible, they'd like the town to lease the building. And if that doesn't work, they'd like the town to at least chip in and help cover costs until next fiscal year's budget when the council can add a line item and use that money for such a venture.

The ongoing discussion between the council and the D-HHS began when the council formed a sub-committee chaired by Vice Mayor Mark McBrady, and Councilwomen Nancy Wright and Denise Rogers, on Dec. 20. Since that time, the Historical Society has been under the gun to come up with the money to buy the building by March 1 when church officials wanted to list it. They would like the town's help.

The town's budget has \$1.7 million in uncommitted, unallocated funds, but by law, it cannot move money to pay for something which was not previously budgeted. In January, the council and public toured the building. Councilman Dennis Repan said he wanted to see an appraisal of the building before committing to a purchase. At the Jan. 17 council meeting former councilman and Historical Society member David Nystrom suggested council direct town staff to create an ordinance to set aside \$300,000 for the museum, or to revise the budget, or begin negotiations with the property owners. Town attorney Phyllis Smiley, with the firm Curtis, Goodwin, Sullivan, Udall & Schwab, said she couldn't recommend the council move forward because of too many issues, and she recommended a future executive meeting to discuss council's options.

At the Feb. 7 meeting, council members spent 30 minutes in executive session for legal advice with the attorney to discuss land banking and property purchase. They came back in open session to discuss the proposal from the Historical Society, and approved spending \$500 earnest money to explore the idea of appraisal and inspection of the property and to begin negotiations.

Town Manager **Yvonne Kimball** asked for time to look into legalities about where in the budget she could use to fund the museum. Council approved a motion that authorized the transfer of funds within the budget after research by the attorney makes certain of the legalities. **Kimball** reported at the March 6 council meeting that she studied the budget, the League of Towns and Cities finance manual and other relevant materials, and conferred with the town's finance staff and attorney. She also consulted a couple of other town managers. She said the town attorney quoted Arizona law which states, "No expenditures may be made for a purpose not authorized in the annual budget." The attorneys advised her to follow the law. They also clarified that \$500 is not "earnest money" per se. "The intent is to purchase the option of having the property owner

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Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

wait until July 1 (next fiscal year) to make the sale. Therefore, they recommend a simple 'option agreement' whereby the town pays \$500 and in return the owner agrees not to sell the property to another person for a specified period of time," the March 6 memo states. **Kimball** referred the matter back to council for its decision whether the potential expenditures were included in the budget or not. "If council decides to proceed with those expenditures, considering them as an unforeseen but justifiable expenditures aligned with your existing expenditure categories, they can be made under the General Fund's Public Works Capital Engineering in the current budget," she said.

During the meeting, residents and council again discussed possible solutions to acquiring the building. McBrady said he spoke to the church pastor who indicated the owner's openness to entering a lease with option to buy. He said the Historical Society has raised \$7,500 toward a museum. Historical Society member Gerald Hoyer said he asked a professional builder to attend the tour in February and give an estimation of how much work needs done. The builder said it would take about \$21,000 worth of repair work.

Councilwoman Denise Rogers said the council has requested on several occasions for a business plan from the D-HHS. D-H business owner Chris Berry said Historical Society members were in the process of putting one together, and said he thought the petitions in support of the museum represented the majority voice of the community.

Resident Jack Hamilton agreed that the community supports the museum, but said it's the question of how to go about spending money to purchase the building. "The law says you don't spend money for unbudgeted items," Hamilton said.

Kimball reported that the attorney's advice is not to make an expenditure if it's not in the budget. The attorney has not had time to look at the budget in depth, but advised **Kimball** to wait until July 1 at the start of the next fiscal year.

Council members continued to mention their fiscal responsibility in spending public money. Councilman John Dibble said if this were his money, he would spend it, as he is not opposed to the museum. "It's not about paying for this right now, it's how to pay for it in six months. I challenge all of you to look at all of the businesses along the way into Prescott. That money is going into buckets. We have none, just a handful of businesses," he said. "We have to be very careful with what we spend. It's not that we don't want the museum. I don't want to see us go into debt. We need to move slowly, and I know slow isn't popular."

Councilmen David Hiles and John Repan said they, too, supported the museum, but could not vote to spend money that wasn't designated in the budget for such an expenditure. The council voted 6-0 not to spend money for an appraisal or as earnest money at this time. Mayor Terry Nolan was absent. The subcommittee will meet again with the Historical Society to discuss options before returning the issue to the council.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Daily Courier
January 14, 2012

Dewey-Humboldt: New town manager from Florida adjusting to Western ways

Author: Sue Tone

Yvonne Kimball may have traded her swimsuit for cowboy boots, but she has not given up her sunscreen. The move from Florida to Dewey-Humboldt brought **Kimball** - the new Dewey-Humboldt town manager - her husband and three young boys to town in sunny January weather. She admitted with a grin that she will be shopping for boots and a gun, "just to fit in." **Kimball's** first week was a short one, beginning this past Tuesday, but already included three evening events: the Town Council meeting Tuesday, an open house on her behalf Wednesday, and a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting Thursday. The council interviewed town manager candidates in May and offered **Kimball** the position in October. "They let me decide when to start, and in consideration of my family, we chose the new year," she said, adding that her two older boys, Julian, 8, and Max, 6, started school at Humboldt Elementary School the previous week. Nicholas, 3, is at home with dad Charles during the day.

Interim Town Manager Jim Rumpeltes set up the meet-and-greet open house for residents to welcome **Kimball**. Rumpeltes also scheduled time for her to meet with the mayor, staff, town engineer and attorney, Yavapai County Sheriff's deputies, and Central Yavapai Fire District staff all in her first week. **Kimball**, 35, was born and raised in China, where she graduated from college with a degree in business English, then taught for three years at a university. She met Charles, got married in China, and they decided to live in the United States. She earned a master's degree in public administration at the University of Central Florida, with certification in urban and regional planning. **Kimball** then took part in a program as a tri-city city manager trainee. During the two years, she spent eight months in three Florida cities gaining experience alongside established city managers.

In 2008 she became the city manager for Bowling Green, a rural Florida city, population 3,500, that she described as similar to Dewey-Humboldt, with an economy based on cattle ranching, agriculture and mining. According to her application, she has direct experience in all aspects of municipal government - finance and budgeting, personnel and labor relations, project management, economic development, planning, grant procurement, and environmental issues. While awaiting her interview in May, **Kimball** said she watched the council meetings over the Internet to learn more about the community. When asked if she were aware of some of the tension with council and staff, she said, "All these things happened before me. I think it's history, and we're going to move forward. Intuitively, I know there are challenges. Like with every job, there are challenges."

On Wednesday afternoon, she sat in on the Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee and answered questions members had about the proposed Butte Street Park. She said she was impressed with the committee and what its members have accomplished so far. Parks are important, she said, and she is relieved she does not have to develop the town's first park by

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

herself. She asked about the need for an engineer, the bidding process for a contractor, insurance and liability issues, and creating a town ordinance for park usage - how to reserve the ramada for a family event, for instance. **Kimball** said starting a new school is exciting and an adjustment for her boys with new teachers and new friends. "It will take a while to settle in," she said. Halfway through her first day, she described her new job as "demanding." "At this moment, I think I'm going to be doing a lot of listening. Our job is to make the council operate successfully. We carry out their directives and their policies," **Kimball** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
February 8, 2008

Intern learns the ins, outs of local city planning

Author: Karen Braynard

SATELLITE BEACH - **Yvonne Kimball**, 31, said she first became intrigued about American government as a high school student in China. "We learned about President Lincoln and a 'government for the people, by the people' and I knew I wanted to somehow be involved. It sounded so much more responsive than our local government in Tianjin, China," she said. That opportunity became a reality for Mrs. **Kimball** as she was preparing to graduate from Florida Central University. "I saw a posting for a tri-city internship in city planning so I applied," said Mrs. **Kimball**. The internship is sponsored by the Florida City and County Management Association and partnered with Titusville, Palm Bay and Satellite Beach. Mrs. **Kimball** said she competed against 30 candidates nationwide for the position. "The experience has been fascinating. First I worked for Titusville, then Palm Bay and now I'm in Satellite Beach until May," said Mrs. **Kimball**. Although the position is termed "intern" it is a paid position, funded by Palm Bay and reimbursed by Titusville and Satellite Beach. "It's different from being a student intern. They usually only get to work a few months and don't have the time to learn and understand how things really work in local government," she said.

Lee Feldman, city manager for Palm Bay, agreed. "Having **Yvonne** work with us was very helpful. Because she was here for a long period of time, we were able to give her an intensive project to work on. That had a great impact on our staff because it was a project we could only work on in our spare time," said Mr. Feldman. "In Palm Bay I helped develop the administrative code, necessary for the implementation of city council regulations. This gave me the opportunity to work closely with city department heads. I researched, wrote, and incorporated existing documentation into the resulting regulations," said Mrs. **Kimball**. In Titusville she worked with the growth management and planning office and worked on their fiscal budget. "I learned how to reduce a budget. It's not as easy as people might think because every department wants to protect their people and programs," she said. When she began the program, Mrs. **Kimball** said even the smallest tasks seemed complex. "When I first started this program, I didn't know how to do anything. My first task was to solve a customer's complaint about waste management and I didn't even know where to start," she said.

Mrs. **Kimball** is originally from China and moved to the U.S. with her husband Charles **Kimball** in 2004. Eighteen months later, she's learned to conduct area studies for planning purposes, she's learned the intent of zoning codes, prepared city budgets, and how to research and present information to city officials. She said she was very proud to have maintained a 4.0 gpa for her master's in public administration from the University of Central Florida and her graduate certificate in urban and regional planning. "Ultimately I'd like to continue on this path in my career," said Mrs. **Kimball**.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today
February 3, 2007

Intern helping three cities
Municipalities teach real-world applications
Author: Linda Jump

Yvonne Kimball is learning how to run a city through a unique internship that has her working in Palm Bay, Titusville and Satellite Beach. The Chinese national has a two-year internship through the Florida City and County Management Association. The August 2006 University of Central Florida master's degree graduate in public administration will spend eight months with each city. Volusia County has a similar internship program through the management association, and Brevard County's is the second. "I hope to run a city one day. This is a good opportunity to get first-hand knowledge of services and how to meet a city's needs," said **Kimball**, 30.

Kimball came to the United States three years ago with her American husband, Charles, and two young sons. **Kimball** decided in her Chinese high school that she wanted to see U.S. democracy. "I remember hearing a quote by (President Abraham) Lincoln that the United States is a government of the people, by the people and for the people." **Kimball** wondered how that could work. In China, she said, private citizens don't have much say in government structure or policy. "The politicians and city manager are the same person or party leader. They might be two people, but they are acting all together," she said. The internship offers hands-on experience and connections. "I learned the basic concepts of government in school and now I'm getting full exposure and seeing the real work," **Kimball** said.

Her primary responsibility in Palm Bay is to revise the city's administrative code. The current code primarily deals with finance, and she's trying to make it more comprehensive. **Kimball** is considered a two-year city employee, with salary and benefits from Palm Bay. But Titusville and Satellite Beach will reimburse the city for their share, City Manager Lee Feldman said. "**Yvonne** is conscientious and doing projects well," Feldman said. He said it's important to build the next generation of leaders.

Titusville City Manager Mark Ryan called the internship "an opportunity to bring a young person interested in public administration to learn about our city and its issues." **Kimball** begins work there in April. He plans to have **Kimball** work with the planning department on zoning rewrites and learn how to run a municipal marina.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Yvonne Kimball** is listed below.]

https://www2.cohpa.ucf.edu/media/604258/pawebkly_0607.pdf

UCF Public Administration's Weekly Update
August 28, 2006

STUDENT NEWS

Titusville Hires Our Graduates

According to Tom Harmer, City Manager of Titusville, the city has recently hired Kelly Booth in their Community Development Department. Titusville previously hired UCF Public Administration graduates, Art Interiano, who was just promoted to Planner, and Mandy Chivers who is also a City Planner. In addition, Titusville hired **Yvonne Kimball** (MPA) as an intern for the next two years as a partnership with the City of Palm Bay and Satellite Beach and the Florida City/County Management Association. According to Harmer "We are very much enjoying our relationship with UCF and the quality graduates that you are producing."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Yvonne Kimball** is listed below.]

https://www2.cohpa.ucf.edu/media/604258/pawweekly_0607.pdf

UCF Public Administration's Weekly Update
August 7, 2006

DEPARTMENTAL CELEBRATION
Inaugural Celebration A Success

Our first Graduation Celebration held on Saturday was a complete success with over 60 people in attendance. Refreshments were served and a small ceremony honoring our graduates was conducted. Dr. Korosec honored doctoral candidate Wendy Bolyard with a certificate and several words of praise and good wishes. Bob Morin honored undergraduate Nathaniel Groover with a certificate, while Bob's his wife Tina and son Cesar helped facilitate the event. As MPA Coordinator, Dr. Korosec presented certificates to these students who attended with their families: Talia Cerrone, Linda Fow, Sally Hogan, **Yvonne Xu Kimball**, Jenna LaFleur, and Eloise Sahlstrom.

As MNM Coordinator, Dr. Feldheim presented certificates to Renee Cartee and Sara Cooper. Special recognition was given to Sara who was instrumental in putting together our first Public Administration Focus. During the reception Sara shared with us that she will be a new mom in January. Congratulations Sara.

GRADUATION

Doctoral Graduate

One student, Wendy Bolyard, who focused on public policy and social equity between male and female physicians, was granted her doctorate in Public Affairs this summer.

Master of Public Administration

There were twenty-three (23) students receiving their MPA degrees: Deirdre Campbell, Talia Cerrone, Amy Davis, Linda Fow, Mabelise Gilles, Latoria Governor, Sally Hogan, **Yvonne Xu Kimball**, Jenna LaFleur, Alexis Luna, Clyde Mathes, Victoria McDonough, Patrice Murphy, Ivan Nance, Mellisa Pharoah, Alicia Pineiro, Lisa Riner, David Rosenthal, Rashika Russell-Hall, Eloise Sahlstrom, Dorothy Selig, Amy Turner, Sara Warren.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Yvonne Kimball
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Yvonne Kimball** is listed below.]

https://www2.cohpa.ucf.edu/media/604258/pawekly_0607.pdf

UCF Public Administration's Weekly Update
July 31, 2006

KUDOS TO OUR STUDENTS

Yvonne Kimball has accepted a unique FCCMA supported initiative in Brevard County. This is a new initiative to provide a recent graduate with unique opportunities to further her career.

Yvonne will work with three different cities as a Management Intern to learn about the differences and similarities in working in cities of different sizes.

Research Compiled by: Winona Saunders
 Colin Baenziger & Associates



Section 7

Michael S. McGlothlin

Cocoa Beach

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

MICHAEL S. MCGLOTHLIN, MBA-PA

Largo, Florida

CITY MANAGER

July 16, 2025

Colin Baenziger and Associates

Re: City of Cocoa Beach, Florida City Manager Position

Greetings Colin Baenziger & Associates Staff:

With an accomplished background in governmental administration and public service, I am writing to express my interest in seeking the long-term employment opportunity as the next City Manager for the City of Cocoa Beach. As the previous Town Administrator for Redington Shores, Florida, I orchestrated all aspects of Town operations; from the development and management of the Town's annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the development and implementation of new policies and procedures to managing infrastructure projects, coordinating special events in the community, ensuring the quality of services provided, and much more.

I am now seeking a new challenge that is commensurate with my skill set and am confident that my ideas and contributions would make me a strong addition to the Cocoa Beach team. Specifically, I possess both the requisite experience and professional capabilities to collaboratively work with all in assessing and overcoming budgetary limitations, responsibly managing growth and development/redevelopment opportunities while protecting the community's concerns, navigating the challenges and opportunities associated with tourism, review and subsequent implementation of the City's Strategic Plan, conduct coordination for necessary beach renourishment, and in leading mitigation, response, and recovery efforts during times of natural disasters.

Please consider the following highlights:

- Contributes over almost 40 years of expertise in governmental administration and public service; including, but not limited to, team and agency leadership, budget development and implementation, emergency management, policy and procedure development and implementation
- Develops and executes short and long-range strategic planning to facilitate alignment across all areas of agency operations; ensuring the City Commission meets the challenges facing the community
- Builds engaging relationships with the City Commission, City staff, members of the community, business stakeholders, as well as local, state, and federal officials and government agencies
- Actively promotes a culture of accountability, transparency, and continuous learning, while simultaneously fostering strong collaborations between cross-functional internal business units and external community partners

The expansive range of my public service background has benefitted me with sound judgment and decision-making skills, earning me the reputation of a visionary and forward-thinking strategist with an aptitude for identifying key agency talent and project success drivers. I am certain of my ability to bring the same insight and discernment into the role of City Manager and feel assured that my strengths are in alignment with Cocoa Beach's goals for this position.

I would welcome a personal interview to discuss the merging of my knowledge and experience with the City's objectives for this role and look forward to hearing from you to arrange a convenient time to meet.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL S. MCGLOTHLIN, MBA-PA

MICHAEL S. MCGLOTHLIN, MBA-PA

Largo, Florida

CITY MANAGER

Service-driven municipal executive with almost 40 years of expertise in municipal administration and public service, including team and agency leadership, budget development and implementation, emergency management, policy development and more.

Notable Skills & Qualifications

- Successfully plans and executes complex community redevelopment projects while coordinating resources and logistics
- Balances multiple projects and rapidly-evolving priorities while delegating and supporting staff, managing high-pressure deadlines and emotionally-charged issues, and resolving escalations
- Models collaboration, accountability, and integrity as a service-oriented leader and staunch advocate of ethical leadership
- Demonstrates an approachable and informative presence while interacting with all internal and external stakeholders
- Actively drives teamwork and leadership functions with a focus on building consensus among groups with differing goals and interests
- Employs basic Spanish-language skills to build engaging relationships with multicultural communities and populations
- Completed 3,600+ hours of professional development training and education before retiring from law enforcement in 2018

Areas of Expertise

Municipal Operations Management • Program Management & Implementation • Strategic Planning • Project Management
Budget Administration • Marketing & Branding • Risk Management • Emergency Management • Logistics • Problem Solving
Community Relations • Team Building • Cross-Functional Leadership • Training & Mentoring • Multi-Agency Collaboration

PROFESSIONAL WORK HISTORY**Town Administrator** | Town of Redington Shores – Redington Shores, Florida

2023 - 2025

Appointed as Town Administrator to lead and manage Town employees, programs and services, operations, finances, infrastructure projects, and special event logistics.

- Administers Town operations, coordinates special event logistics, and markets the Town's message and brand while building supportive relationships with community members, agencies, organizations, and groups
- Assists Mayor and Town Commission with developing annual community goals and priorities; provides leadership and direction required to ensure established goals and priorities are met
- Collaborates closely with Department Heads to ensure quality of municipal government services provided to community
- Establishes and implements all new Town policies and procedures; enforces compliance with Town laws and procedures in accordance with disciplinary philosophy and guidelines
- Enforces Town-wide compliance with all applicable federal and state ordinances, resolutions, and laws
- Administers annual budget of \$14 million; with \$2.5 million in Capital Improvement and \$2.5 million in the Sewer Fund, in addition to overseeing purchasing
- Fosters collaborative and cooperative relationships with external public and government agencies/organizations while supporting and driving alignment with Town goals and priorities
- Directs and manages Town infrastructure projects relating to water, sewer, storm water, and recreation; ensures projects are completed within designated time frames and established budgets
- Led mitigation, response, and recovery operations for Hurricanes Idalia, Debby, Helene, and Milton

City Administrator | City of Columbia City – Columbia City, OR

2019 – 2023

Appointed as City Administrator to lead and manage City employees, programs and services, operations, finances, infrastructure projects, and special event logistics, while retaining oversight of the Columbia City Police Department.

- Administers City operations, coordinates special event logistics, and markets the City's message and brand while building supportive relationships with community members, agencies, organizations, and groups
- Assists Mayor and City Council with developing annual community goals and priorities; provides leadership and direction required to ensure established goals and priorities are met
- Collaborates closely with Department Heads to ensure quality of municipal government services provided to community
- Establishes and implements all new City policies and procedures; enforces compliance with City laws and procedures in accordance with disciplinary philosophy and guidelines
- Enforces City-wide compliance with all applicable federal and state ordinances, resolutions, and laws
- Administers annual operating budget of \$6 million and capital budget of \$2.5 million, in addition to overseeing purchasing
- Increased cash reserves from \$1.2 million to \$1.6 million as Principal Asset Manager
- Fosters collaborative and cooperative relationships with external public and government agencies/organizations while supporting and driving alignment with City goals and priorities

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- Directs and manages City infrastructure projects relating to water, sewer, source water protection, and recreation; ensures projects are completed within designated time frames and established budgets
- Authored the agency's comprehensive, OSHA-approved Covid response plan; included basic PPE guidelines, exposure reporting procedures, employee guidelines and protocols, and more
- Manages outreach program for at-risk youth; provides mentoring and access to winter necessities while facilitating positive relationships with law enforcement through an annual Christmas shop; co-founded program in 2009 as Chief of Police

Chief of Police & City Emergency Manager | Columbia City Police Department – Columbia City, OR 2009 – 2018

Appointed as the City's first full-time Chief of Police, a position that was previously filled by contracted employees. Concurrently planned, implemented, and oversaw all aspects of emergency management and preparedness.

- Built the department from the ground-up; included establishing department SOPs, creating all operational and procedural manuals, and developing the department budget, in addition to recruiting, hiring, and training staff
- Provided leadership to staff while managing daily operations, supervising department programs, and overseeing logistics, as well as ongoing procurement of vehicles, equipment, and supplies
- Established all systems and processes relating to emergency response and management
- Partnered with hazard mitigation group to establish response to natural or manmade disasters; included developing and implementing emergency operations plan and disaster continuity plan
- Cultivated and maintained collaborative relationships with agencies at the federal, state, regional, and county levels
- Developed and implemented an outreach program for at-risk youth to provide mentoring and access to winter necessities while building positive relationships with law enforcement through an annual Christmas shop

Division Commander, Patrol & Investigative Divisions | Zebulon Police Department – Zebulon, NC 2000 – 2009

Established and maintained mutually-cooperative relationships with community businesses and organizations, as well as external agencies such as the Secret Service, Fire Department, City of Zebulon, and more.

- Selected to command both Patrol Division and Service Division while performing the roles of:
 - Special Emergency Response Team Commander (SERT)
 - Department Evidence Custodian
 - Department Policy and Procedure Coordinator
 - Federal and State Grants Manager
 - Procurement Officer (Vehicle, Equipment, and Supply)
 - Department Training Coordinator
 - Police Reserve Program Coordinator
 - K-9 Operations Supervisor
 - Traffic Enforcement Unit Supervisor
 - Special Events Organizer (Presidential visits, visiting dignitaries, corporate VIP events, and community events)

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

District & Superior Court Security Operations | Cumberland County Sheriff's Office – Fayetteville, NC 2000

Law Enforcement Officer | Fayetteville Police Department – Fayetteville, NC 1994 – 2000

Various Positions: Special Assistant to the City Manager, Community Policing & Improvement (1999 – 2000)
 Police Sergeant (1998 – 2000)
 Criminal Gang/Intelligence Investigator (1996 – 1998)
 Patrol Officer (1994 – 1996)

503 Military Police Battalion (Airborne) | United States Army, Military Police Corps – Fort Bragg, NC 1987 – 1994

Various Positions: Investigative Operations Sergeant (1993 – 1994)
 Patrol Supervisor (1990 – 1993)
 Patrol Officer (1987 – 1990)

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Master of Business Administration, Concentration in Public Administration | Columbia Southern University 2015
Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration, *summa cum laude* | Columbia Southern University 2013

MICHAEL S. MCGLOTHLIN, MBA-PA

Credentials & Training

Executive Law Enforcement Certificate Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards & Training (DPSST)	2012
Incident Command System 700 (ICS 700/701.a/703.a/704) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	2011
Graduate, Session XXII Oregon Executive Development Institute	2010
Graduate Rural Executive Management Institute	2010
Incident Command System 400 (ICS 400) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	2008
Incident Command System 300 (ICS 300) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	2007
Graduate (12-Month Program) North Carolina Law Enforcement Management Institute	2005
Incident Command System 800 (ICS 800) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	1994
Incident Command System 200 (ICS 200) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	1994
Incident Command System 100 (ICS 100) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	1994
National Incident Management System (NIMS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	1994

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member Florida City County Managers Association	2023 – Present
Member International City/County Management Association	2019 – Present

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Microsoft Office Suite • Springbrook (Financial Management) • **ClearGov** (Budget Development & Management)
Various Budgeting Modules (Capital Budgets, Operations Budgets, Digital Budget Book)

Candidate Introduction

Michael Shawn McGlothlin, MBA - PA

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration-Public Administration, Columbia Southern University, Orange Beach, Alabama
Bachelor of Science, Criminal Justice Administration, Columbia Southern University, Orange Beach, Alabama
Oregon Executive Development Institute Graduate, Oregon Executive Development Institute (2012 Session # 22 at Bend, Oregon)
Rural Executive Management Institute Graduate, University of Arkansas (2010 Session at Chicago, Illinois)

EXPERIENCE

Town Administrator, Redington Shores, FL	2023 – 2025
City Administrator, Columbia City, OR	2019 – 2023
Chief of Police/Emergency Manager, Columbia City, OR	2009 – 2018
Division Commander/Patrol & Investigative, Zebulon, NC	2000 – 2009
Security Operations, Cumberland County, NC	2000 – 2000
Police Officer/Investigator/Sergeant, Fayetteville, NC	1994 – 2000
U.S. Army Military Police Corps, (primarily) Ft. Bragg, NC	1987 – 1994

BACKGROUND

The Town of Redington Shores, a proud Bicentennial Community was incorporated in 1955, covers 220 acres with 1.19 miles along Gulf Boulevard, and has a total of 6.33 road miles. The Town is divided into four districts, with a citizen elected commissioner serving each district and a mayor elected at-large.

From the sun's first glimmer over the Boca Ciega Bay until it slips into the Gulf of America, the town of Redington Shores beckons visitors and residents to enjoy its wide beaches, fishing, boating, pleasant parks, natural beauty, and quiet soothing relaxation. Midway between Clearwater to the north and St. Pete beach to the south, Redington Shores is just 30 minutes from Tampa International Airport and professional, football, baseball, soccer, and hockey.

In addition to the miles of white sandy beaches and spectacular sunsets over the Gulf of America, Redington Shores is an accessible vacation destination offering something for everyone. You will find it all within your reach; whether it's shopping, watersports, recreation, golfing, boating, fishing, eco-tourism, professional sports, arts, culture, attractions or theme parks.

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Redington Shore's General Fund budget comprised \$4.1 million, and the total budget is \$18.4 million for the FY 2024-25 fiscal year. The Town has 9 full-time employees, 6 contracted employee department heads for police, fire, planning, and accounting services, with 8 departmental director equivalents reporting directly to the Town Administrator. During my municipal management career, I have directly supervised as few as 3 employees to as many as 26.

The three most significant issues facing the Town are:

- **Infrastructure.** Over the past years, and in some cases decades, the Town failed to invest adequately in necessary maintenance of the infrastructure for their sewer and stormwater systems. Accordingly, the town's first five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) was developed that totaled more than \$9 million to organize, plan, and fund these critical community needs.
- **Hurricane resilience.** Due to its geographical location on the Gulf of America, the Town faces annual threats from the devastating impacts of hurricane strikes. This was experienced this past hurricane season with the significant devastation that Hurricanes Helene and Milton brought upon the community.
- **Governmental inefficiency.** During its history as an incorporated municipality the Town has made three attempts to formalize the position of manager/administrator for more efficient operations. However, the effort keeps failing both politically and operationally. As a result of this self-imposed inefficiency, you find that the above referenced issues associated with infrastructure degradation occur.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

The City of Cocoa Beach, which strives to provide valuable government services to its residents, lies on a beautiful but fragile barrier island nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and the Banana River Lagoon. While the City is a lively beachside community, what makes it unique is it has remained a family friendly, residential community with neighborhoods where parents feel safe letting their children ride their bikes to school and play outside until dark. As well, the city and its government have continued to make a wide variety of improvements to meet the demands of its citizens and residents. Additionally, Cocoa Beach, with a distinctly mature population of 11,341, covers 15.19 square miles and is located approximately 70 miles east of Orlando.

Significant team building capabilities, communication skills, and technical expertise was required in every jurisdiction in which I have served. I will bring to the city my proven leadership skills, team based collaborative approaches, open communication style, and documented problem-solving strategies while operating in both routine and demanding environments, and while continuing to remain both fiscally and socially conservative. The City shows a repeated pattern of responsible financial planning, procedures and practices, yet a

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primary challenge will be for me to collaboratively work with all to adequately plan for the City's financial future as it relates to revenue replacement associated with the absence of ARPA 2021 funds moving forward as well as current uncertainty surrounding residential tax revenues within the state. The City is also well established with a staff who have developed a reputation of exemplary performance. Empowering, leading, developing, and mentoring this talented pool of team members will be critical to the continued success of the City and I remain confident in my abilities to bring these skill sets, and more, in working with staff to realize the direction and goals of the City Commission.

The concept of "servant leadership" is the management style in which my career path has led me to strive to adhere to daily. Empowering and mentoring, ethically leading by example, and being an open and honest communicator are considered as hallmarks of this philosophy. However, I also understand that an effective leader must remain adaptable in their ascribed style as no two team members are motivated through identical efforts, just as a mentor needs to remember that all of us have different learning styles.

Throughout my thirty-eight-year career I have found team members who are able to perform with limited direction, while others need significantly more feedback and supervision. Some of the latter, even after very reasonable effort has been made, just do not succeed. Over the course of my leadership and supervisory career, I have taken almost every personnel action possible, both positive and punitive. While these personnel actions are difficult at times they must be completed for the good order of the organization. By ascribing to a progressive disciplinary philosophy, and except in the most extreme cases, I have been able to approach actions in a progressive manner such that employees had opportunities to remedy their issues and were not surprised by any final disciplinary actions that may have resulted.

Every employee I have worked beside has taught me something new and that continues to this day. Conversely, I believe that most would say they have learned a great deal from me – as noted above, staff development is a priority with me, and this is also evidenced by my documented successful history of succession planning during my management career. As a result, I have developed significant skills in organizational leadership and team building, external and internal talent recognition along with recruitment, mentoring, and training capabilities.

The elected officials I have served would likely say that I am highly competent, personable, fair, dedicated, responsive, and decisive. Staff would say they appreciated my availability, communication, consistency, support, high standards, team approach, and recognition of accomplishments. Both groups would see me as ethical and a leader who gets tasks accomplished.

While I greatly enjoy project management, budgetary processes, and policy development my greatest strengths are organizational leadership, team building, and communications. The approach I utilize brings together team members in an environment lacking in

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micromanagement but rich in accountability, mentoring, opportunity for development, visioning, planning, designing, operations, and providing resolution for impacted stakeholders. I have found that this leadership strategy requires clear communication of end goals desired to be accomplished, ensuring that performance metrics are in place and that they fall within stated ethical, legal, and policy mandates, and that it promotes a sense of staff ownership in not only daily operations of the City but also major projects and community endeavors.

In terms of weaknesses, I continue to recognize that at times when critical tasks are prioritized and delegated, they must also be followed up to ensure that the task was indeed completed to the expected standard. This is a critical leadership function that cannot be ignored.

I am proud of my leading role in the mediation, response, and recovery operations from Hurricanes Helene and Milton for the Redington Shores community. Unlike similar responses to Hurricanes Idalia and Debby, the impacts from these two large closely impacting storms quickly overwhelmed organizational resources and yet our team continued working through challenge after challenge to provide the very best services possible. From pre-storm preparation, work performance during the storm, debris removal and monitoring operations, to the reconstituting of the Building Department to enable residents to begin to rebuild their damaged homes, the entire team performed in a highly commendable manner in very demanding circumstances.

In terms of misgivings, I regret that the Administrator position at the Town of Redington Shores as a viable long-term employment opportunity did not come to fruition. While many factors were outside of my direct control, and initial position research did hint at the possible result taking place, I do find it disappointing that we, personally and professionally, were not able to make the opportunity the success that I had believed could have been possible.

The immediate challenges and opportunities I see facing the City of Cocoa Beach are:

- Working with the City Commission and staff in planning for and addressing future revenue deficiencies.
- Responsibly plan for and coordinate managed growth activities, development, and redevelopment opportunities within the city while protecting community concerns.
- Work with all stakeholders in navigating the challenges and opportunities associated with tourism.
- Review and assist with the subsequent implementation of the City's Strategic Plan.
- Conduct coordination efforts for the critically needed beach renourishment program.

During the first six months my efforts will involve:

- Conducting meetings with staff, elected officials, citizen groups, and to some extent county/state officials to assess city operations, concerns, positions, and dynamics.

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- Learning the City Commission's goals, priorities, and insights -- this effort will be critical to developing the appropriate strategic strategies.
- Assessing the City's financial position and reviewing anticipated future trends.
- Further familiarization with relevant laws and the City's codes prior to my start date.
- Assessing current performance measures that will be used to determine if staff and I are meeting organizational goals established by the City Commission and that citizens' expectations are met. This effort will include initiating revisions and clarifications as necessary to identify new and appropriate metrics for gauging successful performance.

I work well with the media and try to ensure accurate, quality coverage for citizens. Part of my effort is designed to help the media keep up to date on the City's operations and programs. My personal appearances in the media can range from occasional to frequent, as I defer to the Mayor and elected officials as to how they prefer. Social media platforms are also instrumental in communicating with citizens and the public at large. My experience has included the use of Facebook, Twitter, and multiple other social media platforms, in conjunction with organizational websites, listserv's, newsletters, and direct mailings, to deliver the messaging of the agency.

I do not anticipate anyone contacting the city with negative comments about me, apart from a former elected official who persists in unsubstantiated personal and professional attacks stemming from an instance where caution was needed to be exercised before a project was approved by the governing body.

In my spare time, I enjoy water activities, golfing, hiking, and traveling with my family.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Highly Ethical
- Knowledgeable
- Empowering
- Accessible
- Positive
- Calm

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

Six months after my hiring there developed a change in direction, focus, and responsibilities for the Town Administrator position due to a majority transition of the Town's Board of Commissioners. Both parties separated voluntarily under employment agreement provisions, and I have no negative comments about the community.

Michael Shawn McGlothlin, MBA - PA

MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation at the Town of Redington Shores was \$132,300.00 per year.

Section 7

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
MICHAEL "MIKE" SHAWN MCGLOTHLIN**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
Columbia County, OR	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Oregon	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
Columbia County, OR	February 2013 - Mr. McGlothlin is named in a lawsuit filed by Professional Credit Service Disposition: March 2013 , Dismissed
	<i>*See Next Page for Candidate Explanation For Records Found</i>
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Oregon	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Speak to Consultant

Personal Bankruptcy

October 2001 - Bankruptcy, Chapter 7
Disposition: February 2002, Terminated/
Discharged

**See Personal Disclosure for Explanation
of Records Found.*

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for
MICHAEL "MIKE" SHAWN MCGLOTHLIN**

Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed
Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

From: Michael McGlothlin [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Background Check Records that Require an Explanation
To: Monique Rogers [REDACTED]

Good morning, Monique,

This reported action involved a disputed commercial account that my wife and I were contesting due to payment made and the business maintaining that the account was not paid in full. As is obvious from the dismissal, we prevailed. Please do let me know if I can assist with any other questions that may arise.

Thank you for the opportunity to address and I hope that you are having a great day!

Best regards,
Mike
Sent from my iPhone

**Background Check Summary for
MICHAEL "MIKE" SHAWN MCGLOTHLIN
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Michael Shawn McGlothlin

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ☒ No ☐
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. LinkedIn account only - no other social media accounts.
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes ☐ No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
Wright v. Town of Zebulon - summary judgement granted.

Attested to: Michael S. McGlothlin
Signature of Applicant

**Background Check Summary for
MICHAEL "MIKE" SHAWN MCGLOTHLIN
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

In the 1990's I, unfortunately, went through a very financially vindictive divorce which resulted in me needing to declare personal bankruptcy in order to financially recover.

After doing so I did fully recover and have not been a party to any bankruptcy proceeding, either personal or business related, since that one instance. For further clarification, I have never been a party to a business bankruptcy in any capacity and have had a record of multiple years of independent financial audits to document my fiduciary capabilities and responsibilities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this or any other topic.

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Michael McGlothlin

Mike Pafumi – Public Works Supervisor, Redington Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Pafumi worked with Mr. McGlothlin in Redington Shores, Florida, beginning in 2023. At the time, Mr. McGlothlin served as the Town Administrator, and Mr. Pafumi held the role of Public Works Supervisor, reporting directly to Mr. McGlothlin.

Mr. McGlothlin's job performance is solid and effective. Mr. McGlothlin supervises his staff without micromanaging, maintains awareness of the chain of command, and provides consistent guidance and support. Mr. McGlothlin communicates clearly and maintains a strong professional presence, enabling productive day-to-day operations.

Mr. McGlothlin consistently makes good decisions, both in general and when hiring personnel. He handles high-pressure situations calmly, never losing his temper, and demonstrates strong problem-solving capabilities. During hurricane recovery efforts, Mr. McGlothlin managed debris removal logistics across multiple towns and agencies, taking a leadership role in coordinating response activities.

Mr. McGlothlin maintained daily communication via text, email, phone, and in-person meetings. He shows a clear commitment to transparency and ensures his team stays informed. He leads by example and rallies employees around the organization's vision, rather than remaining behind a desk managing processes. He makes himself visible in the community, addresses constituent concerns personally, and regularly participates in public meetings.

Mr. McGlothlin handles customer service responsibilities particularly well in a demanding and high-maintenance environment. He demonstrates sound financial skills, completes assigned tasks promptly, and approaches the slow pace of government decision-making with patience. Although the council environment in Redington Shores posed difficulties, Mr. McGlothlin did his best to navigate the political challenges and personalities involved.

Mr. Pafumi confirmed that Mr. McGlothlin has not been involved in any controversies and knew of nothing in his background that would raise concern if publicly scrutinized. Mr. Pafumi would hire Mr. McGlothlin and considers him a strong candidate for a City Manager position, citing his communication skills, task orientation, openness to ideas, and broad experience in military and law enforcement.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Knowledgeable,
- Effective communicator,
- Detail-oriented,
- Experienced,
- Even keeled, and
- Separates business and personal.

Reference Notes
Michael McGlothlin

Strengths: A strong leader who communicates effectively and maintains professionalism under pressure. He brings valuable experience across municipal management, military, and law enforcement sectors.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Rick Swann - Police Chief, Redington Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Swann has known Mr. McGlothlin since 2024, during which time Mr. McGlothlin served as Town Administrator in Redington Shores and Mr. Swann served as Chief of Police. Mr. McGlothlin's high job performance shows his professionalism, ease of collaboration, and high level of detail in administrative leadership.

Mr. McGlothlin demonstrates strength in building consensus, maintaining articulate and persuasive communication, and fostering productive professional relationships. He works well under pressure and handles stressful situations with calmness and efficiency. During hurricane season, Mr. McGlothlin coordinated cleanup and recovery efforts by assigning work tasks, managing workflows, and working closely with departments to ensure a quick and organized response. Mr. Swann specifically praised Mr. McGlothlin's role in these efforts, noting his effective leadership.

Mr. McGlothlin consistently kept Mr. Swann informed through written and verbal communication and demonstrated strong interpersonal skills. Mr. McGlothlin is someone who operates as a leader rather than a desk-bound manager. He possesses strong financial skills and the ability to make good decisions, including in personnel matters. Most of the individuals Mr. McGlothlin hired during his tenure remain in place after his departure.

Mr. McGlothlin regularly attends community meetings, engages with residents, and maintains a strong customer service orientation. He accomplishes tasks in a timely manner and exhibits patience when navigating slow government processes. Mr. McGlothlin maintains professionalism in a contentious environment, including dealing with elected officials who did not have clear expectations. Despite those challenges, Mr. McGlothlin has a respectful and composed demeanor.

Mr. Swann is not aware of any controversy or concerning conduct in Mr. McGlothlin's background. Mr. McGlothlin is a stand-up individual with a background in law enforcement and the military. Mr. Swann would hire Mr. McGlothlin in a heartbeat and believes he would succeed as a City Manager.

Reference Notes Michael McGlothlin

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Cooperative,
- Intelligent,
- Communicative,
- Open-minded,
- Persuasive, and
- Objective.

Strengths: A personable, detail-oriented, articulate consensus builder who demonstrates professionalism and has the ability to lead in crisis.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Robin Gomez - City Manager, Madeira Beach, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Gomez first met Mr. McGlothlin in 2024 while he served as the Town Administrator for Redington Shores. At the time, Mr. Gomez was the City Manager for Madeira Beach. Mr. McGlothlin is a knowledgeable and professional municipal leader who performs well in his position.

Mr. McGlothlin consistently demonstrates strong communication skills and thorough knowledge of the Town. He interacts effectively through phone calls, email, and in-person meetings, ensuring stakeholders are informed and engaged. He makes sound decisions and responds well to stressful situations, maintaining composure and professionalism.

Mr. McGlothlin proves himself as both a high-performance manager and an innovative leader. He regularly attends community meetings and engages with residents, showing a strong commitment to customer service and public interaction. He works effectively with elected officials, offering professional insight and listening carefully to a range of perspectives.

Mr. McGlothlin has strong financial skills and consistently completes tasks on time. He shows patience in navigating slow government processes and maintains an organized, precise approach to his work.

Mr. McGlothlin has not been involved in any controversies and there are no concerns regarding his background or conduct. Mr. Gomez would gladly hire Mr. McGlothlin and believes he would make an excellent City Manager due to his professionalism, friendliness, knowledge, and motivational leadership.

Reference Notes Michael McGlothlin

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Friendly,
- Professional,
- Knowledgeable,
- Precise,
- Organized, and
- Good listener.

Strengths: A professional municipal leader with extensive knowledge of the field and great communication skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Christina Porter - Town Administrator, Indian Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Porter has worked with Mr. McGlothlin since 2024 when she started as the Town Administrator in Indian Shores, Florida. At that time, Mr. McGlothlin served as the Town Administrator for Redington Shores. Redington Shores contracts with Indian Shores for police services. Their professional relationship centered around interlocal service coordination.

Mr. McGlothlin performs his duties with excellence. He responds promptly to all inquiries regarding police contracts and services, such as beach cleanup. He consistently demonstrates reliability and professionalism in every interaction.

Mr. McGlothlin exhibits strong interpersonal skills. He remains friendly, approachable, and an active listener. He communicates effectively by phone and email, ensuring stakeholders remain informed. He demonstrates sound decision-making abilities and maintains a calm demeanor, even under stressful circumstances. For instance, he managed two hurricanes without losing composure, providing steady leadership and ensuring citizens' needs were met during the aftermath.

Mr. McGlothlin handles complex and sometimes antagonistic political environments with grace. Despite managing difficult personalities among elected officials, he stays calm, cool, and collected. His conduct reflects confidence and resilience under pressure. He has also navigated controversial situations, such as conflict with contractors over delayed permits, without compromising service delivery or public trust.

Mr. McGlothlin displays strong financial management skills and completes tasks in a timely manner. He understands the importance of customer service and always strives to serve the community effectively. His leadership style centers around responsiveness and proactive problem-solving.

Reference Notes Michael McGlothlin

From her experience, Ms. Porter believes Mr. McGlothlin would make an excellent City Manager. He provides clear, confident answers and engages professionally. Although others, such as the Mayor, might hold a differing opinion, Ms. Porter firmly supports Mr. McGlothlin's candidacy and speaks highly of his personal character and family values.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Communicative,
- Friendly,
- Determined,
- Knowledgeable,
- Proactive, and
- Responsive.

Strengths: A responsive leader able to stay calm and collected in high-pressure situations.

Weaknesses: None identified.

John Ljuljdjuraj - Business Owner, Redington Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Ljuljdjuraj, a business owner in Redington Shores, has known Mr. McGlothlin since 2024 through their work in the City. He describes Mr. McGlothlin as one of the best individuals employed by the City. He consistently performed his duties and refused to engage in political games, which occasionally made him unpopular with certain individuals.

Mr. McGlothlin demonstrates honesty, professionalism, and effective communication. He interacts with others in a professional and respectful manner and shows excellent interpersonal skills. He consistently makes sound decisions, particularly when hiring personnel, and always seeks to select the most qualified candidate for the position. He avoids political influence and prioritizes the best interests of the City.

Mr. McGlothlin responds well under pressure and maintains a level-headed approach to challenges. He handles stressful situations with composure and professionalism. Mr. McGlothlin possesses a strong financial background, having worked in banking and handled millions of dollars, and brings excellent financial skills to his public service role.

One illustrative example of his commitment to doing what is right involved Mr. Ljuljdjuraj's efforts to obtain a liquor license. When the City inspector denied the license due to a technicality regarding parking, Mr. McGlothlin intervened. He clarified the misunderstanding through written communication, and when city officials failed to respond, Mr. Ljuljdjuraj arranged a meeting. The situation revealed unethical behavior from others in the city government, but Mr. McGlothlin remained above reproach. Without his help, Mr. Ljuljdjuraj would not have secured the license.

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Michael McGlothlin**

Mr. McGlothlin makes himself visible in the community, regularly attends meetings, and effectively engages with residents and groups. He demonstrates excellent customer service skills and completes tasks in a timely and thorough manner. He approaches his responsibilities with dedication, discipline, and honesty. He treats elected officials professionally, remains patient, and upholds integrity even in challenging environments. He ultimately resigned from his position rather than participate in corruption.

Mr. McGlothlin has not been involved in any controversy. There is nothing in his background, personal conduct, or professional record that would raise concerns. Mr. Ljuljdjuraj holds Mr. McGlothlin in high regard and considers him the best and most honest city official he has worked with. Mr. Ljuljdjuraj strongly recommends Mr. McGlothlin for any leadership position and believes he would make an outstanding City Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Professional,
- Good communication,
- Honest,
- Level-headed,
- Trustworthy, and
- Effective.

Strengths: A leader known for his honesty, professionalism, and commitment to hiring based on merit rather than politics. He brings financial expertise and consistently demonstrates sound judgment and integrity.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Ginger McQuigg - Parks and Recreation Board Member, Redington Shores, FL

Ms. McQuigg has known Mr. McGlothlin since 2024, when he served as the Town Manager for Redington Shores, Florida. She served on the Parks and Recreation Board.

Mr. McGlothlin's job performance is responsive and effective, particularly in contrast to his predecessors. He remains highly accessible and communicative, regularly interacting with residents by phone and in person. He attends community meetings and functions consistently, building trust and visibility within the Town. His approachable and grounded demeanor makes him well-liked among community members and board participants.

Mr. McGlothlin consistently makes sound decisions and demonstrates strong customer service skills. He maintains composure under pressure and handles interpersonal or political challenges with professionalism. He brings financial literacy and helpful context to the charter committee,

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which enables board members to make informed decisions. He demonstrates patience, sound judgment, and the ability to collaborate across diverse viewpoints when working with elected officials.

Mr. McGlothlin's leadership style, grounded in presence and communication, allows him to build a rapport across the community. He often participates in town events with his family, reinforcing his commitment to the community he serves.

Mr. McGlothlin would make an excellent City Manager. His professional demeanor, responsiveness, and dedication to public service reflect a leadership style well suited for local government. Ms. McQuigg expresses full confidence in his abilities and said she would gladly hire him if given the opportunity.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Responsive,
- Pleasant,
- Has time for people,
- Strong character,
- Helpful, and
- Good communicator.

Strengths: Strong community engagement, financial acumen, clear communication, steady leadership, and a consistent presence at public events and meetings.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Barry Rubin - Chamber of Commerce President, Redington Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Rubin serves as President of the local Chamber of Commerce and has interacted professionally with Mr. McGlothlin in his capacity as City Manager. While their relationship is not deeply personal, Mr. Rubin has observed Mr. McGlothlin's work closely enough to form a strong impression of his leadership and performance.

Mr. McGlothlin manages city operations effectively and ensures that municipal functions run smoothly. He exhibits strong management skills and consistently keeps the city moving forward. His approach to governance is marked by professionalism and friendly, personable engagement with stakeholders. Mr. Rubin described his interactions with Mr. McGlothlin as both professional and pleasant, underscoring the latter's ability to maintain productive and courteous relationships.

Mr. McGlothlin demonstrates sound judgment in personnel decisions and general operations alike. He communicates effectively and keeps others informed, often through in-person

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discussions and email. He maintains a visible presence in the community and regularly attends public meetings on behalf of the city. His financial acumen is strong, and he consistently accomplishes assigned tasks in a timely manner. Mr. McGlothlin handled recent hurricane issues commendably, showcasing his ability to lead during a crisis.

Known for his composure, innovation, and customer service orientation, Mr. McGlothlin inspires confidence in his leadership. He interacts well with the public both individually and in groups, demonstrating a personable and approachable demeanor. He exhibits patience and operates effectively in political environments with multiple elected officials holding differing views.

Mr. McGlothlin has not been involved in any controversies. There are no concerns about his professional or personal conduct, nor any aspects of his background that would raise issues for a potential employer. Mr. Rubin expressed full confidence in Mr. McGlothlin's abilities and noted that he would be glad to have Mr. McGlothlin on his team. He believes Mr. McGlothlin did a great job in Redington and would make an excellent City Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Cohesive,
- Bright,
- Friendly,
- Competent,
- Personable, and
- Innovator.

Strengths: Excels in city management, demonstrates reliable leadership, maintains a strong presence in the community, and handles operations with competence and innovation.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Joseph Licata - Former Commissioner and Vice Mayor, Redington Shores, FL

Mr. Licata first met Mr. McGlothlin in late 2023 when he was hired as the Town Administrator for Redington Shores. During their professional relationship, Mr. McGlothlin proved to be an exceptional administrator whose job performance was characterized by a high degree of professionalism, responsiveness, and a personable demeanor.

Mr. McGlothlin demonstrates consistent follow-through and maintains immediate turnaround times on inquiries and tasks. He communicates effectively through various channels including emails, texts, and regular monthly meetings. His administrative reports are thorough and detailed, contributing to well-informed decision-making processes. He led the community

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through two major hurricanes just one week apart, managing emergency operations calmly and efficiently. His ability to remain composed under pressure and continue delivering high performance is one of his strongest traits.

Mr. McGlothlin consistently makes sound hiring decisions, building a dependable and effective staff that continues to serve the town well. As a leader, he embraces innovation while maintaining operational stability and aligning employees with the town's strategic vision. He played a key role in discussions about transitioning the Town's government structure and was brought in specifically to operate as a CEO-type figure for the municipality.

Mr. McGlothlin participates actively in the community, attending public events and meetings even on weekends. He excels in both one-on-one and group interactions with the public and is highly customer service oriented. His financial skills are also commendable as he maintains a well-organized budget that aligns with the Town's interests.

Mr. McGlothlin collaborates well with elected officials, even in the presence of differing agendas and personalities. Throughout public meetings, he avoids conflict and facilitates constructive discussion. His patience and professionalism are evident in his approach to governance and problem-solving.

No controversies or concerns have been associated with Mr. McGlothlin. Mr. Licata expressed strong confidence in Mr. McGlothlin's integrity and leadership abilities. If Mr. Licata were still serving as Commissioner, he would hire Mr. McGlothlin again without hesitation.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Personable,
- Professional,
- Interactive,
- Responsive,
- Follows through, and
- Available.

Strengths: A leader who remains responsive under pressure, demonstrates strong fiscal management, and has a talent for rallying teams around shared goals.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Mary Beth Henderson - Former Mayor, Redington Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Henderson worked with Mr. McGlothlin during her tenure as Mayor of Redington Shores, where he served as the Town Administrator. Their professional relationship began in 2023 and involved regular face-to-face meetings, emails, and texts. Ms. Henderson consistently found Mr.

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McGlothlin to be communicative and reliable by keeping her informed about matters within his area of responsibility.

Mr. McGlothlin maintains strong relationships with staff and is known for being approachable, kind, and easy to get along with. He exhibits good financial skills, makes sound personnel and general decisions, and maintains high organizational performance. He is a leader who rallies employees around a shared vision rather than a manager who focuses solely on processes. He regularly attended community meetings and represented the town in public settings, engaging effectively with residents both one-on-one and in groups.

Mr. McGlothlin faced challenges in a difficult political environment where the Commission was reluctant to cede authority to a Town Administrator. He faced an uphill battle and did not always follow through as strongly as he might have. In high-stress situations, he tends to retreat rather than confront the issues directly. Nevertheless, he was not at fault for the broader dysfunction within the Commission, and he maintained high moral standards and professionalism throughout.

Although no single example of a successful team-led solution stood out due to the persistent political challenges in the town, Mr. McGlothlin made significant efforts to improve operations and would have been even more effective with a more cooperative governing body. He would have gained greater support and popularity had he lived within the community, though this was not a requirement for the position due to local housing costs.

Ms. Henderson expressed confidence in Mr. McGlothlin's ability to serve as a City Manager, depending on the size of the organization and the level of support provided. She would hire him again and holds a high opinion of his capabilities.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Nice,
- Kind,
- Easy to get along with,
- Family oriented,
- Good, and
- Great manager.

Strengths: Builds strong relationships with staff, demonstrates financial acumen, and performs well in stable environments where he is supported by leadership.

Weaknesses: Occasionally struggles with follow-through and tends to retreat under pressure. He did not overcome some of the challenges posed by a politically resistant Commission.

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Erin Schoos - Commissioner, Redington Shores, FL

Ms. Schoos, a Commissioner for the Town of Redington Shores, worked closely with Mr. McGlothlin during his tenure as Town Administrator. She credits him as being extremely instrumental in her success on the commission, especially as she entered government service with no prior experience. Mr. McGlothlin demonstrated responsiveness, clarity, and consistent support as she transitioned into her role.

Mr. McGlothlin demonstrates a high level of efficiency and excels in organizing complex municipal operations. He inherited a challenging situation in Redington Shores and helped bring order and structure to town operations. He also exhibits strong budgeting skills and ensures the town's finances are well managed.

Mr. McGlothlin communicates openly and clearly, using in-person meetings, emails, and phone calls to maintain consistent contact. He demonstrates leadership both behind the scenes and in the community. He can serve as both a hands-on manager and a strategic leader who rallies employees around the vision of the organization. He is friendly, easy to approach, knowledgeable, thorough, calm, and dedicated.

Mr. McGlothlin makes sound decisions, particularly when hiring personnel. He stays composed and effective under pressure, particularly during high-stress periods such as hurricane season. He consistently demonstrates the ability to lead and maintain performance, initiate change, and adapt to evolving organizational needs.

Mr. McGlothlin shows great attention to public concerns, with strong customer service skills and community engagement. For example, he quickly coordinated with staff to protect a group of sea turtles found in a residential driveway, demonstrating his responsiveness and care for the community.

Mr. McGlothlin handles complex dynamics among elected officials with patience and professionalism. Redington Shores is known for challenging political environments, and he managed conflicting personalities effectively.

Mr. McGlothlin has not been involved in any controversy, and there are no concerns regarding his background or conduct. Ms. Schoos praised his overall performance and stated she would gladly hire him again. She believes he would make an excellent City Manager due to his effectiveness, leadership, and dedication to serving the public.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Friendly,
- Easy to approach,
- Thorough,
- Knowledgeable,
- Dedicated, and
- Calm.

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Strengths: Highly efficient, calm under pressure, responsive, and effective in organizing municipal operations. Demonstrates strong financial management and leadership abilities.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Thomas Kapper - Mayor, Redington Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Kapper, who serves as the Mayor of Redington Shores, FL, has known Mr. McGlothlin since 2025. Though their working relationship is relatively recent, he has had sufficient interaction with Mr. McGlothlin in his role as City Manager to provide relevant feedback on his performance and character.

Mr. McGlothlin's overall job performance is average. He communicates and interacts well with others and demonstrates extremely good interpersonal skills. He frequently holds in-person meetings to keep others informed and maintains strong community engagement, attending meetings and making himself available to the public. He treats elected officials with respect, which contributes to his ability to work in politically complex environments.

Mr. McGlothlin follows up on calls, gets things done, and serves as a leader who rallies others around a shared vision. He is customer service-oriented and completes assigned tasks in a timely manner. Mr. McGlothlin has not been involved in any controversy, and there is nothing in his personal or professional background that would raise concern.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Good politician,
- Follows up on calls,
- Gets things done,
- Good communicator,
- Leader, and
- Customer service oriented.

Strengths: Demonstrates initiative, follow-through, and strong communication skills. Active in the community and maintains positive relationships with elected officials and constituents.

Weaknesses: None identified.

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Larry Maynard - Commissioner, Redington Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Maynard serves as a Commissioner of Redington Shores, Florida. He worked with Mr. McGlothlin during the latter's tenure in municipal government. Mr. McGlothlin voluntarily resigned from his position in the town.

Mr. Maynard declined to respond to specific questions regarding Mr. McGlothlin's job performance, interactions, or qualifications. He stated that he did not want to incriminate anyone but made it explicitly clear that he would not hire Mr. McGlothlin for any position. He also stated he would not rehire him.

Peter Schatzel - Public Accountant, Redington Shores, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Peter Schatzel has known Mr. McGlothlin since approximately 2015 in a professional capacity as a Certified Public Accountant. He prepares Mr. McGlothlin's income tax returns. While Mr. Schatzel has not worked with Mr. McGlothlin in an employment or administrative setting, he became acquainted with him through a joint landownership arrangement involving one of Mr. Schatzel's longtime clients.

Although Mr. Schatzel cannot speak directly about Mr. McGlothlin's job performance in a managerial or governmental role, he consistently observes Mr. McGlothlin to be a straightforward and honest individual. Mr. McGlothlin is likable, decent, and someone who presents himself well in interactions. Mr. Schatzel did not identify any weaknesses in Mr. McGlothlin's character or conduct. He holds a high personal regard for Mr. McGlothlin's integrity and character.

Words or phrases used to describe Michael McGlothlin:

- Honest,
- Straightforward,
- Decent,
- Likable,
- Integrity, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Consistently honest and straightforward, comes across as a genuinely decent individual in all personal and professional interactions.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Hazel Jones
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

TBN Weekly (FL)
November 11, 2024

Rebuilding in 2 Pinellas beach towns delayed after permit official injured on job

Author: *Jack Prator*

Chely Hernandez-Miller and her husband, Dick, packed only enough clothes for three days when they evacuated their Redington Beach home to her daughter's place in Pinellas Park. "That's how long we thought we'd be there," she said. Now, one month after Hurricane Helene's surge climbed 4 feet inside their home, the couple still hasn't been able to start repairs. Like dozens of other neighbors, they're waiting on substantial damage letters sent through the town's building department staff. "They're moving slow," Hernandez-Miller said. "They're coming through, but I don't know when they're coming. They won't tell us when."

A town decision made at the start of the year, long before hurricane season began, is partly behind the delay residents now feel. Redington Beach officials were enthusiastic in January to join forces with the town's neighbor, Redington Shores, to direct building permits to one joint office. Redington Beach's mayor said the agreement, passed in February, would "create better turnaround time, service and accountability" for town residents, Tampa Bay Newspapers reported earlier this year. But when the towns' building official was injured on the job after Milton, forcing him on medical leave, the permitting process for residents of both towns stalled.

Mike McGlothlin, Redington Shores town administrator, called it a "perfect storm" of setbacks. He said rumors about the building official's departure have swirled around town. "He had just started up the next phase of significant damage assessments after Milton ... and then he had the injury," **McGlothlin** said. "It happened during the course of duty — just unexpectedly." Though **McGlothlin** declined to provide the building official's name, Mark Vasquez is listed as the Redington Shores building official, according to the town's website. Vasquez's LinkedIn profile shows he started the job in January. Calls from a Tampa Bay Times reporter to multiple phone numbers listed for Vasquez went unanswered. "We've had some other challenges, aside from just the injury, but that would be the key reason for our delay for our community and getting things up and running," **McGlothlin** said. "It's going to be a multi-phase, monthslong project for sure."

The town has hired Bill Hudson as interim building official in the meantime. Hudson is also the regional manager of permitting contractor SafeBuilt, which handled building department services for Redington Shores before the town established its own department in June. In a town hall meeting Wednesday evening in Redington Beach, Hudson tried to assuage neighbors' concerns. The biggest question on their minds: When will substantial damage reports be available? "I don't know," Hudson said.

Until those assessments are finished, homeowners won't know where they land on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's 50% rule. If damage costs exceed 50% of a home's value, residents will have to tear down the house and rebuild. Hudson said the town's building office is

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

only allowing repairs that keep people “safe, secure and sanitary” in their homes. Residents should apply for emergency permits as soon as possible and can begin work immediately. “My first push is getting everybody to a point where they can be safe,” he said. While the permitting grace period applies to emergency work like demolition, electrical and air conditioning, it might take longer before the town will approve rebuild permits like those for cabinets and drywall.

Hudson said he’s enforcing permitting so strictly because he’s worried FEMA could raise the town’s federal flood insurance rates. “If we don’t follow their rules, they will revoke the participation,” he said. Many residents, including Hernandez-Miller, said they just want to be back in their homes soon. “We come just about every other day, and we just look and sit in the garage,” Hernandez-Miller said. “What can we do? Nothing.”

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St. Pete Catalyst (FL)
December 15, 2023

Another Pinellas County town bans beach shark fishing

Author: *Ashley Morales*

A ban on fishing for sharks from the beach is now in place in Redington Shores. The town passed the ordinance banning beach shark fishing at its Board of Commissioners meeting Dec. 13. First-time shark-fishing offenders will face a \$250 fine. Repeat violations will result in a \$500 fine.

Redington Shores modeled its ordinance after Indian Shores, where police found a dead 10-foot tiger shark, pregnant with 40 pups, washed ashore in June. After an investigation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Indian Shores police believed the shark was likely fished from the beach and left to die, leading the town to ban beach shark fishing in September.

“Protecting residents and visitors to our shores, along with the protection of the shark species that also call our waters home, is of vital importance to our community,” said Redington Shores Town Administrator **Mike McGlothlin**. “The recent passage of this legislation by our Commissioners is indicative of their hearing the concerns of their constituents about these two core issues and acting in a manner that addresses the associated concerns.”

The *Catalyst* requested data from FWC on the number of sharks found on Pinellas County beaches. In response, spokesperson Johnny Veach said in an email that data from its Fish Kill Hotline may not be the best representation, noting, “Although we do get plenty of shark reports, the reports to the FWC Fish Kill Hotline are completely dependent on a citizen’s motivation to make a report. Fish kill reports only come from locations where people are, so if no one is around to see it, it doesn’t get reported.”

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TBN Weekly (FL)
December 13, 2023

Indian Shores police fundraiser gets hairy

Author: *Jeannie Carlson*

When the Indian Shores Police Dept. initiated its annual “No Shave November” fundraiser and toy drive five years ago to benefit children’s charities at Christmas time, no one knew the event would catch on so well. But from its modest beginnings — launched in 2019 with a seed donation of a few hundred dollars — the campaign has grown impressively. With a week to go in the latest fund drive, officials said proceeds from the fundraiser already were approaching some \$12,000. Department policy requires that all officers are clean-shaven, but the “No Shave November” fundraiser allows officers who want to participate to go all month without shaving in exchange for a \$25 donation. This year, Chief Rick Swann started the beard-growing season in October, extending through November — at \$25 a month. A related beard-growing contest was open to those working on staff in either of the towns the ISPD covers, Indian Shores and Redington Shores. The fundraiser culminated with judges from Indian Shores and Redington Shores awarding “best beard” in two categories: “Young Bucks” and “Gray Beard.” Judging took place at the Indian Shores Town Hall on Dec. 7. Judges included Angie Tillia, accounting specialist for Indian Shores; Brian Curran of Santa’s Angels; Denise Vought, president of the Indian Shores Property Owners Assoc.; Mary Palmer, consultant for Redington Shores; and Chris and Jen Lazorcheck, owners of Coco Wood Grill in Redington Shores.

Redington Shores Town Administrator **Mike McGlothlin** won the Gray Beards category and Cpl. Shane Tindall was a second-time winner in the Young Bucks category. Both winners will receive free shaves from Stefanec’s Barber Shop in Belleair Bluffs, courtesy of the police chief. “Every dollar goes to charity,” Swann said. This year’s proceeds will go to Santa’s Angels, Clothes To Kids, Suncoast Voices for Children and Ready for Life.

Other participants in the Gray Beards category included Swann, Maj. Glen Smith, Lt. Jeff Philips and Sgt. Tom Goettel of the ISPD, plus Willis Knight of Indian Shores Public Works and Brian Rusu of the Indian Shores Building Dept. Other Young Bucks participants included Ofc. Greg Rekucki, Ofc. Cornelius Hill, Ofc. Justin Guillory, MPO Kevyn Andrews and Ofc. Jack Griggs of the ISPD, as well as Steve Hale and Ralph Bellinger, both of Indian Shores Public Works, and **Mike Pafumi** of Redington Shores Public Works.

Kooky Coconuts supplied the sandwiches for the luncheon that followed the judging. Other donations came from Pelican Club, Club at Redington Condos, Indian Shores Women’s Club, Anchorage Condominiums, Kenny’s Corner, Nachman’s Seafood, Dog and Parrot and Riverside Golf, among others. Meantime, a toy drive continues at the town halls in Indian Shores and Redington Shores. Monetary donations are also being accepted, in addition to donated toys.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

TBN Weekly (FL)
October 18, 2023

Redington Shores' new administrator has filled key posts, gotten down to work

Author: *Sheila Mullane Estrada*

The town's new administrator, **Mike McGlothlin**, likens his first two months in office as a combination marathon run and a "Whac-A-Mole" game as he reacted to a variety of erupting crises, including a close brush with a powerful hurricane. "We definitely had to hit the ground running," **McGlothlin** said Oct. 13. "Like any new job, it was kind of like playing Whac-A-Mole, as issues popped up that needed to get addressed and projects that needed to get jumped on that were started by the previous administration. And then in Week 4, we had a hurricane. It was a great welcome back home to Florida." Oh, and he also had to finalize a budget and millage rate for the coming year, search for a new town clerk and building official, oversee updating many of the town's codes, and, yes, supervise cleanup following Hurricane Idalia.

Last week, **McGlothlin** announced his pick for the new town clerk, Margaret Carey. Her appointment will have to be ratified by the commission, but she is tentatively scheduled to start her new job on Nov. 13. "We are very fortunate to have found a very, very good candidate," **McGlothlin** told the commission. "She is very excited to be here." Carey is currently the deputy city clerk in Avondale, Arizona, and previously worked in similar and administrative positions in Buckeye, Arizona, as well as in Palos Heights and other towns in Illinois. She holds a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership from Lewis University in Illinois.

McGlothlin is also researching hiring a full-time building official. Currently, the town outsources the function of building inspections to an outside firm. The administrator told the commission last week that he is discussion sharing the new building official with the town of Redington Beach in exchange for the building fees that town collects from individual construction projects. **McGlothlin** is also closing in on completing a 30-60-90 action day plan he created when he was hired by the commission. At the top of his list were wastewater infrastructure improvement projects, developing a "more efficient" financial software system, implementing the town's stormwater master plan, and reviewing the town's parks and public access plan developed by the beautification committee.

Nearly half of the items on his list have been completed. Items still in progress include such things as renovating the town's parking lots, upgrading the audio/visual capabilities of the commission's meeting chamber, installing utilities along West Gulf Boulevard underground, and reviewing potential changes to the town's Charter. **McGlothlin** hopes that a referendum on charter changes could be placed on the spring 2025 election ballot. "We will be looking at formalizing the commission/administrator form of government," he explained. **McGlothlin** is the third administrator the town has hired. The first resigned decades ago amid conflicts with a commission that was used to running the town directly. The second resigned just months ago over many of the same conflicts. "I am aware of the past history. Of course, I did my due diligence before applying," **McGlothlin** said, adding that he is "aware of politics, but I don't

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practice it.” It appears the commission is quite happy with **McGlothlin’s** performance to date. At the commission’s last meeting, Vice Mayor Lisa Hendrickson praised **McGlothlin’s** “leadership” and thanked him for his direct assistance with her constituents. “You make my job easy,” Hendrickson said. Similarly, Commissioner Joe Licata praised **McGlothlin**, calling his response to commissioner’s concerns “awesome.” Licata said his resident constituents have been “blown away” by **McGlothlin’s** personal contact with them.

In turn, **McGlothlin** praised the commission for giving him their “utmost support” and “allowing me to do my job”. He said one of his top goals as the town’s administrator is to “extend good customer service” to the town’s residents. He urged them to “feel free” to bring issues to his direct attention. That enhanced communication will be a major part of the town’s planned “rebranding” and will include a more frequent newsletter that keeps residents better informed about their government and their town.

Before being hired in Redington Shores at an initial salary of \$126,000, **McGlothlin** served as city administrator in Columbia City, Oregon, where he previously was the city’s chief of police. Previously, he was division commander for the Zebulon Police Department in North Carolina. He holds a master’s degree in business administration and a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice administration from Columbia Southern University.

The commission plans to review **McGlothlin’s** job performance after three and six months, and then annually during his contract period, after which he and the commission could renew or alter the contract. **McGlothlin** also received up to \$8,000 to help pay for relocation expenses from his current home in Oregon. He is required to live in Pinellas County. He and his wife are renting a home in the Largo area but have not yet decided where they will permanently settle. Their youngest son serves in the Coast Guard and was recently transferred to Key West and has already come up to visit his parents. For fun, **McGlothlin** describes his family as “water babies” who love to go to the beach and play golf. “Working in paradise does have its challenges, though. It is easy to get jealous seeing people go to the beach on work days,” **McGlothlin** said.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
July 19, 2023

City administrator of Columbia City sets eyes on Sunshine State

Author: *Scott Keith*

Citing a need to be closer to his family in Florida, **Michael McGlothlin** is leaving his post as city administrator of Columbia City. **McGlothlin** has accepted a position as town administrator for Redington Shores, a town of about 2,500 in the Tampa Bay metropolitan area. **McGlothlin** became Columbia City's police chief in July 2009. With the retirement of then-city administrator Leahnette Rivers in 2019, **McGlothlin** became city administrator — first serving in an interim role, then in a permanent capacity. "The initial plan was to retire from Columbia City totally, but life, health, and plans change," **McGlothlin** told Pamplin Media Group. "That's been the reason why we decided to make this step to return to my home state of Florida."

As to his decision to work in Redington Shores, **McGlothlin** said, "We threw our name in the hat, and we're fortunate enough to make it through the process. It's with a full heart that we're leaving Columbia City." **McGlothlin** has enjoyed his time in the small city just north of St. Helens. "There's nothing negative at all about the city here," he said. "It's a great community, a great team here at Columbia City, with employees, and a fantastic mayor and council, as well." **McGlothlin** added, "Columbia City is going to be in great hands moving forward. It's a tough decision to make, but sometimes your plan in life, and health issues, change. You have to take care of the family, as well as the career."

McGlothlin is proud of city accomplishments during his tenure in Columbia City. "We've been working on some infrastructure projects. We've upgraded our reservoirs seismically," **McGlothlin** said. "We've done some waterline improvements. We've done some street projects. We're kicking off a sewer project right now." **McGlothlin** continued, "We've also accomplished the building of a first phase of the Rivers Walk Trail System. It's being named in honor of Leahnette Rivers. Right now, the first phase is about a half-mile stretch that runs along McBride Creek."

The outgoing city administrator concluded, "We've accomplished a lot in a short period of time. There's still much work to be done, but I'm totally confident in everybody who works for Columbia City. I'm very proud to be a part of this team." Of **McGlothlin**, Columbia City Mayor Susan Ziglinski added, "He is absolutely, positively wonderful. We are going to miss him terribly." **McGlothlin's** last day as city administrator is Friday, July 21. He takes over his Florida position Aug. 7.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

TBN Weekly (FL)
June 28, 2023

Redington Shores picks Florida native, Oregon municipal vet as new administrator

Author: *Sheila Mullane Estrada*

The Town Commission has unanimously picked **Michael S. McGlothlin**, a Florida native and 29-year veteran of municipal, law enforcement and military service, to be the next town administrator. The action will not become completely official, however, until an official contract is approved at an as-yet unscheduled commission meeting. On June 22, the commission directed its attorney, Robert Eschenfelder, to negotiate a contract with **McGlothlin**. “I am humbled, honored, and very excited,” **McGlothlin** told the commission. “I am looking forward to earning your trust and working with your team. I am very glad to be coming home to Florida.”

He drew laughter when he said the “text lines” with friends and family in his current home in Oregon “are already burning up,” following his being chosen as Redington Shores’ new administrator. **McGlothlin** has said he expects to be available onsite in the town by mid-August, according to Vice Mayor Lisa Hendrickson. The town advertised a salary range from \$90,000 to \$130,000 for the new administrator. The current administrator, Jeff Shoobridge, currently earns \$125,080 annually.

The commission plans to ask Shoobridge, whose resignation officially takes place Friday (June 30), to remain available as a paid consultant to assist town staff with continuing implementation of town operations, as well as coordinate the handover of ongoing town management to **McGlothlin**. Shoobridge had clashed with several commissioners over the past year. The same problem happened nearly 20 years ago, when the town hired its first administrator, who then resigned a year later, similarly frustrated over blurred areas of commission responsibilities. Eschenfelder, who will draw up a consulting contract, estimated Shoobridge’s fee at about \$50 an hour, to be billed in six-minute increments. “It will not be full-time,” said Mayor Marybeth Henderson. “Just when we need him.”

The commission picked **McGlothlin** over Howard W. Brown, the former village manager for Indiantown, Florida. In an informal straw poll prior to picking **McGlothlin**, Commissioner Jennie Blackburn at first preferred Brown, but later switched her official vote to **McGlothlin**. “We were fortunate to have really good candidates this time,” Blackburn said. In just a few weeks from posting the job opening, the town had 53 people vying for the administrator position. The commission narrowed that list to six last month and then three. After several candidates dropped out, the commission found itself deciding between **McGlothlin** and Brown. “They are both excellent candidates and we are lucky, lucky, lucky to have them,” added Henderson.

McGlothlin served for the past five years as city administrator for Columbia City, Oregon, where he previously was the city’s chief of police for nine years. Previously, he was division commander for the Zebulon Police Department in North Carolina, also for nine years. He also worked as a law enforcement officer and special assistant to the city manager in Fayetteville,

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

North Carolina. Earlier, he served for seven years in the U.S. Army's Military Police Airborne Battalion at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. **McGlothlin** holds a master's degree in business administration and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration from Columbia Southern University. As part of the commission's selection process, **McGlothlin** was asked to submit a 30-60-90-day "action plan" for how he would manage the town if hired.

Hendrickson praised **McGlothlin**, saying her interviews and research into his background has convinced her he is the right pick for the town. "I feel really confident in **Michael McGlothlin** to run our town. ... (He) can roll up his sleeves and get down with staff," she said. "... (He) came off to me as a very strong collaborative leader who will definitely provide mentorship to our staff and give them guidance when asked for it or if they need it. He will be a complement to our current staff. ... I am just impressed overall."

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
April 28, 2023

Views are aplenty at a proposed fire station public meeting in Columbia City

Author: *Scott Keith*

Columbia City residents were not shy in expressing their feelings about a proposed Columbia River Fire & Rescue fire station in their town, that would be located at the southern end of Jim Bundy Memorial Park. At a nearly packed public meeting held at the Community Hall Thursday evening, April 27, residents were critical of the proposed park location. Among the concerns expressed were the need to protect trees in the scenic area and the need to consider other locations.

While a fire station is still in the discussion stages, city administrator **Michael McGlothlin** said there are public safety concerns in Columbia City for ambulance and fire services, especially with future population growth expected. At the moment, Columbia City is served by CRF&R from two primary stations: the St. Helens main station and the Rainier station. Deputy Chief Eric Smythe estimates that roughly 6% to 8% of the fire district's calls come from Columbia City. Smythe says the district needs to expand its capabilities to handle fire and rescue situations within its coverage area.

Susan Taylor, who lives in Columbia City, said she has concerns about the Bundy Park location. "Our concerns are with the fire department being put in Bundy Park, that it will disrupt the neighborhood," Taylor said. "I'm concerned about the small children." Taylor continued, "I hate to see that park being given up and given free. They can get grants to find some land from a private owner. I hate to see the old growth trees gone. Everybody uses that park. It's beautiful, it's full of wildflowers and trillium. I just don't want it put there."

Another Columbia City resident, Michelle Erickson, said she wants to make sure city residents are able to provide feedback before the city council decides whether or not to locate a new fire station in her city. "I'm concerned that will they take the communities feedback on whether they want it at the location that they are proposing, or not," Erickson said. "I think the community is concerned because that is a beautiful area of our town."

Voicing support for a new fire station in Columbia City is city resident John Hansen. "I think that it sounds attractive right now," Hansen said. "I think it's a long process. I think the station will be built possibly four years from now, but the planning starts here." Hansen said, "It has some advantages not only for Columbia City but for the whole area. I think it's going to be a good thing." City resident Susan Proctor also wants a fire station. "I brought it down to my personal level which is my personal safety and that of the rest of the community as well," Proctor said. "Our populations are not going down, they're only going up. The calls are numerous." Proctor added, "Between everything else that's going on in the world, we do have to look towards our future."

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Addressing citizen concerns about trees in the park and public input, City Administrator **McGlothlin** said, "I think the city showed the fact that we want to hear what our citizens say by the fact that we had the meeting on April 6 and the meeting this evening. We're going to be sending out a survey. Once those come back, we'll tabulate and report to council, so they have an idea on what the citizens input is." As to citizen concerns about the trees at Bundy Park, **McGlothlin** said, "We want to retain all the healthy trees that we can. We understand there may be some trees that do need to be taken out. But we also had conversations with CRF&R that they would keep that tree removal to a minimum."

Smythe said a new fire station in Columbia City "would allow us to put personnel in Columbia City, an engine in Columbia City, an ambulance in Columbia City, that could respond and be on scene within a mere couple of minutes." Smythe said that currently there is a response time of about four to eight minutes in Columbia City, depending on where crews are. The plan would be for fire service grants to fund construction of the station, an effort that would be led by the fire district. The district would be responsible for the maintenance and operation of the building.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
April 21, 2023

Amid homelessness crisis, Columbia County lacks plan

Author: *Aurora Biggers*

Columbia County is not exempt from the statewide crisis surrounding homelessness and the lack of affordable housing. Yet, the county and its cities say they do not track how many homeless people live in the county and have no clear plan to address the issue. During a historic snowstorm in late February, Multnomah County issued multiple alerts warning residents of the below-freezing temperatures and offering lists of warming shelters for homeless residents. But neighboring Columbia County didn't send any such alerts, nor did the county government offer resources for homeless residents.

Mark Pacheco, a public information officer for the county, told Pamplin Media Group that the county had no warming shelter plans. "I am not aware of any specific warming centers being operated within the county," he said. St. Helens nonprofit Community Action Team provided the only warming shelter in the county. The county also had no emergency plan to treat or identify people who had exposure symptoms or died during the storm.

Multnomah County reported at least two people died there during the storm. "If a county resident or visitor is experiencing any form of medical emergency, cold-related or otherwise, they should immediately call 9-1-1," Pacheco said. "County and city emergency services are available to respond to calls." Columbia County's approach during the snowstorm is emblematic of its overall approach to homelessness and housing instability.

Homelessness by the numbers

Pacheco told Pamplin Media Group that the county government doesn't actually know how many residents of Columbia County are homeless. "Many of the houseless in the county tend to pass through, making it challenging to gauge the number of houseless persons in the county accurately," he said. Community Action Team does track that number, however. In January, a point-in-time count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless residents in Columbia County estimated that nearly 400 homeless people were living in Columbia County. The St. Helens nonprofit said it engaged with nearly 700 people in 2022.

While Community Action Team believes the 2022 figure is likely closer to reality, both numbers almost certainly undercount the total homeless population in Columbia County. "We don't really feel like those are representative of the two numbers in our community just because it's like a very small window," said Heather Johnson, CAT housing program manager. Pacheco also blamed limited resources for the county's lack of data. He named several nonprofits, including Community Action Team, that he said are working to fill the gap when it comes to resources and services.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
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"While the county may not have the resources to actively track the number of people traveling through our community, we share your concerns about the displaced population. Columbia County relies on its partners ... to be 'the boots on the ground,'" Pacheco said, mentioning CAT along with Columbia Community Mental Health and Columbia Pacific Food Bank. "With their help, our community is able to provide the less fortunate with resources for food, rehousing support, mental health and substance abuse services, and more."

What is available?

Columbia Community Mental Health, a nonprofit that serves as Columbia County's mental health provider, says it does have resources that help homeless residents. While the agency focuses on mental health and substance use treatment, some of the people CCMH serves are homeless or housing insecure. "It should be no surprise to many people that a lot of homeless (people) do have some substance (use), as well as mental health (disorders)," executive director Todd Jacobson said. His team operates on a harm reduction model, Jacobson said, "which means we do some things that sometimes upset some of our community members by doing needle exchange, and we do hand out naloxone."

While campaigning in October 2022, Sheriff Brian Pixley said the county simply lacks sufficient resources to proactively tackle homelessness. "Law enforcement has been the fallback for the homeless, for mental health," he said. House Bill 3115, which was signed into law by then-Gov. Kate Brown in 2021, requires that local law enforcement's regulation of homeless people sitting, lying, sleeping, or keeping warm and dry outdoors on public property must be "objectively reasonable as to time, place and manner."

"The unfortunate situation that we find ourselves in here in Columbia County is there are zero resources," Pixley said while campaigning, referencing the new law, which removes his deputies' ability penalize people for sleeping outside on public property if there isn't a shelter bed available. The law, which follows 9th Circuit Court of Appeals rulings against cities that sought to prohibit outdoor camping last decade, aims to prevent further harm to homeless residents in places like Columbia County without the resources to house them by making punishments like encampment sweeps and jail time for sleeping outside illegal.

Last year, Pixley said his deputies regularly drove homeless people out of Columbia County to Longview, Washington, and Portland. There were more resources available to them in those cities, he argued. Pixley stands by his position. "Columbia County's most significant issue in addressing homelessness is the lack of services," he said. "Small, rural counties like ours need access to the same resources as the larger metro areas."

Cities are strapped

Michael McGlothlin, city administrator and former police chief for Columbia City, said his small, mostly residential city doesn't have the resources to help homeless residents. "Being a small 'bedroom community' with a limited revenue base to address this issue, it would require us to enter into collaborative partnerships with stakeholders, local, state, regional and federal, to assist us in addressing the problem should it arise," he said.

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That isn't to say everyone in and around Columbia City has a roof over their head, **McGlothlin** acknowledged. "While many Oregon municipalities across the state are being affected by homelessness, our community has not yet seen the impacts that other municipalities have experienced," **McGlothlin** said. "We have, however, witnessed pockets of homeless camps appear in areas around our community over the last several years."

Scappoose officials did not respond to Pamplin Media Group's request for comment on what the city government is doing to address the issue. According to city spokesperson Crystal King, St. Helens is doing little to address homelessness directly, although it is working to address the shortage of affordable housing locally. "The City of St. Helens supports Community Action Team ... which provides emergency shelter resources for houseless individuals in St. Helens," King noted.

While the county and cities have no active plans to address homelessness, they are taking steps to address the lack of affordable housing, as King noted. In 2017, CAT collaborated with local cities and the county on a countywide housing report conducted by Jim Tierney and Commonworks Consulting. Tierney is a former CAT executive director. The report found that households of all income levels face housing affordability issues, with one-third of all county households spending more than 30% of their income on housing. The report also found the county had an affordable housing unit deficit of 1,900 for households earning less than \$25,000 annually. "Without a change in course, these conditions will worsen in the future," the report said.

Housing in Columbia County

A significant contributing factor to Columbia County's limited supply of affordable housing is what analysts call the housing mix. As of the 2017 report, approximately 87% of all housing in the county was single-family detached, while only 12% was multifamily attached and 2% single-family attached. "Addressing the housing problem will require a shift in perspective from past thinking," the report said. "We need to pursue a different housing mix & wider variety of housing types that cost less than the traditional single-family detached home to better meet current and future demand."

The report also recommended cities and the county identify and "aggressively" pursue local cost savings and local subsidies to support nonprofit housing development. St. Helens recently welcomed the first tenants to Broadleaf Arbor, an affordable housing complex that will have some 239 units once it's fully built out. It will offer housing for families and individuals making 60% of the area's median income. For a family of four, the area median income is \$63,900. Expectations are that Broadleaf Arbor will eventually be home to about 1,000 people, many of them children. That's about 7% of St. Helens' current population of just over 14,000.

According to a 2019 housing needs analysis, projected population growth will require St. Helens to add 1,621 units by 2039. That means while Broadleaf Arbor makes a significant dent in that number, it's not even one-quarter of what is needed to meet future demand — and as of 2019, St. Helens already had fewer than optimal affordable homes and market-rate apartments, the

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

analysis found.

Nearly seven out of 10 households in St. Helens are considered low-income, and more than two in 10 renter households are considered to be severely rent-burdened, meaning they spend over 50% of their income on housing. "The housing needs analysis is a tool that the City of St. Helens uses to evaluate our policies, land use rules, and our available buildable land so that we can make better decisions to provide for all levels of housing needs, including affordable housing," King said.

Scappoose is also completing a housing analysis report, which in its draft form, shows the city will need 1,284 new housing units in the next 20 years, 48 more units than the city currently has capacity for. The report projects 45% of new homes — nearly half — must be affordable for households making half the area median income or less.

Pacheco said the Columbia Economic Team and the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District (Col-Pac) are developing the Columbia County Housing Implementation Plan (CCHIP), which will identify strategies to address the county's short-term and long-term housing needs. The two groups will present a project summary to the Board of Commissioners during its afternoon work session on Wednesday, April 26.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
April 13, 2023

Proposed fire station a hot topic in Columbia City

Author: *Scott Keith*

A fire station in Columbia City? The proposal from Columbia River Fire & Rescue is on the table, and residents of the city will be able to offer their input at a public meeting April 27 at Columbia City Community Hall. Currently, Columbia City is served by CRF&R from two primary stations: the St. Helens main station and the Rainier station.

Deputy Chief Eric Smythe noted that at present, the fire district leases a garage in Columbia City from the Oregon Department of Forestry. "The Oregon Department of Forestry informed us that because they're growing too, they would really like to have their garage back," Smythe said. About 6% to 8% of the fire district's calls come from Columbia City, Smythe estimates. And he says the district needs to grow — expanding its capabilities to handle fire and rescue situations within its coverage area.

"When we say we need to grow, the St. Helens fire station was built in the early 20th century," Smythe said. "It has been remodeled a million times. We can only house seven people there. Also, we can only put a fire engine, a water tender, a brush rig and three ambulances, then we're maxed out in that station." Smythe noted similar situations at the Fairgrounds and Deer Island satellite stations.

Describing the impact a new fire station would have in Columbia City, Smythe said, "This would allow us to put personnel in Columbia City, an engine in Columbia City, an ambulance in Columbia City, that could respond and be on scene within a mere couple of minutes." Currently, there is a response time of about four to eight minutes in Columbia City, depending on where crews are, according to Smythe. "We have an obligation to make it there under eight minutes," he said.

City Administrator **Michael McGlothlin** said there are public safety concerns in Columbia City for ambulance and fire services, especially with future population growth expected. The current Columbia City population is estimated at 1,949. **McGlothlin** continued, "With growth, we are concerned about ambulance and fire service being able to be extended to our citizens, who are part of the CRF&R fire district and are taxpayers as well. We're willing to gather citizen input so the council can make their best decision, moving forward."

The city is looking at the southern end of Jim Bundy Memorial Park as a possible location for a small fire station. **McGlothlin** said several available parcels of land around the city were reviewed and discussed as potential sites. "The City Council would be deciding on whether or not to donate the required land," he said. "That would be the city's sole expense, as far as we know to date. The construction would be planned to be funded through fire service grants, and that effort would be led by CRF&R. Then, moving forward, they would be responsible for the

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maintenance and operation of their building." The fire and rescue district wants a fire station that will fit into Columbia City. "We want it to be aesthetically pleasing to Columbia City and can reflect the character and spirit of Columbia City," Smythe said. "We're not going to put a big concrete building, or something nasty-looking, but something that fits in with Columbia City." The district is looking to have the ability to house five personnel at the new fire station. "This really is a great opportunity to provide service and put a station on the north end of the population boom between Columbia City and St. Helens," Smythe said.

Since a new fire station is only in the initial stages of discussion, there is no word on whether there would be a ballot measure to pay for it, or the amount of a possible tax measure.

McGlothlin, who previously served as Columbia City's police chief, also noted that the site hasn't received unanimous support from community members. "There would be a negative with the Bundy Park footprint changing, if it was approved," he said. "We do have some citizens who are very concerned about that, and the council wants to listen to their input, as well."

The public meeting takes place at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 27, at the Community Hall located at 1850 Second St. A prior meeting was held April 6.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tillamook Headlight Herald (OR)
April 6, 2023

Fire Safety: CRFR exploring building new fire stations

Author: *Will Lohre*

Columbia City and Prescott, north of St. Helens, could see new fire stations built to enhance safety in their small communities. Columbia River Fire and Rescue (CRFR) administrators are in the preliminary stages of discussion with the two communities about the fire stations.

No decisions yet

Specific details about what the stations would offer, how many personnel would staff the stations, where they might be located, how much they would cost to build and maintain, and how they would be funded are still to be determined. CRFR Chief Joel Medina said there are two reasons for the enhanced fire service: The two communities do not have fire stations, and there has been population growth in the fire district. "Because of the growth of the district and the county, the way that it's growing in population, I thought that it would be prudent to approach both Prescott and Columbia City and ask them if they would like the opportunity to have more support for public safety because, after all, we are their fire department," Medina said.

According to Medina, Prescott City Council voted to approve moving forward with "entertaining" a potential fire station. Medina said that Prescott has an area in mind for a station but that public input of its citizens will dictate the next steps. Similarly, Columbia City is also seeking public input to decide whether to build a station. Columbia City **Mike McGlothlin** said that CRFR approached the city in February about a station as the city resides in a gap in CRFR's service area.

McGlothlin said that an area for the station had been identified, but it would require modifications to the footprint of Bundy Park. **McGlothlin** stressed that nothing has been decided, and they want public input before going forward. "The City Council and the mayor felt that this was a really important decision, and they wanted to seek citizen input," **McGlothlin** said. "We're really in the infancy stages about this, and we have a definite public safety need, but we just need to see how we can best address it."

McGlothlin said they are hoping to educate citizens and gather feedback and information before they make a decision. Two public meetings have been scheduled to outline the projects. Both of the meetings will be held in the Columbia City Community Hall, 1850 2nd Street, in Columbia City. The first was scheduled at 6 p.m. April 6 and the second meeting is set for 6 p.m. April 27.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
April 5, 2021

Neighborhood watch taking shape in Columbia City

Author: *Anna Del Savio*

Residents are looking for ways to reduce property crimes and build community. Columbia City residents are looking for community-based ways to address crime happening in the city. The city has seen an uptick in thefts earlier this year. Sgt. Gerald Bartolomucci said there were 20 thefts reported in the city in the 10-month period up to May 2021. Seven of those were over the course of a few weeks in spring 2021. Even with the increase, Columbia City had the lowest per-capita theft rate of any city in the county, based on theft report data provided by Bartolomucci in a letter to residents.

Jaime Smith, a Columbia City resident for 15 years, has been talking to city officials about what residents can do to prevent future crimes. Smith said she doesn't necessarily want to see a formal neighborhood watch system with residents scheduled to patrol their neighborhoods. Rather, her focus is on creating more of a community sense in the mostly residential city. Smith said that neighbors on her block have formed a close-knit community. When one resident was away from home for medical issues, neighbors mowed their lawn and kept an eye on the empty house, Smith said.

If an ambulance comes to their neighbor's home, residents will stop by to ask if there's anything they can do. "Not to pry or to babysit, but just to be a good neighbor," Smith explained. Smith said she wants more connections to form between the older residents of Columbia City and the younger families that move in.

Residents gathered at the community hall in June to discuss the possibility of a neighborhood watch program. Smith estimated 20 to 25 people were in attendance. Another meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. Aug. 12, also at the community hall, where residents will flesh out what they want a public safety program to look like. "A neighborhood watch is nice, and we can make it as big or as little as we want it," Smith said. "But really, ultimately, my goal is how do we come together as a community?"

Smith also said she wants to avoid any system of vigilante justice. Some residents who own firearms have said they're prepared to defend themselves, but Smith noted that children in the community "do really stupid stuff from time to time" — a combination that could end in tragedy. Smith said she thinks community Facebook groups and other social media has increased people's awareness of local crimes, even when criminal activity hasn't increased. "I don't personally feel like there has been an increase at alarming rates or anything like that," Smith said of her 15 years in Columbia City.

In the letter to residents, Bartolomucci said most of the thefts appeared to be crimes of opportunity, where valuable items were left in yards, unlocked cars, or open garages. "A few

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small changes such as bringing in items of value, securing out buildings with a lock, adding exterior motion lights, and cutting back bushes that can be used to hide behind, will make your residence a much safer place," Bartolomucci advised.

City Administrator **Michael McGlothlin** said that the increase in crimes hasn't continued. "After that uptick, we did have a slight lull with some scattered property crimes reported," said **McGlothlin**, who served as Columbia City's chief of police from 2009 to 2018. Bartolomucci is currently the city's only full-time police officer. The city also has three reserve officers, volunteers who undergo training and spend at least 16 hours per month with the department, and two part-time officers. Altogether, the department's staffing is equivalent to three full-time officers.

The city is in the process of hiring an additional full-time officer and is considering two of the existing reserve officers for the position, **McGlothlin** said. The police department receives funding from a local option levy of 67 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value, which amounts to roughly \$130,000 in a typical year.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
May 24, 2019

Columbia County ceremonies planned for Memorial Day

Author: *Nicole Thill-Pacheco*

Events are planned in Columbia County next week as a way to honor the memory and sacrifice of those who have died in service to the United States military on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27. Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May and has been a federal holiday since 1971. Nationally, a moment of remembrance occurs at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day, according to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs information.

Scappoose

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4362 is hosting its annual Memorial Day observance on Monday, May 27. The ceremony of remembrance begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Heritage Park Memorial. In addition to musical performances, guest speakers will address the crowd. Boy Scout Troop 294 and the local chapter of the American Heritage Girls will also be in attendance.

Columbia City

The city of Columbia City will be hosting its annual Memorial Day ceremony at Veterans Park on Monday, May 27, starting at 11 a.m. and expected to last for one hour. Special presentations, musical pieces and ceremonies will be held during the event to honor veterans and remember those who have died serving their country. "It's just another great opportunity to honor veterans and current serving military and their families," Columbia City Administrator **Mike McGlothlin** said. **McGlothlin** said this year's ceremony will include traditional elements as well as new speakers and performances.

Oregon State Rep. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, is expected to attend, along with members of the St. Helens Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1440, Columbia City City Council members, the pastor of Grace Baptist Church and current and former military members. Casey Wheeler, the Columbia City mayor, will serve as the master of ceremonies. VFW Post 1440 Judge Advocate Gene Hester is expected to speak about the importance of Memorial Day, while Frank Hupp and David Belson will lead the traditional ceremony honoring soldiers missing in action. Alexis Jenkins, the winner of the local VFW and districtwide Patriot's Pen essay contest will also read from her essay, "Why I Honor the American Flag."

A number of musical selections will be part of the ceremony, including renditions of "To the Colors" and "Taps" by St. Helens City Planner and trumpeter Jacob Graichen. Pastor Dean Christiansen of Grace Baptist Church will lead "God Bless America," while the songs "Dawning of the Day," "Amazing Grace," and "Scotland the Brave" will be performed by Mark Mullaney on bagpipe. Additionally, several flag raising ceremonies will take place. While turnout varies from year to year, the annual event often draws a crowd of nearly 100 people, **McGlothlin** explained.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Columbia City Veterans Park, located off Highway 30 near Mittie Street, has limited parking. Those who wish to attend are encouraged to park offsite and take advantage of a free shuttle service. The shuttle will begin running at 9:30 a.m. Pickup locations are located at the Columbia County Rider St. Helens Transit Center on Deer Island Road, or 2nd and I Street near the post office in Columbia City.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
November 23, 2018

Columbia City approves contract with new city administrator

Author: *Nicole Thill-Pacheco*

Columbia City will have a new city administrator in January, but the face will be familiar to many. **Mike McGlothlin**, who serves as the Columbia City chief of police, will transition to city administrator and recorder, a position being vacated by Leahnette Rivers. The City Council of Columbia City approved a personal services agreement last week outlining the job description and responsibilities for the role, along with other terms of the contract.

Rivers, who has worked with Columbia City since 1999, earlier this year decided to retire at the end of 2018. Since then, she has been working with **McGlothlin** to help him prepare to take over her duties. **McGlothlin** said he has always enjoyed working with local government and added he is excited to take on the new opportunity — and also humbled to have been selected for the job. "Government that works closely with the citizens has the most rewards," **McGlothlin** said. "It's almost like a promotional process. It's like I'm moving from being a department head to doing more of a supervisory role."

McGlothlin was hired to work with Columbia City in 2009 and has more than 30 years of law enforcement experience. In 2015, **McGlothlin** earned his master's degree in public administration. Earlier this year, the city hired Jerry Bartolomucci to fill a Columbia City Police Department sergeant vacancy. Bartolomucci previously worked with the Tigard and Vernonia police departments for a total of 28 years. He retired from Tigard in fall 2017, but was looking for an opportunity to return to police work when he applied for the Columbia City job, **McGlothlin** said. "We're glad to have him aboard," **McGlothlin** said.

In addition to taking on the current responsibilities of city administrator, **McGlothlin** will retain some of his police oversight responsibilities. Bartolomucci will predominately cover daily duties for the police department and will act as the first line of direct supervision for the city's two full-time, three part-time and two volunteer reserve officers.

McGlothlin will enter his new role with the city at a time when other changes are in the works. Casey Wheeler was recently elected to fill the mayor's seat after longtime Mayor Cheryl Young made the choice not to run again for the position, citing health concerns. Sue Ziglinski will also start work on the City Council as the newest elected member. Working with new elected city officials will be another exciting challenge, **McGlothlin** explained. "It's a great opportunity," he said. "In a lot of ways it'll be continuing to grow and taking advantage of relationships that we already have in place."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
September 15, 2018

Staff changes coming for Columbia City

Author: *Nicole Thill-Pacheco*

A number of changes are being discussed when it comes to the leadership in Columbia City. Longtime City Administrator Leahnette Rivers will be retiring at the end of this year and, in her absence, the city is considering moving Columbia City Police Chief **Michael McGlothlin** into the role. City staff and council members have noted no final decisions have been made, but explained the direction they are heading. Rivers said she has been working on providing some training since January this year, when she made the decision to retire.

Earlier this year, Columbia City began advertising for a new part-time police sergeant. The succession plan depends on who applies for the position and their qualifications, Rivers explained. If the right candidate applies, McGlothlin could step into the city administrator role and still maintain administrative and oversight duties as police chief. The new police sergeant would then handle operational duties and patrol on a more day-to-day basis.

City staff and the Columbia City City Council are still discussing options and, so far, have received two applicants. **McGlothlin** and Rivers described the plan as preliminary and said they have not officially offered any contracts or made announcements about the potential staff changes yet. Rivers exit from the city will occur at the same time as several other changes take place on the City Council and the mayor's seat. Longtime Columbia City Mayor Cheryl Young will step down from her term in office in December.

In November, voters will decide the next mayor during the election, but only one person has filed to be on the ballot — Casey Wheeler, who works at the Columbia Pacific Food Bank's executive director. Additionally, Nell Harrison, who has been on council since 2014, will not seek reelection, and voters will only see one name on the ballot to fill the seat — Susan Zigliski.

New opportunities for police chief

McGlothlin has more than 30 years of law enforcement experience primarily working for municipal police departments and has worked in Columbia City since 2009. In 2015, he earned a master's degree in public administration from Columbia Southern University to help him prepare for what he describes as his "act two" of his career. "I knew one day it would be time to hang up the badge and gun," **McGlothlin** said. "It's kind of like a natural progression. City and county administration has always been an interest for me in my second half." **McGlothlin** added that, while the plan is still very tentative, he is excited for the possibility and what it could mean for him and his family.

Rivers ready to enjoy retirement

Rivers, who has worked with Columbia City since 1999, said she's simply decided it's time for her to step down and enjoy retirement, and hopefully be able to enjoy traveling with her husband.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

She has more than 40 years in government work experience. Rivers got her start in municipal government at the age of 17 as a clerk typist in the city of Talent, a town of about 6,000 people in Jackson County. She also worked for Rogue River as a clerk typist, planning commission secretary, and eventually served as the first city administration for the city.

In 1999, she took the city administrator role in Columbia City. Throughout her career in city government work, Rivers said she has enjoyed working in a small-town environment. "You have the ability to make a difference in a small city so much easier," Rivers said. Rivers has earned a variety of accolades along the way, including various distinguished budget awards, in all of the cities she has worked, including Columbia City. In 2015, she received the League of Oregon Cities Herman Kehrli Award, which is awarded to a city employee who provides lasting benefits to the community through exceptional contributions to city government.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
September 9, 2016

Columbia City seeking police levy renewal

Author: *Nicole Thill*

Columbia City residents will be asked to renew a five-year police protection levy during the general election this November, which would secure funding for the Columbia City Police Department to continue operations. Measure 5-256, which will appear on the November ballot, asks voters to continue the implementation of a local option levy of 67 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value in addition to the city's permanent tax rate of \$1.13 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The purpose of the tax is to "bridge the funding gap between the tax revenue collected ... and the total cost of providing basic police protection services," a document explaining the levy reads.

City Administrator Leahnette Rivers said the funding is vital for police operations to continue, and without the funding the police department would be "severely underfunded." The city's permanent tax rate remains one of the lowest in the state, Rivers added. At \$1.13, the tax falls well below the rates of St. Helens and Scappoose, which come in at \$1.90 and \$3.22, respectively.

Columbia City Police Chief **Michael McGlothlin** explained that the levy recertification process will help the police department maintain its current staffing levels of 2.5 full-time paid positions. The city also uses volunteer reserve officers. If the levy renewal doesn't pass, budgetary cutbacks will need to be made by the Columbia City City Council, Rivers explained, although it's unclear what those cutbacks would entail. The council has not discussed what to do if the levy isn't approved by voters, she said.

Information about the levy has been publicized in the Columbia City newsletter, but no further campaign promotions have been organized to inform voters about the ballot measure.

McGlothlin also encouraged residents with questions or concerns to stop by the police department anytime to talk about the levy.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tillamook Headlight Herald (OR)
December 8, 2015

‘Shop with a cop’ returns Dec. 19

Author: *Unknown*

Local law enforcement officers will trade in their police cars for shopping carts for a few hours as part of the annual Shop with a Cop event on Dec. 19. An annual event hosted by the Columbia City Police Department, Shop with a Cop will be held at the St. Helens Walmart starting at 10 a.m., and running until about 1 p.m.

This year’s event marks the seventh consecutive year for the Columbia City Police Department's version of Shop with a Cop. Over the past six years, the event has provided seven nominated families and over 100 children with wintertime necessities and Christmas wish list items that they would otherwise be without.

The Columbia City Police Department has gained funding for the event through community grants, corporate donations, and through the generosity of local citizens. As the donation of funds has grown with each passing year, there has also been an increase in participation from local law enforcement partners, such as Oregon State Police, St. Helens Police Department, Scappoose Police Department, and the Union Pacific Railroad Police.

According to Columbia City Chief of Police **Michael McGlothlin**, Shop with a Cop has not only provided wintertime necessities and Christmas wish list items to “at-risk” youth in the area, but has “built invaluable bridges within the community while fostering an environment of positive growth through interactions focused on improved community policing and relationship building.” Additionally, families who were sponsored by Shop with a Cop in the past have come “full circle” and are sponsors of the program. **McGlothlin** says he is grateful to his department, city staff, supporting agencies and families for making the event possible year after year.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tillamook Headlight Herald (OR)
December 23, 2014

Police on present patrol

Author: *Amanda Frink*

Local law enforcement officers traded in their police cars for shopping carts for a few hours as part of the annual Shop with a Cop event held on Dec. 20. Officers from Columbia City, Scappoose and St. Helens police departments and Oregon State Police gathered at Walmart in St. Helens to purchase necessities and gifts for two local families.

According to Columbia City Police Chief **Mike McGlothlin**, from September through the first week of December, citizens nominate needy families who they think would benefit from the Shop with a Cop program. This year, **McGlothlin** says they were able to sponsor two local families, which consisted of about 14 people total.

Officers paired up with family members to address their immediate needs, such as winter clothing or household items, and then helped them purchase as many Christmas wish list items as possible. “It’s a real good way for police officers to connect with their communities,” said **McGlothlin**, whose wife, Jessica, has led organization of the event.

In addition to helping people in need, the chief said Shop with a Cop also provides children an opportunity for a positive interaction with police. This is the fifth year for the event, which is supported through private donations and business sponsors, such as Walmart and Ace Hardware in St. Helens. **McGlothlin** noted that one of the former Shop with a Cop families has been able to get back on their feet and have made a donation to help with this year’s program.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tillamook Headlight Herald (OR)
August 8, 2014

After arrests, burglaries continue to plague county

Author: *Kyle Boggs*

Following the arrest of 15 people in connection with a rash of burglaries that had taken place across Columbia County, residents felt they could breathe a little easier. However, recent reports from the Columbia County Sheriff's Office indicate renters and homeowners alike should still be locking their doors. In the last two weeks of July, 15 burglaries were reported to CCSO – roughly one a day. In that same time frame, Columbia City Police have received a handful of complaints as well.

Sheriff Jeff Dickerson said it remains to be seen whether these burglaries are related to the 20 cases reported in May, primarily around Sykes and Gable roads in the St. Helens area. "I can confirm the burglaries do continue. As far as who, there's potential out there that... the criminal element is associated, many of them in the county," Dickerson said. "I don't think they're necessarily working in tandem, any of these groups of people. I'm thinking very likely it's a number of people that got the bright idea that when people aren't home, they can kick in the door and get out of there before law enforcement (arrives)."

That has led to a lot of what Dickerson describes as rush jobs, where the burglars enter and exit quickly, grabbing as many valuables as possible and then hitting the road. Sometimes, the thieves have to break in, either by kicking in a door or otherwise. Alarmingly, that's not always the case. Dickerson said in one instance, the thieves struck while children were in a separate part of the home. "The burglars just kind of brazenly came in, burglarized the place, took some car keys and stole the family car with the kids in the house," Dickerson said.

Law enforcement has been able to chip away at the problem. On Aug. 1, St. Helens Police arrested Alexander J. Ross, 22, of St. Helens. Ross is currently held in the Columbia County Jail on two counts of first-degree burglary and one count of second-degree burglary. His bail is set at \$135,000. St. Helens Police Chief Terry Moss said a big break in the case came when a Columbia City resident called about a backpack that was found near a vacant house in the Chimes Crest area. The backpack contained a computer and jewelry that were reported missing from a burglary on Tarbell Road. The backpack was eventually turned over to police, who connected it to Ross. "He confessed to the burglary on Tarbell Road as well as another brazen, middle-of-the-night burglary on Sykes Road that was committed while an elderly woman slept in her bed," read a press release from SHPD. The press release also stated that Ross confessed to a burglary on Smith Road.

Ross had been on officers' radar for weeks after being found in possession stolen during a burglary at the home of Columbia County District Attorney Steve Atchison. Moss said the investigation into not only Ross, but other burglaries is ongoing. "We don't for a minute believe he's the only one," Moss said. Prior to the latest string of burglaries reported to CCSO, deputies

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

arrested Tabitha Briggs on July 13 in the Barger Road area. Dickerson said she was sought on a warrant, and when deputies found Briggs, they also recovered some property that had been stolen in an earlier burglary reported in that area. Briggs was charged with burglary and theft in relation to the items recovered, Dickerson said.

Barger Road, about seven miles northwest of downtown St. Helens, fits the trend of locations burglars have targeted. “It’s happening more and more out into the county. More and more people – bad guys, I guess you’d classify them – are figuring out that people are vulnerable and homes are vulnerable and they’re looking for vulnerable homes,” Dickerson said.

The sheriff advises people to lock up their valuables – things like jewelry, firearms, gold coins and the like – in safes if possible. He also recommends citizens get video or motion-sensor cameras to install on the exterior of their houses, as well as either audible or silent alarm systems. Dickerson said he and his deputies have a handful of warrants in addition to the arrests they’ve already made. They continue to investigate tips and search for information regarding these crimes.

In Columbia City, there are a few vehicles of interest. In the August Columbia City Newsletter, Police Chief **Michael McGlothlin** alerted residents to keep an eye out for a newer model black SUV, an older model white pickup and an older model burgundy, windowless van. “Please contact the police department if these vehicles are observed in the Columbia City area,” **McGlothlin** said, “as it is believed that these subjects are involved in canvassing for homes in our community to burglarize.”

As the leads stack up, law enforcement officials are able to gain a better idea where to look. But catching the crooks red-handed is another matter. “As far as actually catching people with the goods, that’s something we’re still trying to develop leads for,” Dickerson said. Moss stressed that even with the latest arrest, police have their work cut out for them to eradicate the problem. “There’s still others out there that we need to get,” Moss said. He emphasized that anyone who sees suspicious activity should contact police. “Please call us when there’s something suspicious or doesn’t make sense – like the backpack out in Columbia City. That can make all the difference,” Moss said.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
August 1, 2014

Port discouraging public access to Trestle Beach – ‘No trespassing’ sign put up, but ignored by beachgoers

Author: *Mark Miller*

The Port of St. Helens has posted a new “no trespassing” sign at the railroad trestle off Highway 30 in north Columbia City, which many use to access a Columbia River beach popularly known as Trestle Beach. The beach, where local families can often be seen on hot, sunny days enjoying the summer weather, is not a public park. It is the property of the Port of St. Helens, which also owns the adjacent Columbia City Industrial Park.

Craig Allison, the port’s property and operations manager, said of the beach Tuesday, July 29, “Access was never actually completely open.” Although the “no trespassing” sign is clearly visible in front of the trestle, posted to a garbage can and chained in place to a block of concrete, cars and trucks were still parked alongside the shoulder of the highway at the trestle Tuesday afternoon, and several families and couples could be seen lounging on the beach, walking along the wooded trails and playing in the water.

Two men who declined to give their names said they were aware of the “no trespassing” rule, but said they — and many others — simply disregard it. Aside from posting the sign, Allison said the port is “kind of informally putting out the word that people are going down there at their own risk, and that it’s technically off-limits.” But, he added, “We’re not going to put up a fence. We’re not going to patrol it 24-7. ... We haven’t contemplated any kind of ... fine structure.”

Chief **Michael McGlothlin** of the Columbia City Police Department said Monday that police “haven’t initiated any closure.” “We’ve had a lot of people parking along the shoulder of the road. But we’re not closing or restricting the access,” **McGlothlin** said, adding, “We don’t have the authority to restrict that access.”

Both Allison and **McGlothlin** said parking at the beach is problematic. There is no parking lot at the trestle, so cars, trucks and other vehicles typically park alongside the westbound shoulder of the highway — sometimes in a haphazard fashion, with some vehicles parking parallel to the highway, others parking perpendicular to traffic, some backing in, some backing out — on a relatively small area of gravel between the roadway and the railroad.

“Our big concern, especially with high-volume traffic, [is] people entering and leaving,” **McGlothlin** said. “It fluctuates more so with the warmer weather. Our big concern is for the motoring public, as well as the people who are enjoying Trestle Beach.” As for why the port is now advising the public against trespassing at the beach, Allison said in addition to the parking concerns, port officials feel the public has been mistreating the beach. “We’ve had increasing problems that have become apparent with trash and fires and people climbing up on the docks and jumping off,” Allison said. “We started thinking of our liability for the property.”

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The port has tolerated public use of Trestle Beach in the past, but Allison said it has “never permitted” people on the docks. The port and the city have had discussions in the past about the beach becoming a Columbia City park. On its website, the Columbia City Parks Department continues to identify the Trestle Beach area among land it is interested in acquiring. Allison said there have been no recent developments regarding a land deal between the port and the city, but he expressed openness to the idea. The port, he said, lacks the staffing to administer the beach itself as a public area.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
May 12, 2011

Setting the record straight

Author: *Mike McGlothlin*

As the chief of police for the Columbia City Police Department, I feel that I must defend our agency and correct some inferences that are arising in the current state of political affairs. In reading recent opinion articles and political campaign ads that have been brought to my attention, there are apparently some misconceptions about who we are, what we do and how we provide law enforcement services for our community. While I respect and value the opinions of all, even those that are not positive of us, I feel that some key facts need to be interjected into the mix. Some of these may seem too ridiculous to mention.

We work hard to foster healthy and mutually supportive relationships with all law enforcement agencies within Columbia County. No one law enforcement agency 'corners the market' in assisting and backing up other agencies. While not a daily or even frequent occasion, we have been assisted by the many fine troopers, deputies, and officers of the Oregon State Police, the Columbia County Sheriff's Office, the St. Helens Police Department, the Scappoose Police Department, the Rainier Police Department, the Clatskanie Police Department, and the Vernonia Police Department. And, likewise, we have and will continue to assist, back up and support each of these agencies.

Yes, we do work night shifts. We provide seven-day-a-week law enforcement services to our citizens. The hours differ on a weekly basis as to how they are distributed, with weekends receiving the latest coverage. For those times that an officer is not physically 'on duty,' at least one officer is assigned 'on call' and will continue to respond when contacted by our dispatch center. All of the above-listed agencies have responded to help us stabilize situations while the Columbia City 'on call' officer has been notified and responds. In some instances of minor priority many of these agencies have simply handled the call without notifying our 'on call' officer. We make sure that we return the favor.

Barring a dispatched call for service or active criminal investigation, our service level priorities continue to be:

1. Crime Trends - Yes, we even investigate our own crimes.
2. Traffic Enforcement - We want to keep the motoring public safe.
3. Quality of Life Issues - We believe in 'fixing the broken window'.

We do work traffic enforcement on both Highway 30 and within our neighborhoods, even though statistically we issue far more warnings to motorists than citations. Our citizens get tired of being 'ran over' when they try to turn into their community and they are equally concerned with the safety of their families while they are living, working, and playing. We work daily in our neighborhoods to continue fostering strong relationships with our citizens.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

In closing, the Columbia City Police Department ballot measure for your consideration on May 17 is to secure funding for our departments continued existence. We are not in competition with the levy measure for the Columbia County Sheriff's Office. While they have funding issues that are critical to their operations, ours are no less important and are vital for our city residents. My door, as always, remains open.

- Chief **Mike McGlothlin**, Columbia City Police Department

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tillamook Headlight Herald (OR)
April 20, 2011

Columbia City asks for tax to help fund police department

Author: *Josey Bartlett*

There are five proposed tax levies on the May 17 ballot — Columbia City's levy to keep current police services is on that list. The tax, if passed, would levy \$.67 per \$1,000 of a home's assessed value for five years. A household with a home valued at \$200,000 would pay \$134 per year. "We lowered the amount per thousand and now I have put a sign in my yard," said councilor Josh Fromm. "Haven't heard any opposition for [the levy]."

Fromm was against the November 2010 proposed tax levy, which asked for a 3-year \$1.10 per \$1,000 levy: \$.67 for police services, \$.23 for street maintenance and preservation, and \$.20 for storm system maintenance including bringing the city's system up to DEQ standards. The measure did not pass. Fromm said it was not appropriate to levy the tax during tough economic times. Since then, he said the council has compromised. "For many years our goal had been to have a full-time chief of police and better coverage for Columbia City. We finally obtained that and now it's possible we are going to lose police hours," said Mayor Cheryl Young. "Current amount of coverage is what the community has indicated they wanted."

Because of budget cuts last fiscal year the city reduced police hours by 15 percent. Without the levy the city faces hour cuts again. Currently seven police officers work for the Columbia City Police Department. Chief **Michael McGlothlin** is the only full-time officer and the city's first police chief. There are three part-time officers and three part-time volunteer officers. The amount of staffing equates to about two officers for every 1,000 residents. (Columbia City has a population of about 2,000 people.)

The St. Helens Police Department, which serves a population of 12,000, earlier this year had a staffing level of 1.42 officers per 1,000. Since then one officer left the department. CCPD does not have 24-hour coverage, however an officer is always on call if not actually on the clock. Usually one officer is on patrol, but some officer hours overlap during busier Friday and Saturday nights, according to **McGlothlin**. "We are committed to community policing. We like to be back to basics – developing partnerships in the community with a strong presence," said **McGlothlin**. Community policing puts an emphasis on visibility, he said.

Officers make regular stops at the few businesses in town, said **McGlothlin**, and talk to residents out in their yards. **McGlothlin** said because there are only a few businesses in the city most incidents are related to domestic calls, traffic stops and thefts. He estimates the department responds to about 350 self-initiated or dispatched incidents a month. Residents can also fill out a form at city hall if they are on vacation for an extended period of time. Officers will keep a closer eye on this house, which **McGlothlin** said is another aspect to community policing. The levy is predicted to raise \$499,769 over its five-year lifespan.

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tillamook Headlight Herald (OR)
July 27, 2010

Columbia City eyes 3-year levy for services

Author: *Josey Bartlett*

Columbia City officials proposed a three-year tax increase to bulk-up the police force and maintain city infrastructure in a town hall meeting July 26. "I don't want to pay higher taxes either, but this is what it comes down to," said mayor Cheryl Young. The bottom line is that the \$1.13 per \$1,000 each citizen currently pays in property taxes hardly produces enough revenue to keep the city up to date, according to city administrator Leahnette Rivers. She said that cities with similar populations, such as Vernonia, Clatskanie and Rainier, all levy between \$4.85 and \$6.21 per \$1,000.

At first, the 30 citizens who attended the town hall seemed skeptical of the levy, but after a lengthy presentation and question-and-answer session, some voiced agreement or nodded to the stated facts. A family with a house valued at \$200,000 could expect to pay \$220 more in taxes per year for three years. Currently, Columbia City residents pay a sewer tax that, over the last 18 years, has worked to pay off the new sewer system (it will be fully paid off in July 2011). The proposed three-year tax levy, once the sewer is paid off, will only cost residents a few cents more than they already pay, explained Rivers.

Rivers admitted that after three years, it would be hard to return to the \$1.13 tax rate. However, she said it is possible if the economy turns around and the sewer is brought up to DEQ standards. The levy would allow the city to bring staff back to normal levels, repave crumbling roads, upgrade storm water systems, and work toward around-the-clock police enforcement. Columbia City has the lowest police staffing per capita in Oregon, according to city officials.

Residents raised concerns about evidence seen around town of money spent on other things. Officials answered these questions:

- Police Chief **Michael McGlothlin** said the police department bought its new Tahoe before the budget crisis began. The truck's four-wheel drive capability is necessary to get to residents on steeper inclines, he said. The police department also spent money decaling and painting its fleet, which was in violation of state mandates, according to **McGlothlin**. Each vehicle lasts about 10 years, he said.
- A park by the river is being funded by ODOT, Rivers said in response to a question about the expense. The city paid for the city sign with money already set aside for parks and recreation, she said.
- The city has looked into alternative paving materials but has found that it washed off like paint after a few years, said councilor Gary Hudson. The city will stick to the more costly but effective asphalt, he said.

This year, the city did make attempts to tighten spending without raising taxes: It cut 14 percent of its paid staff during the first quarter of 2010 and delayed or suspended construction. However,

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Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

delayed construction can cost four to five times more in the future, said public works superintendent Micah Rogers. Columbia City received \$172,512 in tax levies from November 2009 until now. This is several hundred thousand dollars less than Rainier, Clatskanie and Vernonia, city officials said. During the levy's three years, the city would raise \$499,078.

This estimated figure assumes that property values will increase by three percent. In past years, the gain has been more than three percent. With the economy in its current rebound, Rivers hopes this holds true. If the tax is not approved in November, when it will be on the ballot, the city will instead bill residents with additional storm water and street utility fees - fees that many cities in the county have already added, Rivers said. If the funds are levied as taxes, citizens can usually write them off on their state and federal tax returns, Young said; utility fees could not be deducted.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The South County Spotlight (OR)
June 10, 2009

Meet the new chief

Author: *Stover E Harger III*

Michael McGlothlin joins Columbia City squad as new police chief

In response to growing population and demand for greater police coverage in Columbia City, the town's first full-time police chief will take office on July 1, a change that city officials say will greatly benefit the city. **Michael McGlothlin**, 40, will come from North Carolina to Columbia City with 21 years of experience in law enforcement and a history of community-minded police work. He replaces the former part-time chief Michael Reedy, who was sworn in as the new chief in Aurora, Ore. last week. **McGlothlin's** appointment is a step forward for the city that has been trying for years to bring on a full-time chief, said Mayor Cheryl Young. In recent years, the city has discussed making the chief position full-time, but has never been able to make it work in the budget. But this year, thanks to careful planning and money rearranging, they were able to begin a search last fall. **McGlothlin**, who has been with the Zebulon Police Department in North Carolina since 2000, was chosen from a field of 43 candidates. The lieutenant's experience and qualifications immediately stood out to the city, Young said, as did his family-orientated attitude. 'He comes across as being a very ethical and honest man,' she said. 'And that's very important to me.'

Becoming chief in Columbia City is the next step in his career evolution, **McGlothlin** said, and he is looking forward to sharing his expertise and experience with the city - as well becoming a part of the community. 'We fell in love with the small town feel of the area,' he said about his family's recent visit. His first experience with law enforcement was as a child growing up in Alabama. McGlothlin's grandfather was a judge and the young man always looked up to officers in the area. He was immediately drawn to service. Just after turning 18 in 1987 **McGlothlin** got his first taste of law enforcement when he joined the U.S. Army Military Police Corps. He eventually served for seven years in Operation Just Cause, the 1989 invasion of Panama and Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Before being honorably discharged he was able to take on many roles, including a patrol officer, criminal investigator and operations sergeant.

His drive to 'wear several different hats,' led **McGlothlin** to Fayetteville, North Carolina in 1994 where he stayed for six years as an officer, sergeant and special assistant to the city manager. In 2000 he moved on to Zebulon where he took on many of the same roles, rising to become third in command. If you would have asked him five years ago if he thought he would have been ready to become a police chief, **McGlothlin** said he would have responded with a resounding 'no.' But now, as he and his wife and three children prepare to leave North Carolina for Oregon next week, he feels he is ready to bring his experiences to the table and excel - even in the face of challenges. 'I think I'll have good days and bad days,' he said. 'But with Columbia City I know I'll have far more good days than bad days.'

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tillamook Headlight Herald (OR)
December 3, 2008

Columbia City police chief retires, hired as city admin

Author: *Unknown*

Police Chief **Michael McGlothlin** will hang up his badge and start a new career as Columbia City's top administrator effective Jan. 1. A ceremony recognizing **McGlothlin** for his career in law enforcement will be held during the Columbia City Council Meeting on at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 20. According to a statement from Columbia City, **McGlothlin's** career in law enforcement spans more than three decades, beginning in 1986 with the U.S. Army Military Police Corps. During his military career he moved up through the ranks to the position of Operations Sergeant, ultimately supervising 26 criminal investigators.

After the military, he joined the Fayetteville Police Department in North Carolina in 1994, where he held various positions including Police Sergeant and Street Gang Unit Investigator. He also served as Special Assistant to the City Manager, and was in charge of designing, training and developing the City's Community Improvement Team, which focused on community policing and problem solving concepts and improving organizational responsiveness and efficiency.

In 2000 he joined the Zebulon Police Department as a Police Lieutenant/Division Commander, serving as both the Patrol Division and Service Division Commander for over nine years. When asked what he enjoyed the most during his law enforcement career, **McGlothlin** said, "I really enjoyed the people that I worked with – and the variety – no two days were ever the same."

McGlothlin and his wife Jessica initiated the Columbia City Police Department's Shop with a Cop program, which is now in its tenth year. The program serves families and youths in need with warm winter essentials and a few wish list items during the holidays, and helps to foster positive relationships with law enforcement.

Retiring Administrator, Leahnette Rivers, said, "His leadership skills are exceptional. He has an MBA in Public Administration and has served in supervisory and management roles throughout most of his career. He knows our community, our elected officials, and our employees. He has served the City very well as our Chief of Police, and I am certain he will also be a great City Administrator"

"I was very impressed with **Michael McGlothlin's** resume, attitude, and character when we first met and interviewed him, and I have never been disappointed with his dedication and accomplishments." Mayor Cheryl Young said. Young will retire at the year's end as well. "We have one of the finest police departments because of his leadership and example and I know he is the best person to take over the position of City Administrator at this time," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Nashville Graphic (NC)
December 12, 2006

High speed chase loops through Nash County

Author: *Amanda Clark*

A high speed chase that started in Zebulon looped through Nash County before ending in Wendell with the suspect wrecking the 1991 blue Chrysler Lebaron he had stolen. According to Lt. **Mike McGlothlin** of the Zebulon Police Department, Officer Scott Hicks was on routine patrol on South Wakefield Street around 10:11 p.m. Friday night when the Chrysler drove by, almost striking Hicks' vehicle. Hicks turned around and pursued the vehicle, with his sirens and lights on. **McGlothlin** said the suspect, twenty-year-old Jason Alan Austin of Garner, took off toward Highway 97 in speeds exceeding 100 miles per hour.

Austin continued on Highway 97 East into Nash County where he turned south onto Highway 231 toward Middlesex. Middlesex Police officials put up stop sticks, attempting to stop the vehicle but Austin avoided the sticks. Austin then took Highway 39 to 264 West back towards Zebulon. Zebulon Police officials also deployed stop sticks, but again, Austin avoided them. **McGlothlin** said Austin got up to speeds of 115-120 miles per hour while on Highway 264 heading towards Raleigh.

The chase ended when Austin attempted to take the Rolesville Road exit and struck a guardrail, clipped a light pole and came to rest against a Department of Transportation fence. Austin attempted to flee on foot but was apprehended by Officer Hicks. Officer Edwin Killett, of Zebulon's Police Department also assisted in the chase. Austin was charged with speeding to allude, driving while impaired, provisional driving while impaired, careless and reckless, driving while license revoked. McGlothlin added that the vehicle was stolen out of Wake County and additional charges of felony larceny of motor vehicle and felony and misdemeanor larceny were pending. Austin received minor injuries in the crash. No officers or civilians were injured during the chase, McGlothlin added.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Fayetteville Observer (NC)
December 8, 1999

City's anti-crime programs outlined

Author: *Lora Hines*

Area police and coordinators for local community watch programs learned about some of Fayetteville's crime prevention programs on Tuesday. About two dozen residents and officers attended the Fayetteville Police Department's crime prevention workshop. Robert Smith, who is president of the state Community Watch Association, said similar workshops have been held statewide to get people involved in crime prevention.

Sgt. **Mike McGlothlin** told participants about a new program expected to improve the city and prevent crime. The city's estimated 1,200 employees have been trained to work with other departments' employees to address a variety of problems, such as street potholes and illegal dumping. Kathleen Ruppert, a crime prevention specialist at the Police Department, said such problems can lead to crime because they show a lack of interest in the community.

Employees fill out repair forms, which go to **McGlothlin**, and he assigns them to the appropriate departments. The departments have two to 10 days to follow up on reports and make improvements, **McGlothlin** said. The city already has the tools and employees to make improvements, he said. "The program is based on the use of basic customer service skills. There's no need for extra money."

Employees have been told to report problems they see and problems reported by citizens, **McGlothlin** said. He said he has gotten almost 1,900 reports since the beginning of the year. The city plans to hire someone to head the program, he said. Complaints will be handled by that person after the program is opened to citizens to use, he said. Workshop participants also learned about gang activity from Sgt. Mark Bridgeman, who heads the Police Department's office of special information.

Jessica Poulard, a Fayetteville resident, said she attended the workshop to learn more about gangs. "I want to know more about what's going on," she said. "I have two little ones that I have to be concerned about."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Fayetteville Observer (NC)
September 13, 1998

5 Officers to be promoted (excerpt on candidate)

Author: *Lora Hines*

Five Fayetteville police officers will be promoted to sergeants Monday. Chief Ron Hansen said the officers were among as many as 30 who went through the screening process. ``They went through a considerable amount of testing, assessment and a very tough interview," Hansen said. The five officers' past experiences, commendations and work ethic put them ahead in the process, Hansen said.

Michael McGlothlin, 29, has been at the department four years as a patrol officer and as a gang unit investigator. He has received training in gang identification and investigation, and is a graduate of the North Carolina Justice Academy Police Law Institute. **McGlothlin** served seven years in the Army. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice at Auburn University, and he is studying for a graduate degree. The sergeants will start training for their new jobs on Monday and then be assigned to their squads, Hansen said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Fayetteville Observer (NC)
November 10, 1997

Police officers say 'the wrap' works

Author: *Michelle Brien*

Police Investigator **Mike McGlothlin** laid on the floor of his office and let his sergeant tie him up. When Sgt. Mark Bridgeman was done, **McGlothlin** couldn't move. Bridgeman had to help him sit up; he couldn't even wiggle his toes. That's how "The Wrap" is supposed to work, Bridgeman said. The new device lets police immobilize violent suspects in a safer way than hog-tying, Bridgeman said. When a prisoner is hog-tied, his hands are cuffed behind his back and his legs are shackled, then his hands and legs are tied together with a rope.

Hog-tying forces a prisoner to lie on his stomach. That can cause positional asphyxia -- when a person's own body weight crushes the air out of his lungs. No one has died from positional asphyxia in the custody of the Police Department, Bridgeman said. But, he asks, why wait until that happens when there's a device that can prevent it? The Wrap is a piece of canvas reinforced with steel rods. Usually several officers are needed to restrain a violent subject, Bridgeman said, and it takes at least two to put on The Wrap.

The person kneels on white arrows in the middle of the canvas, then lays down on his stomach. His legs are crossed at the ankles. Officers pull a piece of Velcro two-inches wide across the back of the person's knees, put the Velcro through a buckle, then secure it over the sticky side of the Velcro. Then two more Velcro straps are fastened across the person's ankles and thighs. Another strap goes around the waist.

An officer can cuff the person's hands to a D-ring at the back of The Wrap. It also has Velcro straps that can secure a person's hands at his sides. When the officer is through, he rolls the person to a sitting position. Straps attached to the waist and legs tighten to force the person to sit upright, like an L. And, as **McGlothlin** demonstrated, it keeps the person from moving.

That benefits officers in several ways, Bridgeman said. The person restrained is not in danger of positional asphyxia. The officer is not in danger of getting kicked, nor is his patrol car in danger of losing a window or receiving a dent from flailing feet. "I've been kicked, and it's not a pleasurable experience," Bridgeman said. "We've used this once or twice a week since we got it. They're very effective."

Officers started using The Wrap in July. They cost about \$180 each, and the department bought enough to keep one in every supervisor's car. Sgt. Darryl Smith said he's used the wrap twice, both times on women. "One time, there was a female -- a large female -- trying to kick out the windows and spit on officers. She was combative. Once we put The Wrap on her, she couldn't move," Smith said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bridgeman said just showing the device to a violent suspect can make him calm down. ``They say, `What's that?' and I say, `This is going on you.' " Bridgeman said. ``They calm right down, say `I'll be OK.' " The device was invented two years ago by Sgt. Ron O'Dell and Lt. Craig Zamolo of the Walnut Creek, Calif., Police Department, said Michelle Brighton, an employee of Safe Restraints, Inc., which makes The Wrap. She said about 65 agencies nationwide use the device. She said that the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department is testing it.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Fayetteville Observer (NC)
September 18, 1997

Army to probe Spring Lake death

Author: *Michelle Brien*

The Army will investigate whether two soldiers charged after a killing in Spring Lake had gang affiliations. A Fort Bragg spokesman said Wednesday that nothing indicates large gangs are forming on post. Police arrested Jevon Harrison Poole and Corey Leroy Burrows about a block from where their friend, Leroy Singleton, lay dead on the floor of a house on Kaye Street Tuesday. The three had planned to kill a man inside the house, police said, but Singleton was shot to death instead by someone inside the house when his gun jammed.

Poole carried a business card that showed gang symbols, said Spring Lake Police Chief Gil Campbell. It marked his affiliation with the Gangster Disciples Nation, and bore his phone and pager numbers. Campbell said Tuesday that Singleton and the others involved in the shooting all were affiliated with gangs. Both Poole and Burrows are Army specialists. They face charges of conspiring with Singleton to kill someone in the house, first-degree burglary, and shooting into an occupied house.

Fort Bragg spokesman Lt. Col. Rick Spearman said if Army investigators determine that the soldiers are in a gang, they will be kicked out of the service. Fort Bragg, like other areas, has had incidents of gang activity, he said. But nothing indicates that large gangs are forming on post. "Really and truly, we believe that membership in a gang is inconsistent with military service," Spearman said. "We have policies that we do not discriminate on the basis of creed or race or national origin. If we don't do all those things we cannot allow people to deal with organizations who have extremes of hatred."

According to information on their police photographs, both Burrows and Poole had tattoos on their bodies. Poole has a tattoo of a heart with a banner through it on his right arm. Burrows also has a heart tattooed on his right arm, and has his initials tattooed on his lower leg. Campbell said police would investigate whether those tattoos are gang symbols. Last year, Fort Bragg's former commander ordered all soldiers to be searched for tattoos that could be considered gang insignia or racist.

The 82nd Airborne Division began an investigation of skinhead and extremist activity after soldiers James Burmeister and Malcolm Wright were charged in a double murder. The two were convicted of killing Jackie Burden and Michael James because they were black. Spearman said he did not know whether the tattoos on Burrows and Poole would be considered objectionable. He said their arrests had not prompted a similar post-wide search for gang tattoos or paraphernalia. "This incident is not a trigger, like 'Oh my, everyone get up and look for gangs,'" he said. "We have an anti-gang task force. They look into anything that has to do with gangs."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The task force also teaches soldiers how to recognize gang activity. **Mike McGlothlin**, a gang investigator for the Fayetteville Police Department, supported Spearman's assessment of gang activity in Cumberland County. "I would consider, based off my personal knowledge, that we're still at that gang influence level rather than a gang problem," he said. "A problem would be like a drive-by shooting every day. We're still in the infancy stages." **McGlothlin** said gang members do commit violent crimes in Cumberland County. Members of a gang called the 212 Crips broke into a pastor's home in December 1995. Six people set the house on fire, shot the pastor's wife and held his children at gunpoint. Gang members are also behind some property crimes and weapons violations in Fayetteville. But sporadic problems do not indicate a gang invasion, **McGlothlin** said.

Campbell said the murder was the first sign of violent gang activity that he had seen in Spring Lake. And the killing was the city's first in two years. Police continue to investigate the shooting and believe others may be involved. "It wouldn't be a gang with three or four people," Campbell said. The man who shot Singleton has not been charged. Investigators are trying to determine whether he fired in self-defense.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Fayetteville Observer (NC)
August 16, 1997

Know what to look for

Author: *Simone Dennison*

People from Hope Mills and neighboring communities came together recently to discuss and learn about gang involvement in the area. The awareness meeting was held at the Hope Mills Community Center and was conducted by **Mike McGlothlin**, Alcedo Cruz and David Dawless. These three individuals have studied gang practices and behaviors extensively. Residents reported that they first noticed signs of graffiti in the area in 1993. "Graffiti is the first sign of gang presence and communities should not deny the problem exists, but try to educate themselves," **McGlothlin** said. "The number one tool is educating communities and law enforcement officers."

McGlothlin discussed the myths about gangs and four general categories of gangs. One myth is that gangs are made up of young, poor black males. **McGlothlin** said gangs are not composed of one race and they cover all economic backgrounds. Another myth is that gangs are juvenile problems. Gang members are found to be as young as 10 and as old as 45. The older gang members usually provide the guns and alcohol that lure the younger ones into the gang. The four categories of gangs were identified as traditional, non-traditional, criminal enterprise and tag artists.

Traditional gangs are gangs that have been around for a long period of time. They have established turfs, initiation procedures and have larger and more complex organizations. Non-traditional gangs are new, **McGlothlin** said. Their members are struggling with their identity in and outside the gang. "These gangs tend to dissolve," he said. Non-traditional gangs would be the type probably found in this area.

Criminal enterprise is not really a street gang. Members try to avoid law enforcement as much as possible. This gang is very secretive and sophisticated. Tag artists are graffiti artists. They leave their mark on places like walls, trains and streets. This is another way to mark their turf. Some may get involved in this activity just for the thrill of seeing their mark on a wall. "Others get involved in gangs because something is missing in the neighborhood or at home," Cruz said. Many people join gangs due to peer pressure, for protection from other gang members and to have that feeling of being in a group.

There are certain levels of gang membership, including at risk, peripheral, associate and hard core members. People identified as at risk usually claim gang affiliation to influence people. "This can be very dangerous," Cruz said. At the peripheral level, members may be involved in illegal activities such as guns and narcotics. Associate level members identify with a gang, but seldom get involved deeply in gang activity. These members go out and become trained in certain areas then return to teach the other gang members. Hard core members talk, live and act gang behavior.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Investigators pointed out some key things to look for in determining gang activity. Gangs may use their own bodies and clothing as symbols. The right side of the body is used as a symbol for one gang, while another gang uses the left side. Shoe laces might not be tied on that particular side of the body or a hat might be tilted to that side. The speakers said that their goal is to keep gang activity at the non-traditional level. ``If we can keep gang activity in the non-traditional category, the interest stage, then we're moving in the right direction," **McGlothlin** said. The best thing for parents to do is ask questions, pay attention and get involved.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Fayetteville Observer (NC)
February 15, 1997

Town gets a leg up on thwarting gang activity

Author: *Karen LaCaire Bouvier*

Nearly 100 Hope Mills residents, including Commissioner Ed Herring and Mayor Edwin Deaver, met at the Hope Mills Community Center on Tuesday to participate in an educational seminar presented by members of the Fayetteville Police Department. It was sponsored by the Eaglewood, Timberlake and Village Green community watch groups. Parents, teachers, friends and neighbors joined together to learn more about a growing problem in America -- gang activity.

"People need to understand that we're not doing these presentations because we think there is a major gang problem in our community," said David Sportsman, a police sergeant in charge of the seminar. "We are doing this to promote awareness and to help parents and others recognize the early signs of gang activity or gang affiliation. It's preventative education so that we don't have a gang problem down the road."

Michael Stoudt has said, however, that he has seen signs of gang activity in Hope Mills. "I know that gangs now exist in our town," Stoudt, president of the Eaglewood Community Watch program, said recently. "I don't know if they're just 'wannabes' or actual members. But I do know that I've seen the signs. And my kids have seen the signs. And concerned faculty at South View High have seen the signs."

Fayetteville police officers who conduct seminars such as the one in Hope Mills are among the only law enforcement officials statewide who are taking an active approach to gang intervention. Sportsman and his fellow officers travel all over North Carolina presenting the seminars. They educate other police officers about the signs of gang presence and how to handle youth who might be participating in gang-related activity.

Hope Mills Community Police Officer Sheila Merriman organized the Hope Mills presentation. Timberlake Community Watch members presented Merriman with an award of appreciation for her dedication to keeping Hope Mills "a safe place, especially for our children." Merriman introduced Sportsman and Officers Robert Rivera and **Mike McGlothlin**, who each offered much information during the two-hour meeting.

Residents learned the signs that may indicate pre-gang behavior, such as demonstrating poor school progress, truancy, negative behavior in the home and drawing signs and symbols relative to a certain gang. Participants left knowing which symbols, colors, and hand signs denoted various gangs and how to report suspected gang activities or members. **McGlothlin** and Rivera discussed a variety of reasons that children join gangs, including recognition, protection, fellowship and prestige.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Michael Shawn McGlothlin
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

“Many communities are in denial,” Sportsman said. “All communities are susceptible to gang infiltration in varying degrees, and those areas that are aware and educated will keep gangs at bay.” He emphasized that Hope Mills is not immune to gang activity, saying that potential for gangs exists everywhere. In Hope Mills, he said, gang members have the most potential for penetrating the community because of transplanting, which he described as gang-involved youth from big cities sent to the area by parents who want to get them away from a gang in their hometown.

“Maybe Aunt Jane lives in Hope Mills,” Sportsman said, “and nephew Johnny is in trouble out in Los Angeles, so Mom and Dad send to Aunt Jane to try to protect him.” Sportsman said that the transient nature of a large military population presents the potential for former gang members from large metropolitan areas to move to Hope Mills. “Basically, we all need to be aware and be involved in discouraging gang activity,” Sportsman said.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
 Colin Baenziger & Associates



Section 8

James A. Poag

Cocoa Beach

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

JAMES A. POAG

[REDACTED]

July 16, 2025

City of Cocoa Beach
65 Stone Street
Cocoa Beach, FL 32922

RE: City Manager Position

Dear Hiring Manager:

As an administrative professional with over 20 years' experience in the public sector, I am writing to express my interest in the City Manager position within the City of Cocoa Beach. My experience in government administration has given me the ability to successfully lead a myriad of functions and departments aligning day-to-day operations to achieve organizational goals that drive stakeholder value. I'm excited for the opportunity to bring my experience and skills to your organization and be a part of the growing and ever-evolving City of Cocoa Beach.

- **Administrative Oversight and Leadership.** I am experienced in leading a myriad of local government departments including public relations, development services, community and economic development, finance and budget, strategic planning, information technology, internal audit and small business development. I have managed several large contracts, including public safety contracts. I also have led many community activities and events partnering with local community groups and the media to bridge the gap between residents of different racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Organizational Change.** I work collaboratively across the organization with peers from all levels and communicate effectively with all stakeholders to strategically lead organizational change that leads to improved operations, higher level of service and increased employee engagement and morale. Examples of key organizational changes that I have led include the onboarding of ENERGOV, a self-service solution for building and permit review that has annual permit revenue by over 11%. Another example of an organizational change that I have led is the automation of the City's p-card system.
- **Communication and collaboration.** Communication and collaboration are pillars of my leadership style and practice. I value diversity, inclusivity and equality, not only because they increase long-term organizational capacity, but they also often lead to innovative solutions that drive sustainability and improve the effectiveness of government programs and initiatives. A couple of recent initiatives that I have implemented that highlight my commitment to communication and collaboration include the City's 5-year Strategic Plan and the City Informational Map Guide.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss how I can add value to your team. Please feel free to contact me via email at [REDACTED] with questions or to schedule an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

James A. Poag

JAMES A. POAG

CITY MANAGER

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | PUBLIC SAFETY | FINANCIAL SERVICES | COMMUNITY AFFAIRS | COMPLIANCE & AUDITING

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Executive-level public administrative professional with over 20 years of experience within a myriad of high-level municipal service functions including public relations, development services, finance and budget, small business development, strategic planning, information technology and economic development requiring effective professional working relationships combined with sound management practices and principles.

Astute operations leader with demonstrated experience in successful organizational management. Experienced in governance and leadership with extensive experience in relationship management, change facilitation, business transformation, staff management and training, and the management of day-to-day operations.

Enterprising professional with proven success in resource management maximizing availability and use of a wide array of resources to meet ever-evolving organizational, programmatic, and project needs. Adept at defining objectives and managing timelines to meet challenging goals and delivering multifaceted solutions focused on increased efficiency and delivery of services with improved strategic alignment.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

City of Miami Gardens | Miami Gardens, FL

Sept. 2016 – Present

Director, Office of Civic Engagement

Strategic Administrative Officer

Assists the City Manager in planning, directing, monitoring, and evaluating city programs and operations. Coordinates with public information officers and media advisory to address the City's communication and marketing activities. Leader of economic development efforts for the City, including the day-to-day management of the Development Services Department and the City's civic engagement efforts.

- Directs the City's Strategic Planning and Development Services that includes small business development and capital improvement programming overseeing over \$1 million in new construction within the City that's led to year-over-year increase in Building Services revenue on average by 11%. Examples of new businesses include Derby Point and Bridgepoint West that created 300 new warehouse jobs along with numerous large residential and retail developments.
- Manages an effective team of over thirty-five employees that are empowered to recommend and/or make decisions to improve processes and procedures, streamline and automate operations and improve service delivery. Examples of process improvements include the automation of the City's p-card system and the implementation of ENERGOV, a self-service solution for building and permit review that increased the number of permits issued while decreasing the average approval time.
- Leads City-wide civic engagement events and activities, including youth outreach activities such as voter registration drives, college tours and community bike and run events that promotes community awareness and increases awareness and knowledge of public programs and services.
- Utilizes best practices under NIMS to supervise the City's overall response to COVID-19 as the Pandemic Coordinator in coordination with federal and state agencies.
- Prepares recommendations, reports and publications concerning economic conditions, trends and potential for economic growth in the community, including conducting an annual review/update of the City's overall economic development strategy improving transparency of the city's performance in bringing jobs to the community and expanding the city's tax base.
- Assists in the funding strategy and development planning for capital improvement programs and \$60 million General Obligation Bond projects for Parks and Recreation Department.

Village of Wellington | Wellington, FL
Director of Community Services
Director, Internal Audit and Compliance
Interim Chief Financial Officer

May 2013 – August 2016

Directed all community-related services for Wellington residents, including Safe Neighborhoods, Senior Services, Community Outreach, Education and Public Safety. Served as Interim Chief Financial Officer for the Village and Director of Internal Audit and Compliance.

- Oversight, and presentation of the FY 2013/2014 budget, including \$14 million capital budget and oversight of all neighborhood reinvestment grants including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
- Managed an \$8.2 million Law Enforcement Services Contract.
- Direct Preparation, monitoring, and oversight of \$1.2 million departmental budget and supervised a team of 22 full-time employees.
- Implemented several process improvements and reorganizations including a paperless payroll process, establishment of accounts payable guidelines and response times resulting in improved service delivery.
- Developed annual and multi-year audit plans, including audit criteria and approach and worked with organizational units to identify highest risks and develop metrics working departments to develop self-monitoring programs to track prioritized areas of risk.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Investigator, Palm Beach County Govt. Commission on Ethics | West Palm Beach, FL
Director, Office of Professional Standards, Broward County | Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Aug. 2011 – May 2013
January 2004 – March 2006

RELEVANT SKILLS

Leadership: Organizational Development | Management Practices & Principles | Public Relations | Process Improvement | Strategic Planning | Budget Development & Administration | Internal Auditing

Computer: MS Office, including Outlook, Word, PowerPoint and Excel | Naviline | Eden | ENERGOV

EDUCATION

Nova University | Davie, FL

Doctor of Education, Organizational Leadership

St. Thomas University | Miami, FL

Master of Science in Management, Public Management/Justice Administration

Florida A&M University | Tallahassee, FL

Bachelor of Arts, Criminal Justice/Police Science

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships: International City/County Management Association (ICMA) | Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA) | National Association for Black Public Administration (NABPA) | National Development Council (NDC) | International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) | Florida Government Finance Officers Association (FGFOA) | Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE)

CERTIFICATIONS & AWARDS

Certifications: Certified Fraud Examiner | FEMA/IS-00100.B/IS-00200.B/NIMS

Awards: Top 25 Emerging African-American Leaders in Palm Beach County

Candidate Introduction

James A. Poag

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education, Organizational Leadership Doctor of Education, Organizational Leadership, Nova University | Davie, FL
Master of Science in Management, Public Management/Justice Administration St. Thomas University | Miami, FL
Bachelor of Arts, Criminal Justice/Political Science Florida A&M University | Tallahassee, FL
FEMA/IS-00100.B/IS-00200.B/NIMS Certified Fraud Examiner
State of Florida Level One Code Enforcement Certification

EXPERIENCE

Director, Office of Civic Engagement/ City of Miami Gardens, FL	2018 – present
Strategic Administrative Officer/ City of Miami Gardens, FL	2016 – 2018
Community Services Director/Village of Wellington, FL	2014 – 2016
Interim Chief Financial Officer/ Village of Wellington, FL	
Director Internal Audit/Village of Wellington, FL	2013 – 2014
Investigator/Palm Beach County Comm. On Ethics/Palm Beach County, FL	2011 – 2013
Program Director, Everest Institute, Miami Gardens, FL	2006 – 2011
Director, Office of Professional Standards, Broward County, FL	2004 – 2006
Interim Director, Office of Equal Opportunity, Broward County, FL	
EEO Compliance Administrator, Broward County Schools	2001 – 2004

BACKGROUND

With 116,000 Residents, Miami Gardens is the third largest city in Miami-Dade County. The city benefits from a highly strategic location in South Florida. It sits at the crossroads of major transportation corridors I-95, the Palmetto Expressway, and Florida's Turnpike, providing efficient regional access for residents, businesses, and logistics. This connectivity has supported both community mobility and economic development, especially in attracting events and commerce to the area around Hard Rock Stadium, a significant anchor within the city.

The city is also located within close proximity to Miami International Airport and Port Miami, which are vital gateways for international trade and travel. This geographic positioning gives Miami Gardens unique economic leverage, especially in industries tied to tourism, imports, and global engagement.

James A. Poag

The City of Miami Gardens employs 750 employees including the police department. In my role, I directly supervise approximately 8 department heads including, Building Services, Planning, Code Enforcement, Economic and Community Development. The general fund budget for FY 2024 is approximately \$88 million, with a total citywide budget of about \$165 million, including enterprise and special revenue funds.

The three most significant issues facing the City are:

- **Aging Infrastructure:** Like many mature cities, we are addressing deferred maintenance in roads, drainage, and public facilities, requiring strategic capital investment and grant leveraging.
- **Economic Development:** While we've made progress, attracting diverse businesses and revitalizing commercial corridors remains a top priority to expand the tax base and create jobs.
- **Water Utility Equity:** A longstanding dispute with North Miami Beach over water surcharges has impacted residents. Legislative efforts are underway to ensure fair utility rates and local control.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Cocoa Beach represents a truly unique blend of coastal charm, civic pride, and forward-looking potential. As a community known for its natural beauty, vibrant tourism economy, and close ties to the space industry, Cocoa Beach is poised for dynamic growth—while still preserving the laid-back culture and tight-knit spirit that make it special. I'm drawn to the opportunity to help guide a city that embraces both its identity and its future.

Having worked in municipal leadership for over 25 years, I've found my greatest fulfillment in building responsive, transparent, and resilient local governments. Cocoa Beach offers a platform to do just that. This role aligns perfectly with my long-standing professional mission: to lead with integrity, empower community voices, and create lasting civic impact. Throughout my career, I've championed smart planning, financial stewardship, and inclusive governance qualities that I believe are essential in a city manager, especially in a place like Cocoa Beach where balancing economic vitality and environmental responsibility is paramount.

Joining Cocoa Beach would be a natural next step in my journey—not only because of its scale and complexity, but because it presents an opportunity to bring together everything I've learned and apply it in a way that truly matters. I'm not seeking a job—I'm seeking a legacy of service.

James A. Poag

Throughout my entire career I've prided myself on being a people person. I've always told my employees and the people I serve; my name comes before my title. Thus, my management style is rooted in leading by example. I believe in never asking anyone to do something I wouldn't do myself. I work to ensure my team has the tools, support, and autonomy they need to be successful. If you asked my current staff, they'd likely describe me as approachable, supportive, decisive, and fair—someone who listens and empowers, but also stands firm when it matters most.

Some of my core strengths include strategic decision-making, political acumen, accountability, and integrity. I value transparency in leadership and foster an environment where collaboration, trust, and results go hand in hand. My strength can be highlighted through my ability to entail job creation, tax base expansion and quality of life enhancements.

Over the past few years, a significant increase in commercial development has taken place throughout the city. Over \$75,000,000.00 has been invested in a wide variety of businesses, including Top Golf, Waffle House and Starbucks. As a direct result, over 600 new jobs can be attributed to this wave of commercial development in which I led.

However, as humans along with strengths there are weaknesses. One area I've continually worked on is delegation. Early in my career, I had a tendency to take on too much myself to ensure high standards were met. Over time, I've learned that empowering others not only builds stronger teams but also leads to more sustainable outcomes. I've made conscious efforts to trust my staff with greater responsibility while remaining available for guidance and support. Another area is that I can be very results-driven, which sometimes makes me impatient with bureaucratic delays. I've come to appreciate the value of process and consensus-building, especially in government settings where collaboration and transparency are essential.

I'm most proud of my leadership role in developing "*Now and Tomorrow*," our 10-year strategic plan for the City of Miami Gardens. This plan serves as a roadmap to guide the city through the next decade, rooted in a firm commitment to improving quality of life for all residents. It embraces thoughtful growth while honoring our community's rich culture and history, and it focuses on strengthening neighborhoods, expanding economic opportunities, and deepening community connections. The strategy builds upon our past achievements and positions us to meet future challenges with bold actions and innovative solutions.

One of the biggest lessons I've learned in my career came from my decision to remain with the Village of Wellington, even after I sensed a significant shift in the City Council's direction. I was offered a position with the City of Miami Gardens at the time, but I declined because I felt committed to seeing my work through and supporting the team I had built. In hindsight, staying turned out to be a missed opportunity—one that impacted me then and continues to serve as a

James A. Poag

reminder today. What I've taken from that experience is that nothing in public service is permanent, and when the right opportunity aligns with your vision and values, you must have the courage to move forward. I also learned that a well-built team remains a lasting legacy—they carry their impact into other communities, even when circumstances change.

Unfortunately, with a career that has span as many years as mine has, I have had to terminate employees. It's never an easy decision, and I approach it with seriousness, empathy, and fairness. I ensure that expectations are clearly communicated, performance is documented, and opportunities for improvement are provided. When termination becomes necessary, I handle it respectfully and professionally, always mindful of the individual's dignity and the impact on the broader team. While it's difficult, I understand that maintaining accountability and organizational standards is part of effective leadership.

Based on my research, Cocoa Beach is at a pivotal moment, facing a combination of financial constraints, leadership transitions, and pressure to balance growth with environmental integrity. The next city manager will be tasked with navigating complex budget decisions, implementing equitable parking and business policies, restoring public trust through transparency, and fostering a strong, unified staff culture. With its coastal location and tourism-based economy, the city also requires strategic planning to protect its natural assets while promoting sustainable development.

If I'm selected as the next City Manager of Cocoa Beach, in my first six months, I would focus on listening, learning, and building relationships. That includes meeting with Council members, department heads, staff, and community stakeholders to understand their priorities, concerns, and aspirations. I'd conduct a thorough review of the City's budget, operations, and strategic plans to identify opportunities for improvement and alignment. I'd also prioritize visibility being present in the community, attending events, and establishing open lines of communication. My goal would be to build trust, assess organizational strengths, and lay the groundwork for a shared vision that reflects the values and goals of the City of Cocoa Beach.

I've always approached working with the media as an opportunity to build trust and transparency. I believe in proactive communication, especially during high-interest events or critical issues. I aim to provide timely, accurate information and ensure that messaging aligns with the values of the organization I represent. I've worked collaboratively with communications staff and local journalists to ensure balanced, fact-based reporting that keeps our residents informed without compromising internal processes or sensitive information.

As for my background, there is nothing that would embarrass or discredit the City of Cocoa Beach. In 2005, during a contentious divorce, I was falsely accused of domestic violence. The case was later dismissed without ever going to court, and the allegations were determined to be

James A. Poag

unfounded. I've been transparent about that chapter of my life, and I've carried those lessons with me, especially the importance of integrity, resilience, and honesty in leadership.

I view social media as a powerful tool for transparency, engagement, and trust-building. In Cocoa Beach, I would use platforms like Facebook and Instagram to share timely updates, highlight community events, celebrate staff and resident achievements, and provide clear information during emergencies or service disruptions. I believe in a proactive, consistent presence that reflects the town's values and keeps residents informed and connected.

In Miami Gardens, I've worked closely with our communications team to develop messaging strategies that humanize local government and foster two-way dialogue. For example, we've used social media to promote our strategic plan, "Now and Tomorrow," and to gather community feedback on key initiatives. We've also leveraged it during hurricane season to provide real-time updates and resources. The key is to be intentional, responsive, and aligned with the community's voice.

I'm not aware of any community activists who would contact Cocoa Beach with negative information about me. That said, I believe in transparency and accountability. In 2005, during a contentious divorce, I was falsely accused of domestic violence. The case was dismissed without going to court, and the allegations were found to be unfounded. I've always been open about that chapter of my life, and I've used it as a reminder of the importance of integrity, resilience, and fairness in leadership. I welcome any questions and am confident that my record and reputation reflect my commitment to public service.

In my personal time, I enjoy cooking, fishing, golfing, and traveling with friends and family.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF

- Decisive
- Approachable
- Strategic Thinker
- Supportive Mentor
- Transparent
- Resilient

James A. Poag

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT POSITION

I'm seeking new opportunities that align with my desire for professional growth and personal fulfillment. While I've been proud to serve in my current role with the City of Miami Gardens, I believe it's the right time to take on new challenges that allow me to apply my leadership skills in a new setting. Cocoa Beach presents the ideal combination of civic opportunity and quality of life, especially with my family and close friends located nearby in the Orlando area. I'm excited about the possibility of serving a community that shares my values and vision for collaborative, transparent, and community-focused governance.

CURRENT SALARY

\$155K Yr.

Section 8

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES ALBERT POAG**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Miami-Dade County, FL	November 2009 - Left the Scene of an Accident Disposition: Dismissed <i>*See Pages 15-16 for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Broward County, FL	August 2008 - Foreclosure Disposition: February 2011 , Dismissed for Lack of Prosecution October 2019 - Insurance Claim filed by Mr. Poag against Avatar Property and Casualty Insurance Company Disposition: September 2020 , Voluntary Dismissal with Prejudice February 2020 - Lawsuit filed against Mr. Poag by Suncoast Credit Union Disposition: July 2021 , Final Summary Judgement <i>*See Page 16 for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES ALBERT POAG**

Federal Florida	No Records Found
Motor Vehicle Florida	Major Infraction - See County Records Above
Credit	Very Good
Personal Bankruptcy	No Records Found
Sex Offender Registry	Not Listed
Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed
Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

From: James Poag [REDACTED]
To: Lynelle Klein [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Background Check Records Found that Require an Explanation

Good Morning Lynelle,

Here are the responses to the items listed on the report:

[November 2009] This was a minor accident where I backed into a bicycle rack in the apartment complex where I lived. Before I could go to the office the following day, they contacted the

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES ALBERT POAG**

police and I was issued a citation, which was dismissed by the court. I hope this provides clarification on this matter.

[August 2008] During my divorce, my former spouse and I separated while leasing the marital home. Although she was responsible for collecting and submitting the mortgage payments, I later discovered that she had failed to make those payments, leading to foreclosure proceedings. After being notified of the court action, I refinanced the mortgage following the finalization of the divorce. I paid her the agreed-upon portion from the home's value, and I have retained ownership and continue to reside in the home to this day.

[October 2019] While leasing the home to the Pearson family, they were contractually responsible for paying the homeowner association (HOA) dues. Unfortunately, they failed to make those payments, which resulted in the HOA filing a lawsuit against me as the property owner. After I moved back into the home, I paid the outstanding balance in full. The matter was resolved, and the case was subsequently settled and dismissed. In 2019, I filed a claim and subsequently a legal case against my homeowner's insurance provider, Avatar Insurance, due to their refusal to cover necessary repairs for water damage caused by leaking pipes within the walls of my home.

[February 2020] I voluntarily surrendered a vehicle that I had co-signed for my son to Suncoast Credit Union. At the time, I was not in a financial position to cover the outstanding balance on the loan, which led to wage garnishment. However, after improving my financial situation, I paid off the loan in full, and the case was settled.

Please let me know if you need anything additional.

James

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES ALBERT POAG
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: James A. Poag

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes ☒ No ☐
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ☐ No ☒
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
LinkedIn (Dr. James A. Poag), Instagram (DrAdminQue10)
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes ☒ No ☐
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
N/A

Attested to: 

Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Monique@eb-assn.com or via fax to

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES ALBERT POAG
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

**Personal Disclosure Addendum
James A. Poag**

Answer #2

In 2005, during a highly contentious divorce, I was falsely accused of domestic violence. The accusations were later investigated and proven to be fabricated. The case was dismissed without going to court. I have no record or history of domestic violence.

Answer #9

Thank you for the opportunity to address this question. I believe in transparency and integrity, and I want to be upfront about matters that were previously brought to public attention during my career.

In 2005, I was involved in a personal matter during a difficult period in my first marriage. I was arrested, but the charges were dismissed, and I was never prosecuted. That incident never proceeded to court, and I have since maintained an unblemished professional and personal record. It's something I regret occurred, but it also shaped my commitment to personal growth and accountability.

Additionally, in 2016, I was appointed Interim City Manager in Riviera Beach, Florida, during a period of intense political transition. The City Council had experienced turnover following a contentious election, and I was selected by the majority to help stabilize the organization. While in that role, some politically motivated narratives resurfaced regarding both the 2005 personal matter and my earlier separation from the Village of Wellington, where I served as Director of Community Services. That departure was part of a broader restructuring effort, and I left with valuable experience that I've since applied to successfully lead and advise cities facing even greater challenges.

I am confident there is nothing in my background today that would embarrass this Council, the City of Cocoa Beach, or any partner I serve. On the contrary, my experience uniquely qualifies me to lead in times of complexity and uncertainty. I look forward to earning your confidence and trust through action, not just words.

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

Shelly Williams – Grants Manager, Lake County, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Williams has known Mr. Poag since around 2015. They have worked together in a few capacities and have always enjoyed a good working relationship.

When Mr. Poag was Ms. Williams' supervisor, he was very fair and dependable. When they set a plan or a course, he identified objectives and made sure he had the approval of the organization to execute the plans. Working with someone of his quality is surreal at times. Some managers push staff to work on projects but never see it through to completion, which is very demoralizing for employees. Mr. Poag saw projects through to completion. He instilled a sense of pride in their work and completion rate.

When Ms. Williams and Mr. Poag sat on interview panels together, he picked good candidates. He has a prescribed method of deliverables which is very helpful. He only has so much discretion in the roles he has had. He is a change agent but has not always been positioned in the right place to be someone who could overhaul and lead an organization in a new direction. He has the capacity but has not been given the opportunity.

When Mr. Poag was in community services, they had an effective community outreach program on several levels. The inside joke was that they called him El President because he shook hands with everyone and invited them back to the office. He represented their community very well and was approachable. When a resident expressed concern to him, he gave them the attention they deserved and promised what he could within his scope of responsibility.

They had regular organizational meetings to talk about all aspects of projects. Projects that did not directly affect a department could have some collateral impact, so these meetings were beneficial. When Mr. Poag heard that the Council may be going in a different direction, he was good about keeping others informed.

In an adjacent neighborhood the middle school lets students out early a few times a year. Some children caused mayhem in the neighborhoods. Their department had no budget to spare, but Mr. Poag bartered for TV monitors and brackets from other departments. They scraped together money to purchase play stations and sports games. They grabbed old trophies and hosted a Madden tournament at City Hall on early release days. Chick-fil-A and CVS donated to the event. Mr. Poag met with middle school principals to get the word out. The idea was so successful that they continue to hold these tournaments every time school ends early. The reduction in mayhem was so dramatic that the Sheriff sent officers to interact with the students, which was more positive than chasing them down in the neighborhoods. He found a great solution to a problem they did not have the money to fix.

With an auditor background, Mr. Poag has good financial skills. He is very much into the details and has even worked as their Interim budget person. He has a sound financial understanding of the department and the resources.

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

Mr. Poag's office has a whiteboard which contains all the layered plans and milestones. He meets deadlines. He is good with stress and is always the voice of reason in challenging circumstances. He has a great capacity to see other perspectives.

When Mr. Poag was offered a job by Riviera Beach there was a media source that brought up some things from his past. Ms. Williams did not know him at the time of these events. We all have moments where we do not act the way we want to, so she did not pay much attention to what was said. Some people may not be happy when they do not get the result they are looking for, but he is an auditor first. He always considers the legal basis for actions and, at times in government, this is not the preferred opinion.

Ms. Williams would hire Mr. Poag. He would be a good City Manager. Anyone who has the chance to work with him should take it.

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Honest,
- Dependable,
- Loyal,
- Subject matter expert on many topics,
- Relatable, and
- Understanding.

Strengths: Good at getting to the root cause, gaining consensus, executing large scale plans.

Weaknesses: When they were under pressure to complete deliverables, he could have delegated more or employed temporary workers, but she has no complaints about his work.

Bob Margolis – Former Mayor, City of Wellington, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Margolis met Mr. Poag in 2011. At the time Mr. Poag was working for the Palm Beach County Ethics Commission and Mr. Margolis was Mayor of Wellington. They worked together from 2013 to 2016 in Wellington and are still friends.

Because of Mr. Poag's skillset, work ethic, and experience he could have been a city manager at least ten years ago. Before he asks employees what they are doing, he first asks how they are doing. His people skills are unsurpassed. He has been asked to fly across the country to conduct team building exercises. He is a role model and will never ask you to do something he would not do himself. He also never loses his temper.

As the Community Development Director Mr. Poag handled neighborhood issues. Pockets in Wellington are challenging though they do not like to advertise it. He took the lead and worked

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

on a program with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office to develop a community program. He walked through neighborhoods to speak to residents as sometimes they do not want to talk to deputies or police officers. He brought the youth together for a BBQ to help the children in Wellington have a brighter day. He supervised the funding of a grant to help residents become homeowners. He understood the intricate home buying process and changed the lives of many different families. He did a phenomenal job.

Riviera Beach had a vacancy for the City Manager position, and Mr. Poag was asked to apply. The recruitment did not turn out well for him. Had they hired him, however, they would have a better municipality. He could have fixed the issues, including the ones related to their water treatment plant.

Allegations against Mr. Poag regarding his separation from Wellington are completely unfounded. One of his roles was to review department contracts with other agencies. He uncovered things that the Village did not care for, and made the facts known. One instance was the city's contract with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. He found several red flags in the contract but bringing the issues to light was not the best idea from a political perspective. He brought it forward anyway. Less than a month after Mr. Margolis stepped down as Mayor, they let Mr. Poag go on a false charge. He had more experience reviewing contracts than anyone else that Mr. Margolis has ever known. Mr. Poag operates above board. The Palm Beach County Ethics Committee was sad to lose him as an employee when he was hired in Wellington.

If Mr. Margolis had won the re-election, Mr. Poag would still be working for Wellington. Mr. Margolis would hire Mr. Poag in a heartbeat. Mr. Margolis never met a finer person, and he learned so much from Mr. Poag. He was a great leader, extremely honest, he got the job done and completed the work on time. You cannot ask for a finer candidate. From day one he will bring people into the mission and his vision of what the job allows.

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Leader,
- Honest,
- Straight forward,
- Problem solver,
- Role model that you want to work with,
- Good investigative leadership skills, and
- Always had a smile.

Strengths: Honesty, leadership, looks outside the box to get things done.

Weaknesses: Honesty is a strength but it can work against you when someone does not want to hear what is being said.

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

Melissa Negron – Human Resources Director, City of Miami Gardens, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Negron has worked with Mr. Poag since around 2019. They work on projects and have daily interactions. They are both part of the Directors' team in Miami Gardens.

The work by Mr. Poag that Ms. Negron has been privy to has been timely and thoughtfully completed. He has very professional interactions with the public, coworkers, and staff. Mr. Poag does excellent work.

When they are searching for a solution Mr. Poag has a very methodical approach. If presented with an idea, he researches it and comes back with ideas and suggestions. Miami Gardens has high standards, and he works well there. He has been an agent for change in some instances.

When hiring, Mr. Poag reviews applications and leads the interview process. Employees he hired are still with the city. No one in his department has had to be disciplined or even corrected so he must be doing well. He makes good decisions in general.

Directors are asked to attend community meetings. Many of the Directors complain about having to go but Mr. Poag never complains. He is excellent with the public and they call him the ambassador. They know if they come to him with issues, he will help resolve them. He is also very good at respecting the expertise of the other Directors. When an issue comes up related to personnel, he speaks to Ms. Negron about the options. He then complies with her suggestions.

During the election cycle Mr. Poag ensured that those with past convictions had an opportunity to work through the process to regain their right to vote. He was out in the community to help them with the paperwork. He has also helped write procedures. When they built a new City Hall and Police Station, they turned the old station into offices to give small businesses a place to work that was less expensive. Mr. Poag participated in that process.

Mr. Poag is timely in completing his work. He is very calm under stress and always maintains a very professional and positive attitude. When situations are tense, he brings levity to the situation to diffuse emotions. He is always professional, and he gets the work done.

Nothing in Mr. Poag's background would concern a reasonable person as far as Ms. Negron knows. If anyone has an issue with him, they have kept it very quiet because she has not heard about it. Ms. Negron would hire Mr. Poag. He would be a good city manager. He is enjoyable to work with.

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Professional,
- Organized,
- Innovative,
- Creative,
- Personable, and
- Attentive to people and detail.

Strengths: Excellent communicator, very organized, very methodical in his approach to problem solving.

Weaknesses: He cares too much at times.

Bertha Henry – Deputy County Administrator, Broward County, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Henry has known Mr. Poag since the early to mid 2000s. She served as the Deputy County Administrator for Broward County for over twenty years. Mr. Poag was the Director for the Office of Professional Standards, and he worked closely with Ms. Henry and all County agencies. He oversaw investigations, which can be controversial and require discretion but need to be fact based. His greatest strength is his ability to work well with others.

Broward County's policies are straight forward. Mr. Poag ensured that the departments were aligned with the policies, and his documentation was fact based. He made recommendations but was not asked to be innovative as the information they were working with needed to be factual. He worked closely with the agencies, and they trusted him not to put his own spin on the information that was received.

Many of the investigations centered around misappropriations or items not being handled correctly. Mr. Poag had the financial skillset to look at the information and interpret what was happening. He completed his work on time and maintained a nice demeanor.

Ms. Henry cannot recall any complaints about Mr. Poag. His investigations were fair and based on facts. He maintained confidentiality up until the reports were publicly released and he was able to discuss the information. He was not involved in any controversy during his tenure in Broward County.

Ms. Henry would hire Mr. Poag. She has followed Mr. Poag and his career. When they had an opening that was a good fit for his skillset, she reached out to him and encouraged him to apply.

Mr. Poag has grown substantially in his career since working for Broward County. He provides good public service while keeping the elected officials informed and following internal

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

processes. Depending on the community, he would do well as a city or county manager. He is a good and solid manager.

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Very personable,
- Approachable,
- Trustworthy,
- Easy to talk to,
- Good grasp of the policies and data, and
- Very calm in every situation.

Strengths: Skilled at working with people.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Tania Francois – Executive Producer, CBS News, Miami, FL

Ms. Francois has done some work in Miami Gardens where Mr. Poag is employed. They have worked together. He is innovative while maintaining operations at a high level. When you need something to happen, you go to him, and it happens.

Mr. Poag was always out in the community, even on holidays, and even when he did not have to be there. He attends the Memorial Day Brunch and other events that the City hosts. He frequently deals with the public and he is very well liked.

People come to Ms. Francois with problems that need to be resolved. Many times, these issues do not escalate to the level of a story. Instead of putting it on television, they reach out to other parties. For example, if someone is trying to replace their roof and the permit process is dragging on, she calls Mr. Poag to ask him to help. He assists in the permit process and then the situation is resolved and never becomes a news story. Some individuals in City Hall make it harder than it needs to be. Mr. Poag makes it easy. You call him and it is done.

Ms. Francois reaches out to the individuals that respond in the quickest time frame. Mr. Poag is very approachable and is always responsive. When residents do not get what they want, they are not always pleasant. He has a relatability that helps him connect with members of the community. He works with them to accomplish their goals.

Mr. Poag's background does not contain any items that would prevent Ms. Francois from working with him. She is not aware of anything negative in his conduct. She would hire Mr. Poag if she were able to. She does not want him to leave Miami Gardens. He is her go-to person.

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Dependable,
- Reliable,
- Fixer, and
- Always there.

Strengths: Getting it done, simplifying complicated matters, making hard things easy.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Patricia West – Former Assistant Director, Civil Rights Division, Broward County, FL

Ms. West has known Mr. Poag since around 2004. They worked together in the Civil Rights Division and Mr. Poag reported to her. He was an excellent employee. Civil rights is a difficult job because you are working with those who feel they have been discriminated against. They also handled cases for the federal government. They really had to dot their I's and cross their T's or they were not paid for the investigation. Rarely did she have to return one of his cases for corrections. They have remained friends since they worked together.

Most of us do not make the best decisions when we are young. However, Mr. Poag has always been willing to say he was wrong and turn it into a positive. He worked very hard to move forward. He has earned a master's and doctorate degree. He is very bright and a real team player. He keeps everyone informed.

Later Ms. West was hired to be the Equal Opportunity Director. Mr. Poag was promoted to work with them to handle internal problems in Broward County. For example, their division handled employee complaints against supervisors. Mr. Poag investigated and made recommendations to help decide whether allegations were legitimate. He thoroughly investigated the situation, and his information was always solid. He did what he needed to do for the best outcome.

Mr. Poag worked closely with the Commissioners and the County Administrator. He really had to make sure that all his work was in good standing. During challenging circumstances, he stepped up and did the right thing. This job was challenging because it was sometimes hard to know what the elected officials needed or wanted. He was a good communicator, and he had a good working relationship with them.

Mr. Poag has not been involved in anything truly controversial, just some missteps that could have been handled differently but it worked out. At this point in his career, nothing in his conduct would concern an employer. Sometimes personalities clash but, in these instances, he is always respectful and is respected in return for his level of expertise.

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

Ms. West would hire Mr. Poag. He is very loyal and dependable. He is very innovative. Not one to rest on his laurels, he is always looking to improve. He has done much in the last few years to keep up with technology and continue his education. He has good working relationships with individuals in both Miami Dade and Broward counties.

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Articulate,
- Very focused,
- Understands discretion,
- Analytical,
- Strategic, and
- Very intentional.

Strengths: Very analytical, very easy to get along with, respectful of other opinions, tries to find a win/win.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Osvaldo Diaz – Building Official, City of Miami Gardens, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Diaz has worked with Mr. Poag since 2016. Mr. Poag is very attentive and very efficient. Everyone that he hired is still employed and doing well. They look for fit as well as experience as being part of the team is important. His decision making in general is very good. He is on the ball and constantly brings new ideas to the table. They have weekly meetings to stay informed.

Mr. Poag is at all city and community meetings. He also participates in the local crime watch communities. He is very well spoken with the public, but also to the point. He is a good listener. He can grasp where you need to go while knowing that not everything can be done by policy. He works very well with the community.

Covid was difficult for the building department because they were not 100% electronic. Mr. Diaz was trying to introduce technology. Mr. Poag was very helpful and brought in an outside assistant to work through the processes. He thinks outside the box.

Being fiscally savvy, Mr. Poag understands the importance of managing and maintaining a budget. They are given priorities, and, in many cases, these had to be completed in a certain way and at a certain time. He always met expectations. He has never lost his cool. Even in very difficult moments he is cool and collected.

Reference Notes

James A. Poag

Mr. Diaz is not aware of anything controversial that relates to Mr. Poag. They spend a great deal of time together at work. He works very well with internal and external customers. None of them have ever spoken badly about him.

Mr. Diaz would hire Mr. Poag. Mr. Poag has been key in helping Mr. Diaz develop some of the key programs that have improved his department. Not just from a financial standpoint but also from the policy side. He is a well-rounded individual.

Mr. Poag has the right mindset to manage a community. He is a good policy maker. He is persistent but he is also reasonable. He listens to what others have to say without judgement.

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Strong,
- Determined,
- Open minded,
- Good listener,
- Soft spoken, and
- Forthcoming.

Strengths: Communication, writing skills, good leadership quality, can move people in the right direction and get the work done correctly.

Weaknesses: Can be a little persistent at times.

Francis Ragoo – President, Neighborhood Watch, Inc., Miami Gardens, FL

Mr. Ragoo has known Mr. Poag since around 2019. Mr. Ragoo is the President of several community organizations on behalf of the city. Mr. Poag attends every neighborhood watch meeting for all nine subgroups. He is at all community meetings and events.

When Mr. Poag is working on something he always follows up. He does what he says he will do. He makes good decisions. He is good at keeping others informed. He is quick to respond. If he sends a message and does not get a response in a timely fashion, he follows up.

Mr. Poag works extremely well with the public. His communication skills are very good. He has good information and the ability to communicate well. He has never been upset even when hard questions are asked.

They have an annual event where they help senior citizens rehab their homes. This might include working on roofs or handling plumbing and electrical issues. Mr. Poag coordinates the efforts

Reference Notes
James A. Poag

with the contractors. He is the bridge between Mr. Ragoo's organization and the City. The event has always run smoothly.

Mr. Poag has not been involved in anything controversial. Everyone in the associations that Mr. Ragoo works in are all very complimentary of Mr. Poag and his follow-through. Mr. Ragoo would hate to lose Mr. Poag in Miami Gardens.

Mr. Ragoo would hire Mr. Poag without question. He works closely with the manager in Miami Gardens. He will be an excellent city manager. He will be a great asset wherever he goes, and Miami Gardens will lose a treasure.

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Very responsible,
- Very organized,
- High accountability,
- Extremely professional,
- Ability to communicate, and
- Always timely and punctual.

Strengths: Communication.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Lillie Q. Odum – Former Councilwoman, City of Miami Gardens, FL [REDACTED]

Ms. Odum has known Mr. Poag since around 2021. They worked together for the City of Miami Gardens while Ms. Odum served on the Council. They interacted both in City Hall and out in the community while meeting with residents.

Mr. Poag maintains his department at a high-performance level. He was good about keeping the Council informed. He was timely in completing his work. He made excellent decisions.

Mr. Poag was very active in the community, and he works very well with the public. He is extremely patient, more so than even Ms. Odum, who is well known for her patience.

Mr. Poag has not been involved in anything controversial. Ms. Odum is not aware of anyone who has a negative opinion of Mr. Poag. She would hire Mr. Poag. He is a great individual who would be an excellent City Manager.

Reference Notes
James A. Poag

Words or phrases used to describe James Poag:

- Intelligent,
- Passionate,
- Continuous learner, and
- Studies what he needs to.

Strengths: Very intelligent, very passionate, very knowledgeable.

Weaknesses: He was a little too passionate at times.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

US Fed News (USA)
April 30, 2020

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ASIAN-AMERICAN ADVISORY BOARD COORDINATES
THE DONATION OF MASKS AND HAND SANITIZERS FOR 1ST RESPONDERS**

MIAMI, Fla., April 30 -- The Miami-Dade County government issued the following news release:

In order to help the community during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Asian-American Advisory Board (<https://www.miamidade.gov/global/government/boards/asian-american-advisory-board.page>) (AAAB), under the Office of Community Advocacy (<https://www.miamidade.gov/global/government/commission/community-advocacy/home.page>), assisted Mike Wang, President of the Federation of Florida Chinese Associations and other sponsors during two donation efforts in the month of April.

On April 9, Strategic Administrative Officer **Dr. James Poag** from the City of Miami Gardens and representatives from the Miami Gardens Police Department received 2,800 masks, 2,000 pairs of disposable gloves, and 20 bottles of hand sanitizers for the first responders and essential personnel.

On April 23, the donation went to Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management and turned over to Director Frank Rollason to be used for the frontline workers keeping Miami-Dade County safe. This donation consisted of 3,500 masks, 3,000 pairs of disposable gloves, and 20 bottles of hand sanitizers.

Asian-American Advisory Board Vice-Chairman Dr. Li Zhang and board member Josephine Gordy coordinated the donation efforts with the following sponsors who are paying it forward: Federation of Florida Chinese Associations, Chinese Association of Science, Education and Culture of South Florida (CASEC), Florida Peace Reunification Promotion Association, Shandong Association, Hubei Association, Northeast Association, Guangdong Overseas Chinese Federation, Fujian Association, Wenzhou Association, Yunnan Association, Beijing Association, Sichuan Association, Shanghai Association, Hunan Association, Florida Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and United Chinese News of Florida.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
October 29, 2017

Turnover, vacancies contribute to internal dysfunction in Riviera

Author: *Tony Doris*

Riviera Beach is in disarray. A few months ago, the assistant city manager who had been passed up for the manager job resigned. The human resources director gave notice this month. The city has no assistant human resources director, purchasing director, IT director or building services director. The police chief, recently the subject of a 67-3 vote of no confidence by the county Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, is scheduled to retire near the end of the year. The public works director has been on leave for months, pending an internal investigation, while receiving full pay.

In September the city council, in a 3-2 vote, fired Jonathan Evans, the popular city manager who inherited the mess six months earlier, after they fired the previous manager. The three who moved to oust Evans on Sept. 20 gave no reason for doing so, other than alleging "misfeasance," which he denied. The three voted Oct. 11 to hire an interim city manager without interviewing or conducting a background check, based on a resume that was presented them. Within a day, job candidate **James Poag** withdrew, after the media reported that his ex-wife took him to court for alleged domestic abuse in 2006 and that he was fired by the Village of Wellington last August, for "violations of the Village Employee Standards of Conduct and ... violations of the Village's Purchasing policies and procedures."

Wellington had hired **Poag** to ensure village compliance with federal grant regulations. "He was terminated for noncompliance," Assistant Village Manager Jim Barnes said Tuesday. There was no criminal investigation, but the village hired an outside reviewer and fired **Poag** and one other employee.

Riviera Beach's council has gone back to reviewing resumes for interim city manager and the permanent position. They'll have to move fast. The city employee who has been filling in, Troy Perry, has given notice that he's leaving the city Nov. 3. Meanwhile, the council members' jobs have come into question, as well. A citizen petition drive is underway, seeking recall elections to oust the three members who voted to fire Evans.

Mayor Thomas Masters, a frequent flyer to conferences near and far to promote the city, told the council at its Oct. 24 meeting that because of all the turmoil, he called off a trip to Detroit he had planned for this past week, to the World Conference of Mayors, where he had been asked to give a presentation on Riviera Beach. "When I Googled Riviera Beach," he said, "I knew that the attendees, mayors from around the world and the United States, no matter what I present, when they're Googling the city, they will find that in the last few weeks there have been stories that have been very embarrassing that have gone viral."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

WPTV (FL)
October 20, 2017

Interim Riviera Beach City Manager James Poag withdraws before taking office

Author: *Wanda Moore & Niels Heimariks*

James Poag, who was appointed at Wednesday's Riviera Beach City Council meeting, will not assume the position he was offered. The announcement comes a day after WPTV aired a story about **Poag's** background, highlighting an arrest for domestic battery in 2005 and a hit-and-run crash from 2009. WPTV did a background check on **Poag**, something the city council did not do before offering him the job at a public meeting on Wednesday.

In an email to the City, **Poag** writes "In light of recent reports regarding my possible employment with the City of Riviera Beach, I felt that I need to set the record straight. While I have been offered an interim position and City Manager, I have not and will not accept the position. I am honored to have been considered for the role but have decided to remain with the City of Miami Gardens. During the media's investigation of how and why Riviera Beach came to its decision, aspects of my past personal life were also reported. I deeply regret my past actions and have worked tirelessly to correct them and move forward with my life in a positive manner. My personal life has no bearing on my competency or career. I wish Riviera Beach the best of luck in their search for a City Manager and I will remain a dedicated public servant."

The City council voted 3-2 to hire **Poag** who currently works for the city of Miami Gardens. The vote came as a surprise to many of the people in attendance, including council chair Kashamba Miller-Anderson. Miller-Anderson said she was still in shock after the meeting, when the three city council members who fired City Manager Jonathan Evans a month ago, suddenly made a motion to hire a new interim city manager. Councilwoman Lynne Hubbard made the motion. Most council members had never met **Poag**. In fact, after the meeting, nobody from the city could even tell WPTV his full name. "I figured we would have a number of people to select from, discuss, interview the person, find out what they look like, and then we would make a decision," Miller-Anderson said. Council members Hubbard, Terence Davis, and Dawn Pardo voted to hire him on the spot, without an interview or a background check.

According to the 2005 domestic battery arrest report, **Poag's** then-wife said he placed one hand on her throat and when she tried to defend herself, **Poag** pushed her to the ground. She said she then grabbed her phone in an effort to call the police but he threw the phone into a glass window. The report also states that his wife had visible injuries to her neck. Also according to the report, as **Poag** was put in the back of the police car, he told officers: "I can't believe this is happening to me! I am the Director of Professional Standards for Broward County. Do you know what this is going to do to me? I want all the officers' names and badge numbers who were at my house! Do you know who I am? I guarantee that all of you will pay for this." Prior to working for Miami Gardens, **Poag** held a job at the Village of Wellington and WPTV has learned today that he was fired from that job.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

WPTV (FL)
October 19, 2017

Riviera Beach council hires new interim city manager who has criminal background

Author: *Wanda Moore*

One month after firing Riviera Beach City Manager Jonathan Evans without explanation, the city council hired an interim replacement during Wednesday's city council meeting, without ever meeting him. **James Poag** currently works in the city manager's office in Miami Gardens despite being arrested in 2005 on domestic battery charges. What's on there is that he was arrested for domestic battery and that he is a fraternity brother of Police Chief Clarence Williams. **Poag** was apparently at the city council meeting on Wednesday. Chairwoman KaShamba Miller-Anderson said she the decision took her by complete surprise. "I didn't come here to hire someone tonight," Miller-Anderson said on Wednesday. But that's what happened. Miller-Anderson said she was still in shock after the meeting, when the three city council members who fired Evans a month ago, suddenly made a motion to hire a new interim city manager.

Councilwoman Lynne Hubbard made the motion. Hubbard: "Let's put this person in place for the..." Audience member: "No!" Hubbard: "...for the 90 days." Most council members had never met **Poag**. In fact, after the meeting, nobody from the city could even tell me his full name. "I figured we would have a number of people to select from, discuss, interview the person, find out what they look like, and then we would make a decision," Miller-Anderson said. Council members Hubbard, Terence Davis, and Dawn Pardo voted to hire him on the spot, without an interview or a background check. In 2005, **Poag** was arrested for domestic battery. According to the arrest report, **Poag's** then-wife said he placed one hand on her throat and when she tried to defend herself, **Poag** pushed her to the ground. She said she then grabbed her phone, in an effort to call police but he threw the phone into a glass window. The report also states that his wife had visible injuries to her neck. Also according to the report, as **Poag** was put in the back of the police car, he told officers: "I can't believe this is happening to me! I am the Director of Professional Standards for Broward County. Do you know what this is going to do to me? I want all the officers names and badge numbers who were at my house! Do you know who I am? I guarantee that all of you will pay for this."

One of the arresting officers said in his report: "My perception of these statements was that he intended to use his current occupation within the county to take revenge on all of the officers who participated in this investigation." The charges against **Poag** were later dropped. NewsChannel 5 also obtained **Poag's** driving record. In 2009 he was issued a criminal citation. According to the crash report he was arguing with his fiancé while trying to park his car, when he lost control and hit an AC unit and a transformer. He agreed to pay for damages. According to his Linkedin page, **Poag** is a member of Omega Psi Phi, the same fraternity as Police Chief Williams. There is no official start date for **Poag** yet. He is put in as interim for 90 days but Hubbard already wanted to make it clear that he could apply for the permanent position after the 90 days are over.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (FL)
July 10, 2016

School supply drive – in motion in Wellington

Author: *Joanie Cox-Henry*

As the cost of living continues to soar in South Florida, the harsh reality is not every child returning to school this fall will have all the supplies he or she needs. Wellington's Community Services Department and its team has organized a school supply drive to help students. "We recognize here in the village of Wellington how important it is for children to be prepared on the first day of school," said **James Poag**, the village's community services director. "Community is very important to us here."

School supplies such as pencils, paper, glue, rulers, folders, backpacks, crayons and notebooks will be collected at Village Hall, 12300 Forest Hill Blvd.; Community Services, 12794 Forest Hill Blvd.; the Lake Wellington Professional Centre, 12133 Ken Adams Way; and Village Park, 11700 Pierson Road, between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. through July 28. "We'll then distribute the supplies at a block party Aug. 6 at Tiger Shark Cove," **Poag** said. "The party will be 5 to 8 p.m. and we'll have food, music, entertainment, a bounce house and cotton candy, and it's all free."

B/E Aerospace in Wellington has supplied some backpacks and Walgreens has also donated some school supplies to the drive, he said. "I'm making sure we have the proper amount of supplies," said Jonathan Salas, the village's senior neighborhood advocate. "We're collecting general school supplies. Then, we'll be packing the backpacks with items according students' grade levels."

The Christopher Aguirre Memorial Foundation is also working with Wellington to collect school supplies. "We work with so many kids throughout the year through various programs," **Poag** said. "We have tutoring programs as well as college readiness programs. We also have a bicycle program where we work with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office to reward kids in need of bikes through our Wheels of Wellington program. John and I are originally from Florida ourselves so it's a very rewarding feeling to give back to these kids."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
July 1, 2016

Wellington foundation provides camp scholarships

Author: *Julie Unger*

Wellington Community Foundation board members met with campers from Wellington's Parks and Recreation Department on Tuesday morning. The foundation, a nonprofit organization designed to improve the lives of Wellington residents, provided five Wellington children with camp scholarships for eight weeks, explained Tom Wenham. Wenham, who chairs the Wellington Community Foundation, was joined by foundation board members Robbin Lee and Maggie Zeller, along with Wellington's Community Services Director **James Poag**, Athletic Programs Manager Ryan Hagopian and Senior Neighborhood Advocate Jonathan Salas.

"We're very excited that we're able to do this," Wenham said. "We're very happy to help these five kids enjoy themselves and enjoy the summer." **Poag** and Salas chose the recipients, Wenham said. Foundation officials were proud to be making a difference in the summers of young Wellington residents. "This is our mission, to help Wellington children have a great summer," Zeller said.

Lee, CEO of Wellington Regional Medical Center, is glad to see that the newly revitalized foundation was able to provide this assistance. "Wellington is known for families, and especially our children," Lee said. "To be able to do something for the kids in our community, it's very exciting. I'm thrilled to be here." Campers took a quick break from playing to pose for a picture with foundation officials and village staff members.

"It's a great opportunity for our children to have this experience. Wellington prides itself on family, on our parks, on our recreation," **Poag** said. "To expose these children to the Wellington Parks & Recreation system, I think, is just an absolute positive. We really appreciate the foundation's contribution." Wellington's summer camp program, he explained, brings many former campers back as counselors, where they are able to share their experiences with current participants. Campers get to take field trips, where they go fishing, to the Wellington pool and to other places that not all camps are able to attend, giving campers unique opportunities.

Some of the activities for campers when they aren't on field trips, Hagopian said, include rock wall climbing, bounce houses and more. Earlier this week, the children made their own stuffed animals. On average, the camp has 200 participants each week. Older campers go on field trips Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and recently went to Miami. They have deep-sea fishing trips, and go to entertainment destinations such as Boomers.

"The counselors have been really good," Hagopian said. "All of them are over 18 years old and have graduated from high school." Hagopian directed people to the village's web site, www.wellingtonfl.gov, for information about signing up. "We should still have spaces available for the kinder group, ages 5 to 7, and the 7- to 12-year-old group," he said. "The teen group has

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

filled up pretty quickly this year.” The scholarships provided by the foundation gave children in need an opportunity to hang out with their peers and participate in great activities, he said. “It’s a really big deal,” Hagopian said. “For people to come out and be able to sponsor some of these kids who may not have the ability to go to summer camp, hats off to the Wellington Community Foundation and some of the other scholarships and sponsorships that we’ve had this year.” Wellington’s summer camp runs through Aug. 12 with weekly sessions from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
June 17, 2016

Wellington foundation continuing school supply drive

Author: *Hailey George*

The Wellington Community Foundation, a nonprofit organization with the goal of improving the lives of Wellington residents, is currently in the midst of a school supply drive. Formed in 2009, the foundation has recently been transferred to the hands of a new board, led by former Wellington Mayor Tom Wenham. Other board members include Robbin Lee, Mickey Smith, Maria Becker, Ken Adams, Karen Cavanagh, Barry Manning, Jim Sackett and Maggie Zeller. “Our mission statement is: The Wellington Community Foundation is a charitable organization committed to benefiting the residents of Wellington by supporting and improving their quality of life,” Wenham said. “What we mean by that is, the people in the footprint of Wellington, whether it’s kids, seniors or whomever, we will work with them to help them.”

The foundation’s first project is a school supply drive for children in need. On Thursday, June 2, Dr. Edward and Maria Becker hosted a fundraiser at their Wellington home to launch the drive. Each ticket priced at \$50 was able to purchase 10 backpacks filled with school supplies, such as folders, paper, notebooks, pencils and a sharpener, pens, scissors, a pencil case, glue, erasers and crayons. “We raised about \$6,200, and there were roughly 74 people who attended,” Wenham said. “The money is going to be used to buy backpacks. That was the main reason for the fundraiser.” The foundation’s first fundraiser was a big success. “We were very happy with the money we raised on our first fundraiser,” Wenham said. “We were extremely pleased with the number of people who came and gave us the dollars to help us.”

The Wellington Community Foundation is not finished with its work on the project. The foundation will partner with the Village of Wellington on a block party, which the foundation will attend. It is there that the backpacks will be given out to all the children who need them. The block party is scheduled for Aug. 6 at Tiger Shark Cove Park from 6 to 8 p.m. “The block party consists of an opportunity for residents to come together for music, food and fun,” Wellington Community Services Director **James Poag** said. “In addition, we will be distributing school supplies for underprivileged children in the village that day.”

The partnership between the village and the foundation is an important one, which will provide necessary resources for less fortunate children to receive an education, **Poag** said. “We are very excited about our partnership with the foundation,” he said. “We think their goal is an honorable one. We are really pleased that they have chosen the block party event. It is so important that children are prepared when they go into the first day of school, because preparation is the key to success.” With this project underway, the Wellington Community Foundation looks forward to a bright future of assisting the people of Wellington. “We haven’t decided on our second project at this point in time,” Wenham said. “We will be bringing that up at future meetings.”

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James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
May 20, 2016

Wellington foundation aims to help area residents

Author: *Jason Stromberg*

The newly revitalized Wellington Community Foundation will hold its first fundraising event on Thursday, June 2 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Wellington home of Dr. Edward and Maria Becker. It is an event that will open a new chapter in the history of the nonprofit organization, currently chaired by former Wellington Mayor Tom Wenham.

Created in 2009, the Wellington Community Foundation was originally envisioned as a nonprofit community service arm of the Village of Wellington, led by the Wellington Village Council. However, new rules have since been put in place that forbid elected officials from raising money through such an entity. After years of discussion, the foundation was handed over to a community-run board last year. Since then, Wenham has been working with attorney Mickey Smith, secretary of the foundation, to expand the nonprofit's board and develop its mission.

"From my perspective, the foundation would have died without Tom Wenham's leadership," Smith said. "His relentless desire to give back to the Village of Wellington inspired me to help him." With a new board coming together, Wenham sees bright days on the horizon. "I'm very pleased with the positive spirit of the board of directors," Wenham said. "I'm so proud to be a part of this wonderful group."

Joining the board in recent months are treasurer Maria Becker, Wellington Regional Medical Center CEO Robbin Lee, Town-Crier Publisher Barry Manning, former Palm Beach County Commissioner Ken Adams, retired news anchor Jim Sackett, and local businesswomen Karen Cavanagh and Maggie Zeller. Zeller is thrilled to be a part of the growing organization. "I am honored to have been asked to serve as a member of the board of directors," Zeller said. "The Wellington Community Foundation will allow me to serve the children and seniors of Wellington to make a positive difference in their lives."

Lee will serve on the board as its vice chair. "Wellington is a wonderful community, and it is an honor to be a part of a foundation that focuses on improving the lives of some of the community's residents," Lee said. "There is a misconception regarding the needs of some of our residents, especially children and the elderly. As a member of the Wellington Community Foundation, I can help align some resources for those in need."

The June 2 fundraiser at the Becker home will raise money to help supply backpacks for needy students in local schools. "We are working with **James Poag**, the director of community services for the Village of Wellington, in supplying backpacks to students who need assistance when they go back to school in August," explained Wenham, who thanked the Beckers for their generosity in hosting the fundraiser. **Poag** and the village expect to raise enough money to buy the backpacks and hand them out to students at a block party scheduled for Aug. 6, Wenham said.

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James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Giving back to the community is why Smith came on board. “I agreed to serve on the board because it epitomizes everything good about Wellington,” he said. “It’s about the community coming together to help our neighbors who need a hand. The board has very quickly grown to nine people, and I am thrilled to work with such a dedicated group.”

The foundation has plans for a number of projects to support the most vulnerable people in the community. “Many people only associate Wellington with affluence,” Smith said. “This image of Wellington means absolutely nothing, though, to the many children and elderly people living right here who need our help. If we are successful in communicating the disparity between perception and reality, the foundation will be wildly successful. I believe with every ounce of my being that the generosity of the folks here in Wellington is second to none.”

Sackett agreed. “Having lived in Wellington since 1985, I have seen sweeping changes to our village,” he said. “I have seen it grow. I have seen it flourish. But I have also seen an increased need to extend a helping hand to those who need it. The Wellington Community Foundation is a perfect vehicle to do just that.”

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James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
April 8, 2016

Waste management funding green scholarships in Wellington

Author: *Ron Bukley*

Wellington's Education Committee discussed a new environmental scholarship being offered by the village and its waste services provider, Waste Management, on Tuesday. The scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$1,500, will be offered to graduating seniors at Palm Beach Central and Wellington high schools who plan to attend a four-year college or university. The deadline for applications is Friday, April 15.

Community Services Director **James Poag** said he wanted to clarify how the scholarship will be distributed since the committee will not meet again until August. "If the committee is going to be involved in the selection process regarding the awardees, we need to develop a process," he said. **Poag** said that Waste Management would provide the applications to the guidance counselors, who would then collect the applications. "However, you have a situation now in which this is your April meeting," he said. "You will not meet again in order to form a committee to select the applicants who will receive the scholarships. Therefore, the committee will need to make the decision on how it would like the process to work."

Poag said he had spoken with Waste Management Government Affairs Director Ellen Smith, who had no particular preference on how the recipients are selected. "Those are decisions you have to make this evening on how this process is going to work," **Poag** said, including how to work with the schools and Waste Management. "We need the committee to decide how to do that in this special circumstance."

Committee Chair Marcia Hayden said that based on the information **Poag** had sent committee members, the high schools would receive the applications by April 15 and the top 10 candidates' information would be forwarded to the Education Committee by May 2 so that by May 13, the recipients would be chosen.

Committee Member Michelle McGovern said she would favor nominating a member of the committee to work with Smith to decide. "There's not another meeting until August, which is frustrating in itself, but I think it's fine if we just decide amongst ourselves one person to go through the applications for this year, and then next year we'll all do it," McGovern said. "It's tremendous that Waste Management does this in the first place." Committee members nominated Hayden to go through the applications this year and work with **Poag** to receive the applications and forward a short list to Waste Management.

The environmental scholarships were established by the village and Waste Management to encourage Wellington students to pursue educational paths that support environmental stewardship. Each school will receive a \$1,500 and a \$1,000 scholarship for students demonstrating excellence in the classroom and the community. Waste Management will send the

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James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

awards directly to the winners' college via its financial aid office. In 2016, four winners will be selected, two from Wellington High School and two from Palm Beach Central High School.

Smith said that Waste Management was glad to find new ways to help make Wellington clean and green. "We run clean-fuel trucks in the Village of Wellington," she said. "We are the only hauler of municipal waste that can say that, keeping it quieter with less emissions for the residents of Wellington."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
February 4, 2016

Wellington gets ready for fitness campaign

Author: *Matt Morgan*

As Palm Beach County gears up for Palm Healthcare's fourth annual "Let's Move" campaign throughout the month of March, Wellington is planning some events to attempt to move up from its third place finish last year. The campaign, which promotes health and wellness through exercise, is based on keeping track of active minutes. Teams, including municipalities, schools and businesses, add their minutes together to get the final total for the month. Countywide the initiative logged 2.8 million minutes in a month last year and organizers are hoping to bump that number to four million next year. The competition is great, but Palm Healthcare spokeswoman Marge Sullivan said it's important because people are getting healthier. "For me, success is more teams participating and more people logging minutes and being part of it," she said.

Last year, the Village of Wellington teamed up with Ultima Fitness for events and to get the word out about their combined team. The team finished just behind Pahokee and Boynton Beach to snag the 'bronze medal' spot. For the staff in the village, the healthy competition for bragging rights is a good time, said **James Poag**, Wellington's community services director. "We make it fun, where departments kind of challenge each other," he said.

In Wellington, the exercising effort is a natural fit. The village prides itself on its park and recreation facilities and has walking paths where people can jog or take a stroll. A kickoff event for Wellington is scheduled from 8 a.m. to noon on March 5 at Ultima Fitness, 12799 Forest Hill Blvd. It will be a good chance to pair up with a buddy for find someone to work out with, said Ultima Fitness general manager, Jeffrey Keller. When people are working out with a partner, they can motivate each other and add a social element to the activity. The other big thing when starting out is for people to find something that they enjoy doing, Keller said.

Running a few miles may seem like a daunting task and might not be fun for some people. But maybe they'd enjoy biking, swimming, yoga, martial arts or some other activity. Working out in some form needs to become a daily activity like showering or brushing your teeth, and it's much easier when it's fun, he said. At the kickoff event, Ultima's facility will be open to everyone for free. "Obviously we want the Village of Wellington to be as active as possible," Keller said. "This is kind of our way of giving back."

The campaign is based on an initiative started by First Lady Michelle Obama, and Palm Healthcare spearheaded the local edition. Sullivan hopes the event can continue to grow and more teams will get involved. It has come a long way since its first year that featured about 10 teams, which combined for roughly 100,000 exercise minutes. "Every year it gets bigger and it means more people are making the move to get healthier," she said.

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James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
January 15, 2016

Wellington leaders laud neighborhood watch successes

Author: *Ron Bukley*

Wellington's Neighborhood Watch program has expanded over the years to include many more aspects than the original crime watch mission, which officials believe has resulted in the rejuvenation of some communities that were beginning to deteriorate. Once a program run largely by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, Neighborhood Watch has been embraced by the village to galvanize residents to help improve their own communities.

The village's Community Services Department recently released a plan for Neighborhood Watch meetings that will reach nearly two dozen communities over the next three months. "The Neighborhood Watch program has grown to include neighborhood engagement more than anything else, to include residents [and give them] an avenue to communicate with the village," Director of Community Services **James Poag** said.

That communication works both ways, with the village also able to better communicate with residents, he added. "In addition to being a deterrent for crimes in our neighborhoods, the primary focus of the Neighborhood Watch has shifted from a traditional crime watch program more to an engagement where the village can communicate and listen to the concerns of the residents," **Poag** said. "It provides them an avenue and a stage where they can voice their concerns, and we can take those concerns and go to the appropriate departments to get things resolved in a timely manner."

In addition, the village uses the Neighborhood Watch program as an incentive for neighborhoods to participate in improvement grants available through the Community Services Department. "We've utilized Neighborhood Watch for revitalization purposes so that people can access the funding that we have for our neighborhood improvement grants," **Poag** said.

Neighborhood Watch meetings scheduled include: Scribner in Olympia, Guilford, Wiltshire Village, Lakeside Shores, Stonegate, Black Diamond, Staghorn/Mulberry, Coventry Green, Channing Villas, Pine Valley, Greenbriar Circle, Summerwood Circle, Mayfair, Greenview Shores, Aero Club, Rye Terrace, Wisteria, Chatsworth Village and Folkestone/Yarmouth. In addition, a joint meeting is set for May 18 for all the communities to meet together. "This will be an opportunity for all the neighborhoods to share and engage with their neighbors throughout the village," **Poag** said. "We'll have a platform to share one overall topic at that particular meeting with all our Neighborhood Watch groups throughout the Village of Wellington."

Senior Neighborhood Advocate Jonathan Salas said the Neighborhood Watch program still encourages participants to be extra eyes and ears and to report any activity to the PBSO that seems suspicious, and not try to take matters into their own hands. "We give safety tips such as

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James Albert Poag
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locking car doors, avoiding crimes of opportunity and things like that,” Salas said. “Typically, we segue into giving crime prevention tips.”

Poag said crimes of opportunity are not typically committed by hardened criminals but often by local teens. “They check the doors, and if the doors are open, they’ll take whatever small items they can get their hands on and run off,” he said. “Education is the biggest tool to prevent these things from happening within our communities, and if we can continue to [inform] our Neighborhood Watch groups on how to protect themselves from these types of petty crimes, we can prevent those types of things from happening within the village.”

Salas said that village staff members have seen a tremendous turnaround in some Neighborhood Watch communities. “In a lot of our neighborhoods, we can honestly say they are cleaner, the neighborhoods are upbeat, everyone is familiar with their neighbors, they know the protocol, they know the procedure,” Salas said. “If they see any suspicious behavior, they have the number to contact. We can honestly say that we’ve seen a drastic improvement in most of our neighborhoods.”

Poag said that the PBSO, which initiated and still participates in the Neighborhood Watch programs, has also expressed satisfaction with their effectiveness. “They’ve actually seen how the Neighborhood Watch programs have been effective in helping them to deter those small types of unlocked-door crimes within the neighborhoods,” **Poag** said. “We collaborate with the PBSO in the Neighborhood Watch effort so that we can increase the number of residents engaged within the community.” **Poag** said the success of the Neighborhood Watch program has been obvious. “We’re very pleased with the program,” he said.

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James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
August 7, 2015

Wellington fitness & wellness education day set for Aug. 22

Author: *Julie Unger*

Ultima Fitness & Wellness, in cooperation with the Village of Wellington, Walgreens and *Wellington The Magazine*, will host a free Wellington Fitness & Wellness Education Day on Saturday, Aug. 22 from 8 a.m. to noon. The event will take place at Ultima, located at 12799 W. Forest Hill Blvd. in the Wellington Plaza. Ultima and the village will be collecting back-to-school donations, with special requests for hand sanitizer, construction paper, pencils, pens, paper towels and other items that will be helpful for teachers. Wellington teachers who attend are eligible to receive a donation of school supplies for their classroom.

In the past, during the back-to-school time of year, Ultima would have an event to help prepare teachers and parents getting ready for the school year, said Jessica Merrell, Ultima's chief marketing officer. Ultima, she explained, has always been diligent about giving back to the community and decided to change its event this year, making it larger and not centered just within the fitness facility. "This year, we wanted to kick it up a notch and do something more impactful, something bigger," Merrell said. "We started talking with the village... about what we could do to make as significant an impact as possible." As they brainstormed, they focused on the fact that many teachers in the community use a significant amount of their own resources to supplement what they are given to run their classrooms.

Wellington Community Services Director **James Poag** is excited to join in on the event. "We felt it was important — almost imperative — to reach out to our community and help re-educate them with regard to fitness and wellness, at the same time collecting school supplies for those in need," he said. "Oftentimes, we only consider the student as someone being in need. In addition to the students, we also wanted to reach out and help the teachers."

That is why teachers will be the focus of the event. "We wanted to do something specifically for the teachers," Merrell said. "What we also wanted to do, though, was not make this a one-day event. We didn't want it to be where people came, they participated, and they left." The larger goal is to use the day to educate the educators and the parents of the children in the community on how to have a healthy lifestyle throughout the school year. "A well-prepared teacher basically translates to a well-prepared student," **Poag** said. "We felt it was a great idea to join in and join forces to pull this event off," **Poag** said.

On Aug. 22, teachers, students, parents and families are welcome to learn how to live healthier and be better prepared for the school year. This will be done through an extensive schedule of demonstrations, classes and more, geared toward parents, teachers and children. Topics will range from stress reduction through mindful living, improved sports performance, packing healthy lunches, stress management through holistic health practices, overcoming childhood adversity through martial arts, and more. There will also be yoga classes for young children,

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Merrell said, noting that there are alternative ways to de-stress, other than playing video games. In addition to the free child daycare at Ultima, there will be free healthy food, juice and supplement samples, plus free chair massages, and Walgreens representatives will also be on hand offering flu shots and health screenings. Anyone who attends the educational day is invited to join multiple free classes, including Stranger Danger for parents and children, Zumba, Pilates, barre, U-Pump, Qi Gong, and self-defense for teachers and parents.

Every Wellington teacher who comes to the event will be eligible to receive the donations collected throughout the month and on Aug. 22. “We want to hand out the donations to the teachers who have shown that they are willing to take that extra step to really be a part of making sure that they themselves, and their students, and the parents are starting off the school year in the best way to lead a healthy lifestyle throughout the year,” Merrell said.

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James Albert Poag
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The Palm Beach Post (FL)
June 11, 2015

Lots of activities for families in Wellington

Author: *Palm Beach Post Staff Writer*

Kids are out of school for summer, and it won't be long before parents hear the annual complaint: "I'm bored! There's nothing to do." But in Wellington, village officials hope to delay the youngsters' seasonal boredom for at least a little while. From park events to outdoor movies, the village has a variety of family-friendly activities for parents and children of all ages during the summer months. A free Family Game Nights series is a new addition to the line-up this year. It runs every Tuesday through Aug. 11.

Parents and children can spend the evening in a local park and play a variety of games: board games, Frisbee, football, jump rope, even play with Hula Hoops. "I was just thinking about what could we do for the youth in the community throughout the summer who may not have anything to do," said **James Poag**, Wellington's community services director. "And I said, what if we do a family game night to try to get families engaged with their children throughout the village, throughout the summer. What better time to do it?"

The game nights will be held at a different site each week. Locations include the Community Services office off Wellington Trace, Tiger Shark Cove Park, Primrose Park and Goldenrod Park. "It encompasses all of our different neighborhoods," said Jonathan Salas, senior neighborhood advocate.

Salas said he has been out in Wellington to let residents know about the game nights, and Palm Beach County sheriff's deputies and village code officers are also promoting it during Walk-and-Talk events. He said the response from residents has been positive. "They think it's a great idea to get families engaged and get them involved over the summer," Salas said. "It gives them an opportunity to get out of the house out of the evening, and they like the fact that they won't have to go far. They can just walk to the park and play."

Meanwhile, Wellington's Parks and Recreation Department is offering a plethora of activities to keep children entertained during summer vacation. Some events are free, others have a cost. Call the village at 561-791-4005 for details. Wellington's Summer Camp at Village Park is available for children ages 5 to 15 and includes sporting and entertainment, animal exhibits, swimming, field trips and more. There's also summertime sports activities to sign up for like circus academy, basketball academy, speed and agility camp, fishing camp, volleyball camp, cheer camp, tumblekid camp, and soccer camps.

At the Aquatics Complex, the village is offering several sessions for American Red Cross swim lessons and junior lifeguard classes, starting this month. If music and movies are more up your child's alley, check out the line-up for live concerts and outdoor movie nights at the Wellington Amphitheater. Remember to bring your own seating for the grass lawn for these events. Every

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other Thursday, food trucks will be on hand, while tribute bands or other live acts perform on the amphitheater stage. Concerts will also be held on Saturday nights as part of the village's Summer Concert Series. On Friday nights, the amphitheater caters to the silver screen. The village will show a G- or PG-rated children's movies, ranging from recent releases like "Cinderella" and "Into the Woods" to older favorites like "Cars" and "Ratatouille." Admission is free.

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James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
June 4, 2015

Annual Neighborhood Watch meetings return

Author: *Michael Readling*

There are around 60,000 residents of Wellington and, sometimes, engaging each and every one of them can be difficult, if not downright impossible for village officials. So, in a nod to the way things used to be, Wellington Community Services has found a way to get its message out to as many people as possible. In this age of emails and Internet, the department is turning off the computer and unplugging itself as it hits the streets. Harkening back to a time when town meetings were the norm, Wellington residents are invited to join staff from Community Services, Code Enforcement, the Palm Beach County Sheriff's department and other local agencies to neighborhood-specific talks about what's going on around them.

These Neighborhood Watch meetings began Wednesday and will continue weekly, in different neighborhoods, into October. This year, the meetings will be held in community buildings in the neighborhoods, or the village's Community Services Building, in an attempt to avoid early evening rain showers. "One of the reasons we look to have the Neighborhood Watch meetings is it gives us the opportunity to engage with our residents and share info we have with them," said **James Poag**, Wellington's community services director. "We can disseminate information from our end about community programs, outreach efforts and new services, in addition to answering any questions or concerns they may have. The sheriff's department is there to answer anything directly related to criminal activity. It's a very effective form of two-way communication."

Poag said this is the fourth or fifth year the Neighborhood Watch program has been offered and it has proven to be very popular -- and effective -- in getting residents involved and up-to-date on issues. In fact, it has been so effective that the program, which originated in communities with mostly rental units, has expanded to include those with single-family homes as well. "It has grown tremendously," said Jonathan Salas, a senior neighborhood advocate for the village. "I think there were some misconceptions about Neighborhood Watch, but we are just here to relay messages. A big part of Neighborhood Watch is extra eyes and ears for the Sheriff's Department. If you ever see anything taking place, just take a description and call local law enforcement. Don't take it into your own hands."

Some of the messages the village will be focusing on through this summer program highlight the different forms of fraud that residents, especially senior residents, could fall victim to. Salas said one of the most recent scams making the rounds in the community is that of an "International Lottery," in which residents receive a phone call telling them they have won a large sum of money, they just have to give their credit card details to be able to collect. This is just one of the schemes that will be brought up as the village continues to try to educate its residents. "There are people putting skimmers in gas stations, Internet phishing schemes ... there are a host of different methods of fraud taking place," **Poag** said. "We are just trying to be proactive." In addition to

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information they need to know, attendees to these Neighborhood Watch meetings can find out how the village will pay them to party. Through Neighbors of Wellington grants, residents can receive up to a \$250 reimbursement for food bought for the purpose of a neighborhood block party. Those parties, **Poag** said, are just another way for the residents to engage and become more involved in the community in which they live. More involvement, he said, means more vigilance when it comes to protecting their streets.

Neighborhood Watch Program

What: Meetings in which Community Services staff, Code Enforcement, members of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and other local agencies speak to residents about crime trends, village programs and outreaches and the importance of being vigilant.

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Town-Crier (FL)
May 1, 2015

County officials outline action plan to receive HUD funding from feds

Author: *Ron Bukley*

Assistant County Administrator Shannon LaRocque led a presentation Tuesday on the county's action plan for fiscal year 2015-16 for federal financing it receives from the Department of Housing & Urban Development, as well as a five-year strategic plan. LaRocque said that the county's Department of Economic Sustainability has made significant progress over the past five years, including the delivery of public services and emergency shelter to more than 22,000 county residents, and the construction of the county's first homeless resource center, which is now in full operation.

It has also hurricane-hardened or rebuilt about 2,500 affordable housing units, and leveraged more than \$74 million in private development equity to build new, high-quality and energy-efficient housing communities for low-income and moderate-income seniors, individuals and families. The construction of more than \$37 million in infrastructure has come about in partnership with local municipalities and county departments, she said, adding that more than 2,800 jobs were created through HUD's loan program.

Ed Lowery, director of the Department of Economic Sustainability, said the plan for the next five years will be the guiding document for the use of grant money received from HUD. "The plan identifies needs in the areas of housing, economic and community development, and sets forth broad strategies for the use of Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] home investment partnership and emergency solution funds for a period of five fiscal years," Lowery said. "The county's plan is designed to be proactive and flexible in order to respond to a wide variety of changing community needs."

As an example, he said, following the back-to-back hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005, the county received \$43 million in CDBG-based funding from the state. "This flexibility allowed our department to hit the ground running and facilitate critically needed housing repair, new housing development and infrastructure improvements," he said. Lowery explained that the 2015-2020 plan is stakeholder-driven and the process began in December 2014 with public meetings, meetings with municipal partners, various county departments, private nonprofits, housing authorities, developers, community redevelopment agencies and economic development entities, as well as various homeless advocacy organizations.

Sherry Howard, deputy director of the Department of Economic Sustainability, said the plan takes the market into consideration, such as population growth and median incomes. The county population in 2010 of 1.32 million is expected to grow 6.4 percent by 2020 to 1.47 million. The median household income, which fell from \$67,000 in 2010 to \$63,000 in 2011, and again from \$64,600 in 2013 to \$63,300 in 2014, grew to \$64,900 in 2015. A total of 557,000 (71.6 percent) of households are owners, while 158,000 (28.4 percent) are renters. Ownership exceeds the

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statewide rate of 67.6 percent, Howard said. About 44 percent of renters and 35 percent of owners suffer severe housing problems such as paying 50 percent or more of income for their rent or mortgage, overcrowding with 1.5 or more persons per room, or substandard conditions such as the lack of a complete kitchen, plumbing or air conditioning.

The overall strategic plan goals are for decent housing by retaining and improving affordable housing stock; expanding economic opportunities by creating jobs and providing services and capital to new and expanding businesses; and creating a suitable living environment by improving safety and livability of neighborhoods and increasing access to public facilities and services. The plan also provides goals to help the homeless, including rapid re-housing, emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing, as well as homeless prevention programs such as emergency rent or utility assistance. Special-needs service goals are to help the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, victims of domestic violence and those with chemical addictions.

It also plans to add more public facilities such as parks and recreation, homeless facilities, community and senior centers, and youth facilities. It will also assist in providing infrastructure to areas where the population cannot afford to pay, including roads, sidewalks, potable water, sewer and drainage. The local municipalities of Wellington and Royal Palm Beach participate in HUD programs but on a much smaller scale, mainly in financing for handicapped-accessible improvements for homes and some aid to seniors who cannot afford to maintain their homes. Royal Palm Beach Village Manager Ray Liggins said only one area of the village qualifies for CDBG grant funding, and the village is looking for ways to try to get access for those in need of the services. The village is also looking for ways to obtain Americans With Disabilities Act grants for sidewalks and road crossings. “The county acts on our behalf as it relates to homes, and the people can apply directly to the county for specific housing improvement such as HUD grants,” Liggins said. “We don’t do it directly anymore.”

Wellington Director of Community Services **James Poag** said the village currently invests CDBG funding primarily in ADA sidewalk improvements. “We’ve allocated a small amount of dollars to some housing rehabs for some of our elderly citizens,” **Poag** said. “In addition, we’ve used some of our outreach funding for a youth mentoring program. We are required to have a housing outreach component that talks about fair housing and things of that nature, so we’ve allocated a portion to that also.” **Poag** said only 15 percent of the funding may be used for outreach such as mentoring and a senior transportation program. “The remainder has to be dedicated to housing or something of that nature,” he said, explaining that the funding for Wellington comes directly from HUD.

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James Albert Poag
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The Palm Beach Post (FL)
April 23, 2015

New Wellington program gives bikes to kids

Author: *Janis Fontaine*

To a kid, a bicycle means freedom. Freedom to explore, freedom to escape, freedom to be independent. But Jonathan Salas, a senior neighborhood advocate for the Village of Wellington, knew more than a few kids who shared bikes, and some kids who didn't have access to a bike at all. "We wondered how can we change that," Salas said. Then Salas remembered the unclaimed bikes sitting in evidence storage at the sheriff's office. Legally the county can release recovered bicycles after 90 days, but some of them had been sitting there for years. Salas contacted Tracey Siciliano, who handles property evidence for the city, to find out if he could have a few of the bikes. He could.

Earlier this month, Wellington's new Bicycle Assistance Program gave away its first refurbished bikes to kids in the White Pine community. The communications deputies in the field cleared it with their parents, then the deputies surprised Mia Bacquain, 13, and Jalen Hopkins, 8, with bikes. Mia was overwhelmed, and Jalen needed a little help to get going, Salas said. Deputies Jeffery Denny and Anthony Musso coached him. "They had to show him how to ride, how to be safe, use the brakes, and watch for cars," Salas said.

Salas, 31, joined the Village of Wellington in September armed with a bachelor's and a master's in criminal justice from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University. He had taught college for several years, but he wanted to test what he taught in the real world. So far, it's right on target, he says. Salas says he has time to think on his hour-long daily commute from Miami. "I'm a thinker," Salas said. "Sometimes I don't even play the radio so I can think."

Salas sees giving away bikes as part of a larger purpose: Changing lives. "I grew up in poverty and I understand what it takes to make a change in kids' lives. I had great mentors who told me I could be anything. I want to pass on the tools to be successful and tell kids how important it is to keep trying." But mostly, Salas wants to stop dealing with juvenile delinquency after the fact. He wants to get out ahead of it, and catch the child before he or she starts down that road. The bike program is just one way of building a positive relationship between kids on the street and the people in the community who want to help them.

When Salas called on the Wellington community for help, he got it. Some of the bikes were in pretty good shape, but others "needed a little extra love." Salas reached out to Stan Kilbas at Wheels of Wellington. Could Kilbas help him get the bikes ship-shape, safe for kids to ride? "Stan couldn't say 'yes' fast enough," Salas said.

Kilbas, a West Palm Beach native, is celebrating 20 years of selling and fixing bikes at his store in the original Wellington Mall. He got started on the bikes right away. "Some of them were beat up pretty bad," Kilbas said. "If they're in real bad shape, we give them to Jack ('The Bike Man'

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Hairston) for parts, but the ones that are salvageable, we fix." Kilbas says he's not keeping track of how much it costs. "I'm not going to worry about it. I would do it anyway, because it's good for the community. We want to help these kids out. Keep them healthy." A bike opens up the world for a kid in so many ways, Kilbas, 65, said. "They can get out and socialize. When we were kids, our bikes were important because we earned money with them." Kilbas' first job was delivering the newspaper on his bike. Twenty-some years later, the surfer was looking for a sport that he could do on his schedule instead of the ocean's schedule, and he re-discovered his love of biking. "We used to ride on the trails behind Kmart (at State Road 7 and Southern Boulevard). Now on weekends, we ride off-road bikes up through the Grassy Waters area on the levees back there. We ride road bikes on Monday nights in Wellington, a 36-mile ride, and mountain bikes in West Palm and Palm Beach on Wednesdays."

For the first bike giveaway, **James Poag**, the community services director, said they chose kids they knew from their outreach program. "We have a Walk & Talk program, where we get out and engage the community, so we were aware of some families who were in need. Walk & Talk brings our office into the neighborhood and gets us out from behind our desks. It's an opportunity to find out about the community's concerns and issues, what we're doing about it, right and wrong."

Salas will also take referrals from other departments. "They can tell us about the kids they've come across who don't have bikes," Salas said, and he tries to downplay his contributions. **Poag** won't let him. "It was his idea," he says. "He's the one who put the plan in motion." "But this program wouldn't even been possible without Stan. He's our No. 1 partner," Salas insists. "It's a win-win-win," Kilbas said. "We're all trying to help the community."

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James Albert Poag
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The Palm Beach Post (FL)
January 29, 2015

Wellington offers grant to homeowners

Author: *Michael Readling*

Whiteflies are one of the biggest scourges on global agricultural production. With more than 1,550 known species, they have caused hundreds of millions of dollars of damage to crops from Africa to Asia to North America. One of the places not lucky enough to escape the whitefly infestation is the Village of Wellington, which has been battling the little bugs for a couple years. The effects are obvious: Ficus hedges once full and thick are now decimated lines of sticks. Smaller plants are simply just gone. But the village is fighting back.

A joint venture between Code Enforcement and the Planning Department led to \$75,000 in funds being set aside for the Major Thoroughfare Hedge Grant program. This program is designed so homeowners who live along the village's major roads can apply for up to \$500 in matching funds to replace hedges and install irrigation. "We wanted to be proactive and provide residents with some kind of relief when replacing their hedges due to the whitefly epidemic," said **James Poag**, the village's community services director. **Poag** said Code Enforcement and the Planning Department conducted an assessment throughout the village which identified 149 homes that were currently out of code thanks to the ravenous appetites of the whiteflies.

In November, they made the grant available to residents, offering to match any money spent on new hedges or irrigation, dollar for dollar, up to \$500. A few residents have taken advantage, but **Poag** expects to see the program get more attention as the weather warms. "We've received a couple of applications but we're encouraging all of our residents to take advantage of the program, we'd like the most participation possible," **Poag** said. "We'd like to see people start applying as soon as possible so we can start the abatement of the older hedges and give us a healthier and more orderly appearance throughout the entire village."

Residents who are replanting hedges and other plants are encouraged to use native plants that would be immune to any future whitefly outbreaks. To assist homeowners in choosing the correct types of plants for their yards, Wellington recently opened an arboretum, also known as the Tree & Shrub Identification Area, in Greenbriar Park. This quarter-acre spot in the park feature more than 30 species of plants native to Florida and designed to grow in the soil and climate found in Palm Beach County. Residents are encouraged to visit the arboretum to see which plants they would prefer on their property when it comes time to replant.

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James Albert Poag
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Town-Crier (FL)
November 28, 2014

Toy drive aims to spread holiday cheer in Wellington

Author: *Julie Unger*

Because of the generosity of local residents and businesses, approximately 300 children will have a brighter holiday season. Wellington's InterFaith group, partnering with Wellington's Community Services Department, is hosting this year's toy drive at St. Peter's United Methodist Church. On Dec. 22, pre-registered parents will be invited to pick toys for their children at St. Peter's, which is changing things in its third year hosting the toy drive. While parents are picking toys out for their children, and volunteers are wrapping and labeling the toys, there will be a place for the children to play. "We're trying to infuse the community with positivity. Folks who have a lot can give some to folks who have a lot, lot less," said Emily Denmark McGee, associate pastor at St. Peter's.

The community is working together to make this event possible, with groups such as InterFaith, the Mall at Wellington Green, Jet Hauling, Tara Management, Ultima Fitness, the Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Binks Forest Elementary School and the Wellington Preservation Coalition working toward a common goal: collecting toys to make the holiday season brighter for young Wellington residents. Something as simple as a toy is all it takes to bring a smile to the face of a child in need. "I've seen these type of toy drives in the past," Wellington Community Services Director **James Poag** said. "I think the best thing for me, when you have the opportunity to do something like this, it's just to see the eyes of the child light up when they get to select a toy."

There is still a great need for toys, as gifts are needed for all ages, from babies to teenagers. Though gifts for small children are often easier to come by, there is a need for age-appropriate gifts for teens and pre-teens. Some suggestions include gift cards and sporting goods like basketballs — especially items that older kids can use alone, without being dependent on having others to play with. Toys for the toy drive are being collected from now until Thursday, Dec. 18. However, there will be one final visit to all of the drop-off locations Friday, Dec. 19, in case any last-minute toys come in.

Toys can be dropped off at the Wellington Community Center, the Wellington Community Services Office, the Wellington Municipal Complex, the Wellington Recreation Center, Ultima Fitness, the Lake Wellington Professional Centre, all Wellington fire stations, Walgreens at the Wellington Marketplace, as well as St. Peter's and various InterFaith locations.

Meridith Tuckwood, community services specialist with the village, sees the toy drive as a two-way street. "It's just a blessing on both sides," she said. "It's a blessing for those who are able to contribute, and it's a blessing for those who are able to receive." Tuckwood, who has worked with many of the previous toy drives, is overwhelmed with the generosity and hope that comes

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from these events. “The community really rallies to provide for those who are struggling for any given reason,” she said.

The Village of Wellington, **Poag** said, works to combat this need. “During the holiday season, it’s a time for us to have an opportunity to share with others who may be less fortunate. Throughout the year, many of us have so many blessings that we so often take it for granted,” he said. “It’s always good to give back to the community and be invested in the community. Wellington is committed to its residents and committed to trying to relieve some of their needs, especially during the holiday season.” Sponsorship opportunities are still available to help those in need. “We are extremely grateful for the continued generosity of our Wellington residents and businesses, but we do still need their help,” Tuckwood said. “We’re very fortunate to live in such a wonderful community.”

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James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
October 3, 2014

Wellington ed board pleased by grant program's first year

Author: *Ron Bukley*

The Wellington Education Committee approved another round of \$25,000 grants to the village's 11 elementary, middle and high schools Monday. It also approved a new policy to allow schools with money remaining from the previous year's grant to roll it over to the next year. Community Services Director **James Poag** gave an update on the grant program and recommended that the remaining money be allowed to stay with the schools, rather than be returned to the village. "In this summary, it explains that two Wellington elementary schools received B ratings," he said. "All other elementary and middle schools were A-rated, according to the 2014 preliminary grades. One of the elementary schools moved from a B grade to an A grade."

Poag said that performance gains for the lowest 25 percent, which is the primary goal of the grants, accounted for 200 of the total possible 800 points in determining the grade for elementary and middle schools. He explained that the Wellington Village Council had approved a resolution giving the Wellington Education Committee authority to administer and monitor the grants to ensure that proper reporting is being done. As it stands, money not allocated by May 31 must be returned to the village. "I recommend that this committee make a motion to allow the schools to use the unencumbered funds to begin programs for the upcoming year," **Poag** said. "This will require an amendment to the current grant guidelines, which must be done through a council resolution."

Poag suggested that the committee refine its definition of "non-consumable" and "consumable" items, explaining that a question had been raised whether computers, including laptops and iPads, should be considered consumable. Items such as workbooks intended to be marked in, pencils, crayons and work paper are considered consumable, and spending grant money on such items is not permitted. **Poag** also recommended that the schools, with help from the area superintendent, develop a uniform method of reporting expenditures to the village. However, some committee members did not favor that approach, at least for the coming year.

Board Member Theresa Ventriglio said she thought uniform reporting would be difficult with three different school levels. "I think that the principals sitting here should have input for that as well," Ventriglio said. "For us to make that decision as a board, we can do that, but I feel that we get the best information hearing from the principals." Board Member Michelle McGovern said the coming year would not be a good time to require schools to have a uniform report due to uncertain mandates at the state level. "It could not be a more difficult year to ask them to have a uniform report," McGovern said. "We can thank the Florida Legislature for that, but these teachers won't even know what their school grade is until November after their school year as it stands right now, not to mention, I'm not sure if anybody can tell me what test we're taking this spring for every level."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

McGovern added that she thought **Poag** had done a good job breaking down the reports that had been submitted so they were reasonably comparable, and the committee could see how the money was being spent, especially toward improving performance levels for the lower 25 percent of students. “The reason for this grant is to help support our lowest 25 percent as best we can in order to equalize our opportunities for all of our students,” McGovern said. “I think a lot of the data in this shows that we were successful, and that our schools were successful in that.”

Board Member Ana Martinez, however, said that a uniform report might be easier for the principals in their presentations next year. She noted that most of the principals produced huge reports on the grant money. “Maybe we only need certain things,” she said. “We could streamline to one page, two pages maximum.” Board Chair Marcia Hayden agreed with Ventriglio that a uniform report for the elementary, middle and high schools would be difficult because of the different forms of assessment, but some degree of uniformity would be valuable. “We do appreciate all the work that Mr. **Poag** did in putting this together for us,” Hayden said, asking that the reports be sent to all the principals so they could see what was submitted to the council members.

McGovern said she would like to see some form of reporting on how the lower 25 percent of students were served, adding that she believed some of the schools were not doing that. “I think there were some schools that were not able to service the lower 25, so I think that’s important to know as well,” she said. McGovern made two motions, one to allow the schools to roll over unspent funds, and another to use the state’s guidelines for consumable and non-consumable items. Both motions carried unanimously, 7-0.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
September 25, 2014

Spinelli grant program is 'off to a great start'

Author: *Michael Readling*

Even people who never met Keely Spinelli can't stop talking about what an inspiration the long-time educator was to her community. "I did not have the pleasure of meeting her but, from everything I've heard, she was a phenomenal teacher in the Wellington School System," said Meredith Tuckwood, community services specialist for Wellington. "If you mentioned her name amongst her peers or the kids or anyone who came into contact with her, they couldn't talk enough about her." Nearly six years after Spinelli died at age 46, following a five-year battle with cancer, her legacy lives on in Wellington. And, perhaps fittingly, the Spinelli tradition touches more than just one school.

In 2013, the Village of Wellington Education Committee voted to create the Keely Spinelli Grant with the intent of offering financial assistance to students who fall into the bottom 25 percent in reading and/or math in all 11 village schools. Each school could receive up to \$25,000 to buy things like materials and equipment to supplement its curriculum. At the end of the year, the schools were asked to provide a grant report. The results were exactly what Spinelli would have hoped for. "The results were actually phenomenal," said **James Poag**, Wellington's director of community services. "According to our data, 1,154 students participated in the reading program and another 300 participated in math. Of those students, 73 percent achieved growth in reading and 83 percent showed growth in math. It was a great success." It was so successful the education committee has approved another \$275,000 to be set aside for the program this year.

Tuckwood said there was no set process for how each school utilized the funds it received. It was up to the teachers and administrations on each campus to come up with the best way to communicate with the children they teach every day. "Some schools did boot camps, some did pull outs during the day. I think the primary method was tutoring," she said. "There was a mixed methodology that they used. Some did it during school. Some did it after hours, some even had school on Saturday." Regardless of the schedule, the inaugural round of Spinelli grants proved to be very successful. The hardest part for Round Two, in fact, will be trying to figure out how to compare what happens this year to what happened last year, **Poag** said.

The State of Florida (again) changed its evaluation system this year, switching from the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards to Common Core State Standards. That means different scores for different things. But that, **Poag** said, is just a small bump in a road to better-educated students that Wellington plans to travel for a long time. "The village is more definitely committed to reinvesting into Wellington's education system. And we would definitely like to see continued success and increasing success of the program," **Poag** said. "It's just, with the state's scoring system, we're trying to measure what those numbers would look like. It's like comparing apples last year to oranges this year."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
September 18, 2014

Wellington hosting symposiums for seniors

Author: *Michael Readling*

One of the things that the Village of Wellington tries to do in order to set itself apart from the other communities, according to officials, is engage its residents. That's why, when a recent survey among the senior residents showed a desire for more information about benefits and government services, the Community Services Department sprung into action. The 7,500 seniors comprise about 12 percent of the village's total population of 58,000. "One of the things the village takes seriously is its investment in the community itself and being a great hometown," said **James Poag**, community services director for the village. "We try to reinvest in the community to provide adequate schools, parks, housing and programs that address the needs of our residents."

The latest example of that initiative is a series of symposiums aimed at assisting the senior population feel more comfortable with their daily lives and future. Today at 11:30 a.m. representatives from Debt Helpers, a local nonprofit, and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) program will be present to talk about Medicare and other benefits of which seniors should be aware. This is the first of three symposiums over the next three months that will feature experts in different fields. "We are very excited about it. They will be giving an overview about the benefits.gov website and showing the residents how they can perform a benefits check-up, where they put in information to see if they might qualify for additional benefit program," said Meridith Tuckwood, community services specialist for Wellington. "Often, we find that some of the seniors are living off of Social Security and struggling when, in fact, they may be eligible for food stamps and just not know it. They will learn how the site works and be shown that it is a secure site and no one will be accessing their information."

The remaining two seminars are scheduled for October and November and will touch on subjects such as the advantages and disadvantages of aging in place (at home), independent living facilities, nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The seminars also will provide information on the importance of colon/gastrointestinal and breast health as well as gynecologic care and hormone replacement for older adults. Speakers for those two events will come from the Florida Assisted Living Association, the Department of Elder Affairs and Palms West Hospital. Tuckwood said the symposiums are a follow-up to some senior lunch-and-learns that began a few years ago as a way to get the senior population more active and engaged in the community. "To me, if there is great opportunity for our residents to make their quality of life better, we are here to provide it," she said. "If we can make their golden years better, I'm all for that. It feels good to ask our residents what they need and then be able to provide what they are looking for."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
September 6, 2014

New task force aims to cut vandalism

Author: *Kristen M. Clark*

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office is looking for the public's help to identify suspects they believe are responsible for spray-painting "miscellaneous markings" on several light poles and street signs throughout Wellington this summer. Meanwhile, a new task force in the village is working to deter future incidents by speeding the cleanup. The vandals first struck on June 16, sheriff's office spokeswoman Teri Barbera said. The sheriff's office has released security-camera images of two suspects they believe are involved. Barbera said anyone who can identify the suspects is urged to contact Crime Stoppers at 800-458-TIPS.

Last week, three new cases were reported of the word "size" being spray-painted on commercial locations in the village, according to Village Manager Paul Schofield's weekly report to the Village Council. In response to the incidents this summer, the village has established a graffiti task force charged with cleaning up the vandalism within 24 to 48 hours. The detail is a cooperative effort between Wellington's community services and public works departments and the sheriff's office, Community Services Director **James Poag** said. "These guys who go out and tag these public places do it so the tag stays up for a long period of time," **Poag** said. "So the sooner you clean it up, the more deterred they are from continuing it."

On the whole, however, incidents of vandalism continue to decline this year in Wellington. Through July -- the most recent figures available -- there were 88 cases of vandalism, down 23 percent from the 114 cases reported during the same seven-month period in 2013, according to the sheriff's office. Residents who spot graffiti are asked to report it by calling the village at 561-791-4000. **Poag** said if residents witness vandals in the act, they should contact the sheriff's office immediately by dialing 911.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (FL)
August 31, 2014

Housing program – Village initiative helps seniors fix up their homes

Author: *Nadia Sorocka*

Eligible Wellington residents age 62 and up can get up to \$7,500 to fix up their residences through the village's Senior Home Repair Program. These improvements can include fixing exterior code issues and violations, making homes more energy efficient and fixing safety issues, said **James Poag**, director of community services. "We know that many of the seniors who live in our community live with fixed incomes," he said. "They may not have the income to fix their homes or get them in the shape they need [the home] in."

Meridith Tuckwood, Wellington's neighborhood advocate, said the Village Council was looking to provide assistance for seniors. "The council is interested in providing services that will provide [seniors] a better future," she said. "Offering loans for home repair does that." The assistance is provided as a five-year forgivable loan at 0 percent interest. Twenty percent is forgiven each year on the anniversary of the loan. "When a senior is approved for a loan, they also receive a list of names of recommended contractors," Tuckwood said. "This protects the safety of our seniors and guarantees they will get the work done correctly."

If the property is sold or rented during the five years following completion of the improvements, the balance of the loan becomes immediately due and payable. Properties with outstanding code violations are given priority. "This program doesn't just benefit seniors; it benefits everyone in the community," Tuckwood said. "We hope this becomes a catalyst to inspire neighbors to make improvements and beautify their home, too."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
August 21, 2014

Program lets citizens, officials interact

Author: *Michael Readling*

It used to be, in days gone by, communities would hold meetings in a central location to discuss topics that affected their members, or raise any concerns. Unless there was a real controversial issue on the agenda, those meetings tended to attract the same few people, leaving the rest of the community out of the loop. Now, in these days of communities focusing on all residents and their needs and wants, those meetings sometimes come to your front door. In Wellington, it's called the Walk and Talk program, and it is designed to allow community leaders the opportunity to see their neighborhoods firsthand, and for residents to have the chance to talk to those leaders.

Despite being less than a year old, the Walk and Talk program has proven very successful, said **James Poag**, director of community services for the Village of Wellington. Each tour features a person from the Community Services department, along with village code enforcement and at least one Palm Beach County Sheriff's deputy. "We've gotten a very positive reaction from the residents," **Poag** said. "And the information we gather is helpful in us directing resources to address the issues we hear about. The concerns we hear let us know if it's something our office can handle, or if we can bridge the gap and find out who's responsible."

The teams meet at a corner and walk the streets, engaging any resident they can find. Occasionally, they'll knock on a door or two. "We just try to hit whoever is out. We'll knock on some doors," said Scott Campbell, community projects manager for the village. "We try to get a healthy mix of different people in the neighborhood. In a couple of hours, we see who we can talk to and make sure we can address any concerns they might have."

The most common concern, according to Campbell: People not picking up after their dogs. "If that's our biggest problem, there probably aren't too many issues out there. But that's the one we hear most often," he said. "Other times, people want to know who to go to if they're having an issue with code compliance. Something like trash cans being left out or a neighbor's roof being too dirty." Said **Poag**: "We've seen some very positive changes based on the input we've received from residents during the Walk and Talk program. It gives us information and allows us to point in the right direction and focus on those things that need to be fixed."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
July 4, 2014

‘Walk & Talk’ events in Wellington’s neighborhoods

Author: *Julie Unger*

Wellington’s Neighborhood Services Department is continuing its Safe Neighborhoods initiative with a series of upcoming “Walk & Talk” events. Neighborhood advocates, code compliance officers and Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office deputies are visiting residents in communities around the village from 5 to 7 p.m. to hear concerns and discuss neighborhood issues.

Vice Mayor John Greene attended his first Walk & Talk recently in the Yarmouth neighborhood, where he was able to see firsthand what was going on in the community. Greene noticed a warm response from residents, whose stories were much more positive and encouraging than he initially expected. “I think they were a little surprised, but very happy to share what they see on a daily basis,” Greene said. “I think they were flattered to be able to have an opportunity to reach out to the various levels of government, of law enforcement, in a way that is typically not what they’ve experienced.”

Over the years, there has been a great deal of conversation dedicated to how to improve older, often multi-family Wellington neighborhoods. “They’ve heard a lot of promises and haven’t seen a lot of action,” Greene said. “They’re finally seeing some of the actions that they’ve been promised and hoping for.” Many of the actions have been a direct result of the work of Neighborhood Services Director **James Poag** and his staff. The Safe Neighborhoods initiative began in 2009 as a way for the village to protect and increase the quality of life for residents in multi-family neighborhoods, **Poag** said. “We dedicated a community policeman team to go out there with us and speak with the residents about crime and other issues in their neighborhoods,” he said.

Typically, four or five staff members participate in the Walk & Talk events, which are posted on the village web site and calendar. Walking around the neighborhood and conversing with residents provides the opportunity for people to raise concerns. “I give a lot of credit to **James** and his department for having the vision to get closer to the neighborhood, reach out to the residents and understand exactly what’s important to them,” Greene said. “My experience, in meeting some of the folks last week, is that they were very happy to see the interest, not only from our Safe Neighborhoods program, but the PBSO.”

There has been significant improvement in the last year, Greene added, and this is reflected in the openness and enthusiasm of residents who, in the past, might have encountered local government only in less-than-ideal circumstances. **Poag** agreed that the residents are glad to be taking part in the program. “They are excited about the program and the Walk & Talks and the other initiatives that we have in the office,” he said. “It provides the residents an avenue to voice their concerns and be heard. We’re getting ready to do some more neighborhood improvement

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

projects. We have built some parks for the children. The residents really have embraced the program because they see positive things.”

Residents have also seen a significant decrease in crime over the past several years as a direct result of this program and community policing, **Poag** said. Greene agreed, explaining that compliance in code enforcement is essential, helping to create a safe environment and keep landlords in check. Compliance is not limited to landscaping and trash, but extends to maintaining roofs, neighborhood lighting and safe building construction.

There are, however, other topics to address. One of the biggest complaints village staff members have heard, **Poag** said, is that many of the neighborhoods look dated. Updated lighting and other projects to improve neighborhood aesthetics are on the list of things the village would like to accomplish. “We want people to know that Wellington is committed to preserving the quality of life for our residents, and we do our best to provide the services needed to do that,” **Poag** said. The message is getting through, as residents recently told Greene that they have noticed positive advances over the past year.

“**James Poag** has done an outstanding job, and I think it’s great to have him in that position,” Greene said. “I think he understands the challenges facing these neighborhoods. Just watching him walk around and shake hands — it really is inspiring to see. I think they felt that. The people in the communities really felt that somebody is listening and somebody cares.”

All walks are scheduled for Wednesdays from 5 to 7 p.m. July communities and streets are Hyacinth Place on July 9, Goldenrod Road on July 16, Guilford Villas on July 23 and the 12th Fairway on July 30. August walks will be White Pine Drive on Aug. 8, the Periwinkle community on Aug. 13, the Mulberry/Staghorn community on Aug. 20 and the Hawthorne community on Aug. 27. September dates are Folkestone Circle on Sept. 3, Yarmouth Drive on Sept. 10, Peconic Court on Sept. 17 and Westhampton Circle on Sept. 24.

“I want to do more of these, and I want to get out and hear what the residents are saying,” Greene said. “We’ve been talking about some of the higher-profile issues that take place in Wellington, but these are good, hard-working people who are in Wellington for all the same reasons — to raise their kids and have a safe place, and they deserve that.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town-Crier (FL)
October 11, 2013

Wellington council sets policy on what can be purchased

Author: *Town-Crier Editor*

Members of the Wellington Village Council voted Tuesday to enact a public purpose expenditure policy governing what items Wellington staff can purchase using village funds. After Wellington was criticized last year for the use of its purchasing cards to buy food, gifts and other items, council members put a moratorium on spending for those items until staff could work out a plan that would enforce spending only on necessary items.

The proposed policy would allow spending on meals and refreshments for certain events, or under certain circumstances with approval by the village manager. “You’d be approving this to satisfy the recommendation from the Office of the Inspector General,” Director of Internal Audit and Compliance **James Poag** told council members.

According to the staff report, the policy would allow staff to spend money and be reimbursed for meals during a workshop or conference, if a business-related meeting or activity extends through a meal, for refreshments at official village meetings open to the public, during official staff retreats, at “recognition events” for retirement or other milestones, or during village-sponsored conferences or meetings.

The policy bans spending on entertainment and alcoholic beverages; meals for regular, recurring staff meetings; gift purchases other than greeting cards; office parties or holiday celebrations; and political events, contributions and donations. “We’re here to clarify what we think is and is not acceptable,” Councilwoman Anne Gerwig said. “This is really spelling out in detail what would dictate a public purpose.” To be reimbursed, the employee would have to have certification from his department head, explain what the public purpose of the purchase was, list attendees to the event along with the date, time and location, provide an itemized receipt and provide evidence of written approval if necessary.

Councilman Matt Willhite suggested adding the funds to each budget’s department, but **Poag** said the money is already there. “This is just defining what a public purpose is,” he said. “We have to have a way to track these expenses.” Willhite suggested removing the expected dollar amounts from the policy. “I don’t know why there needs to be a dollar amount associated with it,” he said. “It looks like we’re saying this is what we’re going to spend.”

Village Manager Paul Schofield said the council didn’t have to approve a dollar amount or even a department for the spending. “You’re just approving a general policy,” he said. “That is mostly informational. You can approve the policy without approving expenditures for any specific department or person. Then the expenditures would go to accounting and Mr. **Poag’s** office as well to make sure they meet our policies. They will have those checks regardless.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Mayor Bob Margolis said he was in support of the policy. “The inspector general said we couldn’t [make the purchases] because we didn’t have a policy to allow it,” he said. “This is what we’re doing now, developing a policy.” But Willhite said he didn’t want unnecessary spending, noting that one item went from having \$26 spent on it to a budget of \$1,000. “We went from zero tolerance to opening the floodgates,” he said. “It’s allowed in their budget, but I have a concern when we have certain areas that show higher numbers than others.”

Councilman John Greene said he thought the council should approve the policy without assigning funds to any department. “It’s already in their budget,” he said. **Poag** said that was basically what the council was considering. “There is no seeking any dollar amounts or funding,” he said. Greene made a motion to approve the policy, which passed unanimously. “What’s important is we finally have a policy in place that is in compliance with the recommendation of the inspector general,” he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
James Albert Poag
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)
January 25, 2004

Names in the News (excerpt on candidate)
Author: *Herald Staff*

BROWARD COUNTY

James Poag has been named director of the Broward Office of Professional Standards. He will oversee reviews and investigations in the county's whistleblower program. The office conducts investigations in Broward County ethics policies and also helps county agencies in their efforts to increase efficiency. **Poag**, who lives in North Miami-Dade near the Broward County line, previously worked as an investigator supervisor with the Broward County Civil Rights Division. He also has served as a compliance administrator for the Broward School Board.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
 Colin Baenziger & Associates



Section 9

Suzanne E. Sherman

Cocoa Beach

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

[REDACTED]

SUZANNE SHERMAN

[REDACTED]

July 21, 2025

RE: Application for Cocoa Beach City Manager Position

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers, City of Cocoa Beach
c/o Scott Krim, Colin Baenziger & Associates

To Whom It May Concern:

As a servant leader and professional local government manager, I promote integrity and professionalism in the organizations I serve, and I thrive on opportunities to develop positive team culture, promote collaboration, and provide improvements in operations. As a leader in municipal government, I have experience in building and maintaining strategic relationships and leading high-performing teams to successfully meet ambitious goals and objectives. I prioritize listening to, connecting with, and motivating people to support change to achieve desired results on behalf of an organization.

As a resident of Brevard County for nearly 25 years, I am deeply familiar with the challenges and opportunities affecting our area, and I am committed to continuing to serve our exceptional community. My 22+ years of government work has all been within Brevard County, and it would be truly an honor to serve the City of Cocoa Beach in the role of County Manager.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Sherman, ICMA-CM

Resume of Suzanne Sherman



Summary

As a servant leader and professional local government manager, I have established a reputation as a highly competent "go-to person" and change agent. I promote integrity and professionalism in government and I thrive on opportunities to develop positive team culture, promote collaboration, provide improvements in customer service, and implementing strategies to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local government operations.

Relevant Local Government Experience

Satellite Beach, FL

Dec 2024 to Present

Assistant City Manager

- Support City Manager in all initiatives as directed. Direct oversight of Planning, Code Enforcement, Building, Sustainability, and Human Resources functions.

Palm Bay, FL

Jan 2019 to Nov 2024

City Manager/Deputy City Manager

- Responsible for a citywide budget of over \$373 Million for a full-service city of comprised of over 140,000 residents, 88+ square miles, and over 1,000 employees. Oversaw 13 departments including police, fire, utilities (water, wastewater, and reclaimed services) and public works. In a 3% charter cap environment, strategically increased General Fund undesignated fund balance, established emergency stabilization fund and increased recurring investments in future road maintenance fund. Improved city's bond ratings with Moody's (Aa3), S&P (AA-), and Fitch (AA).
- Oversaw development of a new Master Capital Improvements Program, including significant investments in roads, stormwater (including multiple state appropriations-funded baffle boxes), public safety, citywide vehicle replacements, and a wide range of aging infrastructure.
- In a period of high population growth, initiated a complete overhaul of an outdated Comprehensive Plan, replacement of decades old finance/HR/customer service system with a new enterprise-wide software, Workday, funding for a \$30+ million new wastewater plant, implementation of new systems (iMS, Bluebeam) and processes to streamline permitting, and invested millions for new road widening and improvement projects, including ITS to address traffic congestion. Also championed the modernization of IT operations, including significant focus on cybersecurity improvements.
- Successfully managed response and resolution for operational improvements necessary to correct issues from prior administration that were identified by the state JLAC audit and state and federal housing programs.
- Active leadership in times of emergency response and build positive relationships with employee union leadership as part of negotiations with IAFF, FOP, NAGE White and NAGE Blue.
- Highly responsive and collaborative approach to engagement with members of the community,

Sherman, 1 of 4

including residents, business owners, nonprofit organizations, and the development community. Active in leading City efforts to build relationships with state and federal legislators.

- City Manager from July 2020 through November 2024; served as Deputy City Manager January 2019 through June 2020

Satellite Beach, FL Assistant City Manager

Nov 2015 to Jan 2019

- Direct interaction with members of City Council and Board Members, including frequent presentations before City Council and staff liaison to the Citizen Budget Committee.
- Served in a dual capacity as Support Services Department Director, overseeing the functions of finance, budget, information technology, human resources, employee benefits, and risk management.
- Responsible for developing and managing a citywide budget of over \$12 Million.
- Executive-level management and operational decision-making including project implementation and oversight and competitive bidding to acquire improved service levels or reduced costs.
- Managed the City's response and submission to FEMA following declared disasters.

Palm Bay, FL Acting Deputy City Manager/Assistant to the City Manager (2014 to 2015)

Jan 2006 to Nov 2015

- Direct interaction with members of City Council and Board Members, including presentations before City Council and the Utilities Advisory Board.
- Lead project manager for the a new I-95 Interchange (\$44 Million FDOT Project). Improved communication between staff, property owners/developers and other government agencies. Reduced project environmental mitigation costs by over \$1.5 Million.
- Focused on economic development and negotiating with developers to secure public infrastructure improvements (roads, water/sewer) for the undeveloped area comprising nearly 1/3 of the city's land mass.
- Additional major projects included auditing stormwater utility billing, managing a Florida Department of Economic Opportunity grant, working with the city's lobbyist on legislative priorities, annual budget preparation, and oversight of the city's \$4 Million road improvement program.
- Served as Acting City Manager, Deputy City Manager, and Acting Public Works Director.
- Also served on the Brevard County Tourism Development Council's Capital Infrastructure Advisory Board.

Business Operations Division Manager – Palm Bay Utilities Department (2011 to 2014)

- Managed the 21-member Business Operations Division responsible for customer service, billing and collections, budget/accounting/purchasing, marketing/outreach, and special projects.

Sherman, 2 of 4

Responsible for a department budget of over \$25 million.

- Successfully transitioned the Finance Department customer service/billing and collections team into the Utilities organization. Developed customer service expectations and values and identified skill sets needed by each team member to direct training efforts. Also led the team in development of a work process manual used for training and consistent service delivery.
- Customized an American Waterworks Association Customer Service training program and held four, three-day sessions to train over 30 staff members, including visits to the utilities plants and demonstrations by field crews to improve customer service knowledge and enhance the customer service experience.
- Managed the incorporation of the customer service, billing and collections functions into GreenWay, the Utility's EMS (Environmental Management System) program, which focused on continuous improvement and sustainability, and insured the department remained ISO 14001:2004 certified and compliant.
- Led the Business Operations team to awards in 2013 and 2014 for the most process improvements within the department. Examples included implementing paperless work orders for the field service team, automating reports to streamline billing and collections processes, and numerous improvements in customer service provided via the lobby, call center, and web.
- Reduced billing costs by over 40% for over 33,000 monthly, 12,000 quarterly, and 34,000 annual bills.
- Provided ethics training to the entire 120-member Utilities Department.

Risk Manager – Palm Bay Human Resources Department (2008 to 2011)

- Responsible for the City's Risk Management and Employee Benefits programs and oversight of three internal service funds with a combined budget of over \$14 million; direct report to City Manager. Served as Acting Human Resources Director as needed for 9-member department.
- Evaluated long-standing health and risk insurance broker relationships and saved the city over \$77K annually by establishing performance contracts with new vendors.
- Transitioned the City from a self-insured health insurance plan to a fully-insured model with a rate increase cap of 8% per year for three years during a period of significant market increases.
- Other notable accomplishments included contract management of the Employee Clinic and transitioning the City to an electronic open enrollment system for benefits.
- For vehicle liability and worker's compensation claims, changed from an in-house self-insured approach to a guaranteed cost model to reduce claims costs and provide budget stability.
- Developed and implemented a process to track and initiate subrogation claims in situations where the City did not previously pursue recovery for damages.
- Responsible for presentations before City Council and general and union employee groups on a recurring basis. Also provided on-call response for vehicle accidents and employee injuries. Represented the City at the Brevard County Emergency Operations Center as needed

PalmStat Management Analyst – Palm Bay City Manager's Office (2006 to 2008)

Sherman, 3 of 4

Section 9

- Under direction of the City Manager, coordinated and administered PalmStat, an accountability and performance management system developed to identify and implement process improvement strategies Citywide.
- Responsibilities included the analysis of statistical data, the development of monthly written reports to communicate the analysis, and working closely with department heads and key staff to facilitate the PalmStat process.
- Assisted in the development of the city budget of over \$140 million, and tracked budget performance measures for each department.
- Supervised City's Grants Coordinator; supported grant applications and implementation, as well as submission of proposals for state and national awards.

Brevard County Sheriff's Office

May 2003 to Apr 2005

Fiscal Projects Coordinator/Accountant

- Monitored and analyzed financial compliance aspects of state and federal grant programs and law enforcement services contracts with the City of Cape Canaveral and the Canaveral Port Authority.
- Handled program-specific fiscal analysis as needed; served as the agency's liaison with FEMA for damage assessment, recovery, and financial reporting in 2004 after three hurricanes impacted the county.
- Led a team tasked with developing the first strategic plan and annual report for the organization.

Education

University of Central Florida, M.A. Public Administration, 2003

Florida International University, B.A. Political Science, 2000

Other Interests/Memberships

Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) – Member since 2004
2024-2025, Vice President, Board of Directors

International City/County Management Association (ICMA) – Member since 2004
ICMA-Credentialed Manager

Sherman, 4 of 4



January 13, 2025

RE: Letter of Reference for Ms. Suzanne Sherman

To Whom It May Concern:

As a resident of the City of Palm Bay for over thirty years and as a proud United States Marine Corps veteran, I have been blessed to serve in a range of public service roles, including working as Director of Community and Military Relations for now retired United States Congressman Bill Posey for many years. I have been acquainted with Ms. Suzanne Sherman for more than ten years, and before working with her as Mayor, was familiar with her as an outstanding ethical leader and member of our community. From the time I was elected to serve as Mayor of the City of Palm Bay in 2020 and through late November 2024, I was blessed to work side by side with Ms. Suzanne Sherman for the good of our great City.

Ms. Sherman served the City of Palm Bay from January 2019 through November 2024. During her tenure, she started as Deputy City Manager and took on the City Manager role in July 2020. This was not her first time with the City of Palm Bay; she also served in several progressively responsible positions with Palm Bay from 2006 through 2015. I am writing this letter of reference for Ms. Sherman as I found her to be an outstanding leader, serving our City with integrity, leading her team with humility and strength, and demonstrating compassion and commitment to the Palm Bay community.

When Ms. Sherman stepped into the leadership of the City, she led Palm Bay to rebuild an operational and management foundation that was in need of repair and strengthening. During her tenure, she managed a citywide budget of over \$373 million for our full-service city and led us through the successful completion of a state JLAC audit that started in 2018. She hired and oversaw a team that put the City's state and federal housing grant programs back into compliance, developed a true multi-year capital improvements program that had been missing for years, and oversaw the updating of the City's outdated Comprehensive Plan and phase one of our land development ordinance rewrite. She also displayed strong fiscal management by improving the City's bond ratings, establishing an emergency stabilization fund and road maintenance fund, and increasing reserves. Ms. Sherman also formalized many processes and procedures into a new Administrative Code and led the City to develop a new strategic plan to replace one that was outdated.

Legislative Department

120 Malabar Road SE • Palm Bay, FL 32907-3009
Phone: 321.952.3414 • Fax: 321.953.8971
Visit our website: www.palmbayflorida.org

Section 9

Moreover, through all of this, she consistently displayed servant leadership qualities. She did not micro-manage, but rather empowered and encouraged her team to achieve greatness. She restored a high level of morale to the organization and fostered collaboration, teamwork and compassion, all while holding employees accountable. Ms. Sherman led with integrity and transparency and set an example for her team. The changes she instituted and her reputation as a servant leader drew seasoned, quality employees into the organization to step into leadership roles, further strengthening the team.

In conclusion, it is indeed an honor to write this letter on behalf of Ms. Sherman. I would welcome the opportunity to work with her again in the future and I highly recommend Ms. Sherman to any future employer; any organization would be truly blessed to have her join their team.

Sincerely,

CITY OF PALM BAY



Rob Medina
Mayor

Candidate Introduction

SUZANNE E. SHERMAN

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, University of Central Florida
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, Florida International University
ICMA Credentialed Manager

EXPERIENCE

Assistant City Manager, Satellite Beach, FL	2024 – present
City Manager, Palm Bay, FL	2020 – 2024
Deputy City Manager, Palm Bay, FL	2019 – 2020
Assistant City Manager, Satellite Beach, FL	2015 – 2019
Acting Deputy City Manager/Assistant to the City Manager, Palm Bay, FL	2014 – 2015
Business Operations Division Manager, Utilities Dept, Palm Bay, FL	2011 – 2014
Risk Manager, Human Resources Dept, Palm Bay, FL	2008 – 2011
PalmStat Management Analyst, City Manager’s Office, Palm Bay, FL	2006 – 2008
Fiscal Projects Coordinator, Brevard County Sheriff’s Office	2003 – 2005

BACKGROUND

Having served as both the City Manager for the City of Palm Bay, and more recently as the Assistant City Manager for the City of Satellite Beach, I am providing an overview of both cities, along with some important issues that each City is facing.

The City of Satellite Beach is a barrier island city of 11,453 residents with 114 full-time/43 part-time employees. The FY 2025 Amended General Fund Budget is \$18.6 million, with all funds totaling \$29.2 million. As Assistant City Manager, I directly supervise two staff members (Human Resources Manager and Community Development Director) but am primarily focused on initiatives to support the execution of the policy and vision of the City Council and City Manager. The three most significant issues facing the City of Satellite Beach are:

- With a tax base that is primarily residential with limited commercial, the need to seek alternative sources of revenue and to streamline operations and reduce expenses is critical.
- The City needs the ability to properly fund a capital improvements plan to keep up with aging infrastructure to maintain the high quality of services its residents expect. ARPA funding was utilized strategically in recent years to address many outstanding capital needs, including a new Fire Station/Public Works facility and road paving projects, but many more still remain.
- With neighboring jurisdictions competing for talent and increasing pay regularly, the City must actively monitor pay scales and benefits to remain competitive.

SUZANNE E. SHERMAN

The City of Palm Bay is a mainland city of over 88 square miles, 142,359 residents, and more than 1,050 full-time employees. The FY 2025 Adopted General Fund Budget was \$122.8 million, with all funds totaling \$373.2 million. In my position as City Manager, I directly supervised 7 staff members, including the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Finance Director, Public Works Director, two Deputy City Managers and an Office Manager.

The three most significant issues facing the City of Palm Bay are:

- Similar to Brevard County, the City of Palm Bay operates under a 3% voter approved charter cap. This cap restricts the City Council from setting a millage rate that would result in total ad valorem growth exceeding the prior year ad valorem revenue by more than 3%, unless approved by a supermajority vote to meet emergency or other critical needs. Even with new growth in the tax base, the cap has driven the City millage rate down at a rate that is not sustainable to cover future operations.
- In a period of high development and rapidly increasing population, working with developers to improve infrastructure and address roadway and traffic issues are at the forefront.
- Completing major infrastructure projects, including the \$150 million road bond repaving program and the \$40+ million new south wastewater plant.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

My interest in the City Manager position with the City of Cocoa Beach is based on several considerations. The size of the city, both in terms of geography and employee count, along with the political stability of the Commission and the Commissioners' genuine pride in Cocoa Beach and passion for what is in the best interest of the City is attractive. In reviewing recent Council meetings, it is excellent to know that the recently retired City Manager built a solid team that Council has expressed support of and confidence in. It would be an honor to lead and work with such a team. The City of Cocoa Beach incorporates a truly beautiful part of our barrier island, and I am excited about the opportunity to be a part of upholding the small-town quality of life that is expected by residents, including working with the Commission to manage how redevelopment occurs and fighting state law changes that negatively affect home rule. I am also motivated by the opportunity to protect the natural resources that make the City uniquely special, and to provide long-term leadership stability and continuity for the employees.

I am a servant leader and I place great value on team and a culture of teamwork; I believe that my role is to support and empower employees as we provide high quality services to our City. I maintain an open-door policy and prioritize being accessible and available to employees. I am not a micromanager, but I am a motivator and I hold myself and employees accountable. Promoting from within and succession planning are very important to me, and I enjoy building relationships with employees through active listening and getting to know them.

SUZANNE E. SHERMAN

Members of my staff would say that I am approachable and a good listener, that I hold people accountable, praise publicly and correct in private, and that I am open to new ideas and excited to make improvements in operations. They would also say that I lead with integrity and that I promote work-life balance and flexibility. My elected officials would say that I am responsive and partner with them by prioritizing both the implementation of their policy directives and in quickly addressing immediate concerns from members of our community. They would also say that I am engaged and active in the community and with employees, not just sitting behind the desk.

As a leader and manager, my strengths include the ability to motivate and challenge teams to do more and exceed initial goals/expectations, to truly listen to and support all engaged parties, and to foster collaborative relationships to address issues. These strengths were certainly needed when I returned to Palm Bay in 2019. At that time, the City had been regularly featured in a negative light in the news media and had suffered tremendous reputational damage on many fronts. In the nearly six years I was there, I was proud of the opportunities that I had to work with the Council and the team to make significant changes, especially in rebuilding the foundational aspects of the organization. For example, I successfully led the organization in completing an intensive State of Florida Joint Legislative Action Committee audit that had started in 2018.

Additionally, I prioritized resolving significant lingering issues with federal and state housing programs, changed the City's poor reputation regarding building permitting and development, implemented a new capital improvements plan, addressed a seriously outdated comprehensive plan and completed a new strategic plan. With many years of experience in government finance and budgeting, I strategically increased General Fund reserves and developed new fiscal policies to create long-term financial stability.

I also had to rebuild the leadership team. Over time this led to certain high-ranking staff members leaving the organization. Firing employees is never an experience that most managers would look forward to, but when it is for the greater good of the department or agency it feels right and is truly beneficial to the team and the organization. Early in my career, I learned a valuable lesson about taking too long to address a team member with a negative leadership style. The negative impact on the staff members who reported to the ineffective leader taught me the value of moving quickly to address the root cause to return the organization to a healthy operational state.

I believe that communication, both within the organization and from the City to the community and vice versa, is extremely important, and must be consistently championed to build and maintain trust. Leading with integrity and transparency, I worked with staff to improve relationships with the media, inviting media representatives to come and meet with us and hear more about the changes we were making. The results were positive as communication became less adversarial and more collegial. I believe that active use of social media is necessary while not neglecting communication for those who prefer other methods. Part of a city manager's job

SUZANNE E. SHERMAN

is to be in tune with the type of engagement the community needs and desires. I have experience with social media messaging, community and employee newsletters, hosting town hall events, and speaking at HOA meetings, for example. I also recognize when special levels of engagement are warranted. An example of this would be the positive relationship I built with residents of the former Majors Golf Course in Palm Bay. They were immensely frustrated over the decision by the owner to close the course and I opened my doors to them and had multiple meetings and phone conversations with them to keep them updated on the anticipated development project. Being accessible and transparent in these and other communication strategies further promotes trust.

I also enjoy opportunities to bring innovative approaches to tackling organizational issues. For example, during a time when Palm Bay experienced double digit vacancies in law enforcement, I advocated for an aggressive recruitment campaign for experienced officers. The campaign had union support and included higher than normal sign-on bonuses, which were funded through unspent salary dollars. The results were tremendous and the staffing woes of the police department improved. In my frequent pursuit of organizational improvements, I can recognize the difference between operational norms that are upheld based on traditions and activities that are expected and acceptable, versus resistance to change because “we’ve always done it that way”. I believe in starting with the expected end and working backward from there. I do not advocate for change simply for the sake of change, and I do not modify operations based on how something was done in a prior organization in which I served.

There is certainly truth to the adage “what gets measured gets done”. I find that being able to establish a strategic plan and target short- and long-term goals, objectives and metrics creates a useful guide for larger policy objectives in an organization. For higher priority projects, having a visible system for tracking progress and maintaining accountability is very useful, but I also do not believe in measuring just for the sake of measuring. It has to make sense, has to be based on something that is meaningful to the organization, and must tell a beneficial story about our accomplishments and achievements. I also know that none of this has any value unless it is rooted in collaboration and partnership with elected officials, staff members, and the community at large.

If offered the position of City Manager for the City of Cocoa Beach, I understand that challenges will include issues such as future revenue sustainability, development and environmental concerns, and tourism and vacation rentals, to name a few. My focus will be to bring stability to the organization through building trust, engagement and communication with all stakeholders, and leading by example in providing high-quality customer service. I am confident that through solid leadership and teamwork we will achieve success in tackling the challenges we face today and those that come in the future.

In the first six months on the job, I will begin what will be a perpetual journey of listening and learning, which will include many opportunities for communication and relationship building. Spending time getting to know each commissioner, staff members, and community members

SUZANNE E. SHERMAN

will be at the forefront. I will ask questions, be visible, learn the culture, and see first-hand the challenges that the City is facing. I will work with the team to apply strategic approaches to meeting needs and achieving goals. I will be engaged at city and community events, representing the City professionally, displaying community pride, and advocating for what is in the best interest of the City of Cocoa Beach. I know what it takes to get the job done, and I am comfortable knowing that there are times when coming in early, working late, and being active on weekends is part of the job. But I also believe in work-life balance, and I have learned how to successfully achieve this balance and model it for others.

There is nothing in my background that would be concerning to any future employer, and I consistently worked with community activists to develop respectful communication and build positive working relationships.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my family and being an active member of my church.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Ethical leadership
- Growth mindset
- Empathetic
- Collaborator
- Motivator
- Spirit of Excellence

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

In November 2024, following an election that changed the City of Palm Bay Council majority, I was terminated 3-2 as two of the new Councilmembers and one of the current members determined they wanted to make a change in leadership. I was provided the opportunity shortly thereafter to return to the City of Satellite Beach once again as Assistant City Manager. I truly enjoy serving in local government leadership positions and working with elected officials, and I have been looking for opportunities to serve in a city/county manager capacity again. Due to family commitments, I am unable to move from Palm Bay. As a result, I have only been considering positions that are within a reasonable driving distance and that provide flexibility on the residency requirement.

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation at the City of Palm Bay was \$245,632, including vehicle allowance. My current compensation at the City of Satellite Beach is \$146,938, including vehicle allowance.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
SUZANNE ELIZABETH SHERMAN**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
State Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
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Federal Florida	April 2015 - Lawsuit filed by Sandra Kane Karwel against the City of Palm Bay including Ms. Sherman and other City officials. Disposition: August 2015 , Dismissed
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July 2022 - Lawsuit filed by Lisa and John Enlow against Jeffrey Spears including Ms. Sherman in her capacity as City Manager.
Disposition: May 2023, Dismissed

June 2025 - Civil Lawsuit filed by Lisa and John Enlow against the City of Palm Bay including Ms. Sherman in her capacity as City Manager.
Status: Open

**See Next Page for Candidate Explanation
For Records Found*

Motor Vehicle Florida	No Records Found
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Credit	Excellent
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Personal Bankruptcy	No Records Found
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**Background Check Summary for
SUZANNE ELIZABETH SHERMAN**

Sex Offender Registry	Not Listed
Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed
Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

From: Suzanne Sherman <suzanne.sherman759@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Background Check Records that Require an Explanation
To: Monique Rogers <monique@cb-asso.com>

Good morning Monique,

All three lawsuits are related to my employment with the City of Palm Bay. The first case, Karwel v. City of Palm Bay, was ultimately dismissed and when I was individually named, along with many other employees, the city attorney had all of us terminated from the lawsuit. Ms. Karwel was a resident with mental health issues who battled the city for many years on a variety of issues. The other two lawsuits were filed by the Enlow family. The first one was dismissed in 2023 and it appears they refiled it in 2025. The Enlows had a variety of complaints, primarily against the police department, and constantly called 911 to report people on ATVs riding on the street next to their house.

Please let me know if you need anything additional.

Thank you,

Suzanne Sherman
321-343-1095

**Background Check Summary for
SUZANNE ELIZABETH SHERMAN
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Suzanne E. Sherman

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ☐ No ☒
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/suzanne.sherman.334>
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/suzanne-sherman-38181a345
I do not have a personal web page but I do have a recently created web page for a government consulting business.
I opened earlier this year: <https://www.sshermaconsulting.com/>
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes ☐ No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
N/A

Attested to: _____



Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Rob Medina – Mayor, City of Palm Bay, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Medina has known Ms. Sherman since 2014. Mr. Medina was serving as a congressional staffer and resident of Palm Bay, where Ms. Sherman held the role of Deputy City Manager and Interim City Manager. Their relationship continued through his service as Mayor, where they worked closely to address several high-impact priorities facing the city. Over the years, he observed her leadership as a government liaison and as a municipal partner.

Ms. Sherman is a competent and integrity-driven professional, and her transparent leadership style is grounded in trust-building. During her tenure in Palm Bay, the city was experiencing a period of organizational instability and public concern. She quickly implemented new directives, serving as a calming and stabilizing presence during times of uncertainty.

Ms. Sherman's greatest strength is her ethical leadership. She invests time in people's needs, team dynamics, and nurturing talent. Her leadership style is ethical, supportive, and focused on building strong teams. She supports staff through change and maintains a clear focus on operational performance.

Ms. Sherman makes strong, well-reasoned hiring decisions, even in complex labor markets. When qualified candidates were scarce, she identified talent and potential within existing personnel and made placements that aligned with the city's needs and the individual's strengths.

Ms. Sherman helped address a long-standing issue in Palm Bay related to slow police and fire response times. She worked with public safety leaders and supported raising the ad valorem cap, which provided funding for needed improvements.

Ms. Sherman's leadership is visionary, strategic, fair, and strong. She earns trust by actively listening, respecting different viewpoints, and building consensus. This was especially important during council meetings with elected officials with different priorities. Her approach balanced political dynamics and maintained neutrality, mirroring an experienced City Manager.

Ms. Sherman remains composed and focused during periods of stress or controversy. During a challenging period in the city's history, Ms. Sherman chose to step away from her role to uphold personal and professional values. She was later invited to return as Interim City Manager, where she played a key role in reestablishing organizational stability and public trust. Because of her leadership, the city made significant strides in rebuilding its reputation and earning back the trust of the public.

Ms. Sherman's removal from city government occurred during a change in council leadership. The newly seated council held a predetermined agenda, and this unfortunately prevented Ms. Sherman from establishing and meeting performance goals. The decision to let her go was viewed as politically motivated and unrelated to job performance. Her departure was met with disappointment by some who advocated for a charter change to prevent such dismissals during future council transitions.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Ms. Sherman is deeply connected to the community and highly respected by residents. Her departure prompted public disappointment, which was cited as further evidence of her positive impact. Ms. Sherman is customer service-oriented, patient, and resilient in the face of adversity. Her professionalism and leadership style positioned her as a valuable asset to Palm Bay during a pivotal time in its history.

Ms. Sherman would be an excellent asset to any city organization. Her leadership experience, ethical grounding, and operational expertise prepare her well for complex, high-level municipal roles. She brings knowledge, experience, character, humility, and the ability to lead through transition and growth.

Words or phrases used to describe Suzanne Sherman:

- Mediator,
- Caring,
- High integrity,
- Ethical,
- Strong leadership, and
- Empowering.

Strengths: Visionary leader, committed to ethical governance, skilled at team development, politically astute, operationally sound.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Juliet Misconi – Deputy City Manager, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-614-1097

Ms. Misconi has known Ms. Sherman since 2013, working under her leadership at the City of Palm Bay, when Ms. Sherman served as City Manager. In recent years, Ms. Sherman served as City Manager and direct supervisor to Ms. Misconi.

Ms. Sherman is an outstanding public servant. She is a compassionate leader who earns the trust and respect of her employees. She has a calm and composed demeanor and remains level-headed in high-pressure situations. She shows strong commitment to the community and handles difficult conversations with professionalism. Her leadership style is compassionate and employee-focused, and people enjoy working with her.

Ms. Sherman maintains a high level of professionalism and brings a people-centered mindset to management. She cares about employees' well-being and understands the importance of mental health, flexibility, and life outside of work. She creates a culture of respect, collaboration, and trust. She is respectful and supportive in her professional interactions.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Ms. Sherman makes good decisions in management and personnel matters, and her hiring approach is thoughtful and measured. She has also demonstrated sound judgment when building teams and placing individuals in roles that align with their skills. She communicates well across departments and respects appropriate boundaries. She held regular shared staff meetings to provide clarity and alignment across leadership teams.

Ms. Sherman led several high-impact projects at the City of Palm Bay. One issue recalled was the city's stormwater utility fee revisions. Under her direction, the outdated structure was overhauled and transitioned to a modernized model. She led the process from start to finish, including consultant selection and project delivery. She was instrumental in the management and successful distribution of ARPA funds. She completed ARPA projects on time and followed the necessary federal guidelines. In addition, following a prior audit by the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee (JLAC), she guided the city through the follow-up inspection. She made sure these corrective actions were effective and properly documented.

Ms. Sherman is active in the community and regularly represents the organization at public meetings and local events. She is customer service-oriented and highly responsive to internal and external stakeholders. Patience is another hallmark of her leadership. She remains focused and steady even when navigating complex bureaucratic or political environments.

Ms. Sherman's departure from Palm Bay was public, but there were no concerns or incidents that reflected poorly on her professionalism or integrity. She is held in the highest regard and would be welcomed back without hesitation.

Words or phrases used to describe Suzanne Sherman:

- Servant leader,
- Compassionate,
- Respected,
- Calm under pressure,
- Trustworthy, and
- Approachable.

Strengths: Compassionate leadership, strong conflict resolution skills, employee-focused, effective communicator, and trusted team builder.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Mariano Augello – Chief of Police, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-426-5451

Mr. Augello has known Ms. Sherman since 2010. Mr. Mariano served as the Assistant Police Chief until Ms. Sherman later appointed him as Chief of Police while she was the City Manager.

Reference Notes

Suzanne Sherman

During that time, they worked together closely daily, discussing operations, staffing, and citywide issues.

Ms. Sherman is a skilled and inclusive leader who avoids micromanagement. Her calm and steady personality helped promote professionalism and a composed atmosphere among department heads. She regularly brought clarity and direction to team meetings, explained her vision effectively, and ensured that everyone left with a clear understanding of expectations. She maintained an open-door policy and was consistently available to discuss concerns, even while managing a city with over 900 employees across 13 departments.

Ms. Sherman's strengths include communication, vision, consistency, and remaining calm under pressure. Her ability to navigate diverse personalities with respect and balance created a positive internal culture. She increased morale and encouraged inclusive leadership by running weekly department head meetings. Even in times of crisis or emergency, she remained composed and confident, setting the tone for others to follow.

Ms. Sherman made well-considered, strategic decisions when hiring personnel. Her processes were often extensive, including national searches, internal panels, and thoughtful inclusion of department feedback. While the final decision rested with her, she took input seriously and ensured that selections reflected shared goals and long-term fit. She included executive staff in decision-making and valued collaboration during personnel processes.

Ms. Sherman kept department heads well informed on city operations, council decisions, and organizational priorities. Her communication ensured staff remained confident, aligned, and prepared to respond effectively to evolving city needs.

Ms. Sherman was very engaged in the community, especially in Palm Bay's historically underserved neighborhoods. She walked through these areas with city staff, listened to residents' concerns, and implemented practical solutions. Her leadership helped address long-standing issues like drainage, code compliance, and public safety by coordinating cross-departmental efforts and ensuring accountability. Her commitment to the community was widely respected.

Ms. Sherman is a mentor and a motivating leader. Her presence attracts attention, and she handles stress with ease. She fosters a culture of trust, inclusion, and shared purpose. Mr. Augello accepted the Police Chief role instead of retiring because he trusted and valued Ms. Sherman's leadership and support.

Ms. Sherman has not been involved in any controversies that would raise concern or cause embarrassment. She departed the City of Palm Bay following her termination by the Council, but no issues of misconduct were identified, and her professional reputation remains strong.

Ms. Sherman is an excellent City Manager. She is a calm, strategic communicator who brings people together and builds trust throughout departments and with residents. Her leadership transforms culture at all levels of the organization and community.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Mentor,
- Spiritual,
- Motivating,
- Communicator,
- Inclusive, and
- Visionary.

Strengths: Calm, excellent communicator, visionary leadership, community-focused, inclusive decision-maker, builds morale and team cohesion.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Donny Felix – Former Councilman, City of Palm Bay, FL

Mr. Felix has known Ms. Sherman since 2016. Mr. Felix was a Palm Bay resident and later served on the City Council. He worked with Ms. Sherman when she served as Interim City Manager and later, City Manager. Mr. Felix was familiar with Ms. Sherman's work and leadership skills during her roles in city administration, including her time with the Utilities Department.

Ms. Sherman is an excellent manager. She is fair and consistent in her leadership, has strong communication skills, and brings balanced structure with people-focused leadership. Her management style reflects integrity and compassion, and she is well known for listening more than speaking – both to colleagues and the public. She was considered highly approachable and effective at maintaining an open-door policy for staff and council members alike.

Ms. Sherman is an innovative leader who welcomed new ideas and brought meaningful change to the organization. Under her leadership, the city introduced advancements, such as artificial intelligence (AI), through its website to streamline resident services. She implemented process improvements and ensured accessibility across all levels of the city government. Her approach empowered deputies to lead initiatives while maintaining accountability confidently. She was viewed as someone who kept communication lines open and ensured council members were informed of relevant operational updates.

Ms. Sherman consistently made sound decisions, including during hiring processes. She approached hiring with intentionality, incorporating structured processes and clear evaluation criteria. Although Council members were not directly involved in personnel selections, she communicated hiring decisions openly and was receptive to feedback. Her balanced style blended transparency, decisiveness, and respect for institutional procedures.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Ms. Sherman is deeply customer service oriented. She regularly responded to concerns from residents, often engaging with them directly to resolve issues. She often followed up on constituent matters and met face-to-face with residents. Her responsiveness reflected a high degree of professionalism, empathy, and commitment to the community's needs.

Ms. Sherman maintained a positive and driven outlook during her time as City Manager. She delegated strategically, trusted her team, and stayed within appropriate boundaries regarding council and administration roles. Both process discipline and relational strength defined her leadership.

Ms. Sherman departed the City of Palm Bay without any controversy or concerns related to professional conduct. Ms. Sherman's performance was described as excellent, and she made a positive impact during her tenure, given the scope of her responsibilities and the size of the community.

Ms. Sherman would be an asset to any organization seeking a fair, communicative, and visionary leader. Her responsiveness to residents and ability to build trust across make her uniquely equipped for senior leadership in local government.

Words or phrases used to describe Suzanne Sherman:

- Confident,
- Fair,
- Consistent,
- Compassionate,
- Effective communicator, and
- Driven.

Strengths: Balanced leadership style, innovative thinker, intensely community-focused, strong communicator, highly approachable.

Weaknesses: At times, her compassion was misinterpreted as a lack of assertiveness.

Laura Clawson – Human Resource Director, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-243-8583

Ms. Clawson has known Ms. Sherman since 2010, having worked with her at the City of Palm Bay in various capacities. At the time of their initial collaboration, Ms. Clawson served as a Senior HR Generalist while Ms. Sherman held the role of Risk Manager. Over the years, their working relationship evolved as Ms. Sherman advanced, serving as City Manager. Ms. Clawson noted Ms. Sherman's calm and consistent leadership over the years across multiple roles and challenges.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Ms. Sherman is a people-centered leader who inspires dedication through her inclusive and empowering leadership style. She offered an open-door leadership style that encouraged autonomy and built mutual respect among staff. Her approach fostered a workplace defined by collaboration and morale.

Ms. Sherman maintains high expectations for structure and efficiency. She led innovative efforts to improve city services, including enhancements to the website, making it more user-friendly. She consistently demonstrated strong decision-making and clear communication when hiring personnel. She filled positions with talented people and encouraged development opportunities for internal talent.

Ms. Sherman is exceptionally skilled at navigating complex operational challenges while maintaining steady leadership. When both the Public Works Director and the HR Director were absent, she quickly coordinated a creative solution. She restructured staffing coverage, worked directly with department leaders to secure continuity, and successfully recruited new directors while still managing her duties as City Manager. Her composure and leadership during a high-stress staffing gap helped maintain services and team confidence.

Ms. Sherman is highly respected by both peers and staff. She leads with kindness, intelligence, and adaptability, earning trust in all levels of the organization. Her thoughtful guidance played a key role in driving a positive cultural shift—one that was recognized and embraced by the workforce.

Words or phrases used to describe Suzanne Sherman:

- Smart,
- Well-spoken,
- Kind,
- Caring,
- Innovative, and
- Adaptable.

Strengths: Empathetic leadership, collaborative and empowering style, high emotional intelligence, innovative mindset, steady under pressure, and decisive.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Randy Foster – Former Councilman, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-431-9691

Mr. Foster has known Ms. Sherman since 2021, during his time on the City Council, when she served as City Manager. He described her as a dedicated and competent municipal executive who consistently delivered strong performance across all areas of responsibility.

Reference Notes

Suzanne Sherman

Ms. Sherman was an outstanding city manager and a professional, effective leader. She demonstrated a deep understanding of municipal operations, communicated clearly, and executed priorities on time. She earned trust by prioritizing employee development, maintaining high standards, and achieving goals without compromising morale.

Ms. Sherman was attentive, responsive, and dependable, particularly during emergencies and sensitive community issues. In urgent situations, she kept elected officials informed and provided clear direction, helping to instill calm and confidence throughout the organization.

Ms. Sherman demonstrated strategic thinking and sound financial management. One example was her work to improve the city's budgeting process—building a strong leadership team, identifying funding sources, and integrating grants to support infrastructure without increasing debt.

Ms. Sherman was often praised for navigating complex political dynamics while keeping the city's priorities front and center. Despite managing the competing interests of several elected officials, she kept communication open and decisions balanced, bringing professionalism and consistency to the role.

Ms. Sherman leads from the front, motivates others, and invests in future leaders. Her sense of purpose and positivity inspired those around her. She was known for aligning teams, driving performance, and approaching challenges with integrity and clarity.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Knowledgeable,
- Ambitious,
- Caring,
- Values team success,
- Professional, and
- Fosters personal connection.

Strengths: Skilled communicator, fiscally responsible, effective under pressure, politically aware, staff-oriented, results-driven.

Weaknesses: Occasionally, individuals disagreed with her approach, though her decisions were always guided by integrity and ethics.

**Reference Notes
Suzanne Sherman**

Phil Weinberg – Former Councilman, City of Palm Bay, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Weinberg has known Ms. Sherman for over a decade through their shared involvement in Palm Bay city government. He served on the City Council during part of her tenure as City Manager and interacted with her regularly on municipal matters.

Ms. Sherman is a capable, intelligent, and loyal executive with a firm grasp of city operations. She effectively addressed evolving challenges by applying her knowledge of internal systems, staff needs, and charter officer functions. Her leadership brought consistency and clarity during a period of transition.

Ms. Sherman made sound decisions and approached personnel matters with confidence and care. She stepped into her role ready to make necessary changes, guiding the organization through realignment efforts and process improvements. Her focus on results and internal structure supported both staff and public service delivery.

Ms. Sherman maintained professional, respectful communication and collaborated effectively across departments and with the council. She successfully navigated the challenges of a council-manager government, responding to multiple elected officials while upholding her administrative responsibilities. She remained visible in the community and responsive to resident concerns.

Ms. Sherman is loyal, analytical, and practical during difficult circumstances. Her approach was steady, and she consistently prioritized the city's interests. Mr. Weinberg expressed complete confidence in her abilities. She would be an asset to any city organization.

Ms. Sherman's tenure ended after a newly elected council removed her during their first meeting. Mr. Weinberg noted this to be politically motivated and unrelated to her performance. He believed she was not given a fair opportunity to work with the new members. He expressed complete confidence in her abilities and strongly recommended her for future municipal leadership roles, including City Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Patient,
- Loyal,
- Analytical,
- Intelligent,
- Capable, and
- Community-focused.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Strengths: Experienced municipal leader, innovative, effective under pressure, strong problem-solver, and a trusted presence in the community.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Brittany Retherford – City Manager, City of Satellite Beach, FL

Ms. Retherford has known Ms. Sherman since 2017 through their professional work in the City of Satellite Beach. Ms. Retherford observed Ms. Sherman's leadership as City Manager and collaborated with her regularly on public communication, strategic initiatives, and citywide priorities. She has continued to follow Ms. Sherman's career with respect and admiration.

Ms. Sherman is a competent leader who brings excellence to every aspect of her work. She is exceptionally patient, even in challenging circumstances, and consistently demonstrates professionalism during periods of political and organizational stress. Her calm, humble, and steady demeanor served Palm Bay well in high-pressure decision-making and times of public scrutiny.

Ms. Sherman is known for strengthening every organization she serves. She creates momentum and improves systems, teams, and policies. She builds trust through compassion, clear communication, and strong ethics, earning the respect of staff, community members, and local leaders.

Ms. Sherman's leadership is people-focused and well-rounded. She combines professionalism with empathy, offering support and mentorship when needed. She remains focused, organized, and composed under pressure, making her well-suited for executive-level roles in local government.

Ms. Sherman's departure from Palm Bay was publicly known and politically driven. There was no wrongdoing, and she maintained composure and professionalism throughout the process. Her handling of the situation further demonstrated her strong moral character.

Ms. Sherman is viewed as a strong candidate for any city leadership role. She brings strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, and organizational stability. Her presence uplifts those around her, and any municipality would benefit from her leadership.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Patient,
- Versatile,
- Kind,
- Motivating leader,
- Loyal, and
- Humble.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Strengths: Inspirational leader, emotionally intelligent, improves organizational performance, resilient under pressure, deeply ethical, and highly respected.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Frank Catino – Former Mayor, City of Satellite Beach, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Catino has known Ms. Sherman since 2012 through their work at the City of Satellite Beach. As Mayor, Mr. Catino observed Ms. Sherman's professional growth from her time as a member of the leadership team under City Manager Courtney Barker. He remained familiar with her work throughout her tenure and provided detailed insight into her performance.

Ms. Sherman is exceptional, professional, and composed, even when handling difficult or confrontational situations. She has a calm and respectful communication style, which contributed to a constructive work environment and helped her build trust among staff, elected officials, and the public. Her judgment and professionalism were consistently reliable.

Ms. Sherman was highly effective in staff management and promoting team cohesion. She fostered a collaborative environment where employees felt empowered and engaged. Her leadership style encouraged unity and morale without micromanagement, and she was respected for working with her team.

Ms. Sherman played a central role in the city's budgeting process. She worked closely with department heads to create balanced, practical budgets that reflected city priorities. Her approach focused on essential infrastructure and community needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility. She managed limited resources effectively and made informed financial decisions.

Ms. Sherman maintained consistent communication with her supervisors. She provided clear, balanced briefings and helped elected officials evaluate potential impacts of various decisions. She ensured leaders were informed without overstepping, which reflected strong emotional intelligence and mature leadership.

Ms. Sherman was active and engaged in the community. She regularly attended local events, sustainability initiatives, and public celebrations on behalf of the city. Her visibility and respectful presence in public reinforced trust between government and residents, and she remained approachable and professional in all settings.

Ms. Sherman's steady, patient approach was especially valued during challenging moments. She listened to all viewpoints, stayed composed under pressure, and responded with thoughtful solutions. Her calm presence and ability to maintain focus were noted as key strengths.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Mr. Catino would gladly hire Ms. Sherman again, citing her deep knowledge of the region and her ability to work effectively with countywide partners. He believed any organization would benefit from her experience, leadership, and professionalism.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Intelligent,
- Calm,
- Innovated,
- Truthful,
- Pleasant demeanor, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Professionalism, fiscal management, staff leadership, community engagement, respectful communication

Weaknesses: None identified

Joel Knopp – MSL CPAs & Advisors, City of Palm Bay, FL [REDACTED]

Mr. Knopp has worked with Ms. Sherman since 2022, in his role as an external auditor for the City of Palm Bay. During this time, Ms. Sherman served as City Manager. She worked with his firm during entrance and exit audit conferences, as well as on follow-ups to material weaknesses identified in the city's financial reports. Although their interactions were not daily, Mr. Knopp had consistent professional contact with Ms. Sherman. He observed her approach to fiscal accountability and leadership during a challenging time for the city.

Ms. Sherman is professional, knowledgeable, and responsive in her role. From the outset, she demonstrated a strong understanding of government auditing processes, the importance of internal controls, and the implications of public audit findings. Her communication during audit engagements was clear, respectful, and solution-oriented, which helped facilitate transparency and progress between city staff and external auditors.

Ms. Sherman's leadership was pragmatic and structurally focused, particularly in addressing financial deficiencies. She worked closely with her team to correct material weaknesses, especially in grant compliance and documentation, by implementing new systems and placing the right personnel in key roles. These efforts led to measurable improvements year after year, demonstrating her proactive approach and commitment to fiscal integrity.

Ms. Sherman showed steady progress in resolving audit findings and remained professional throughout the process. Her timely responses and practical action plans reflected her ability to guide an organization through complex financial challenges. Even with limited direct contact, her confidence, courtesy, and clear grasp of financial governance left a strong impression.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Respectful,
- Professional,
- Responsive,
- Confident,
- Personable, and
- Courteous.

Strengths: Financially competent, clear communicator, practical decision-maker, responsive to oversight, steady leadership under pressure.

Weaknesses: None identified.

James Beadle – City Attorney, City of Satellite Beach, FL

Mr. Beadle has known Ms. Sherman since 2018, when she began serving as Assistant City Manager for the City of Satellite Beach. In his capacity as legal counsel for the city, he worked with Ms. Sherman on various matters throughout her tenure, noting her professionalism, task orientation, and leadership presence. Although their interactions were limited to project-based needs rather than daily collaboration, he was able to observe her consistent ability to execute responsibilities and coordinate with diverse teams.

Ms. Sherman was a highly professional and results-driven public administrator. She was noted for her ability to manage responsibilities effectively, whether through delegation or direct involvement. She established clear benchmarks and timelines for deliverables and ensured her team members were aligned with those expectations. Her structured, organized approach allowed projects to progress efficiently, while maintaining open communication with internal and external partners.

Ms. Sherman's leadership style blended people-oriented collaboration with operational efficiency. She worked directly with others, when necessary, while still ensuring that organizational goals and deadlines remained a top priority. She was calm, patient, and deliberate in her communications, especially during legal or procedural discussions. Her ability to guide routine yet essential matters, such as franchise ordinances or procurement processes, was a reflection of her consistent engagement in complex city functions.

Ms. Sherman was talented in team-based problem-solving. One example of her leadership was coordinating the solid waste franchise agreements. She managed stakeholder meetings, the bidding process, and legal reviews. Her professionalism and knowledge of city procedures helped her handle everything smoothly and successfully.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Ms. Sherman left Satellite Beach to take on the role of City Manager in Palm Bay. Following her departure from Palm Bay, she was invited to return to Satellite Beach. The city's willingness to bring her back was seen as a testament to her reputation, capabilities, and strong working relationships across departments.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Professional,
- Task-oriented,
- Goal-driven,
- Collaborative,
- Patient, and
- Consistent.

Strengths: Highly organized, effective communicator, sets clear expectations, experienced in municipal operations, and manages projects efficiently.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Jodi Rozycki – Councilmember, City of Satellite Beach, FL

Ms. Rozycki has known Ms. Suzanne Sherman since 2023 through their professional work with the City of Satellite Beach. Ms. Rozycki served as a City Councilmember when Ms. Sherman held the Assistant City Manager position. During this time, she observed Ms. Sherman's leadership, work ethic, and team management capabilities in a fast-paced, dynamic municipal setting.

Ms. Sherman is an excellent public servant who consistently performs her duties with professionalism, patience, and reliability. She managed her responsibilities with confidence and efficiency, requiring no oversight from council members, which reflects her accountability and work ethic. Tasks were handled thoroughly and on time, making her an asset to the organization.

Ms. Sherman demonstrated effective leadership by managing a diverse team and resolving issues as they arose. She engaged others for input, encouraged collaboration, and upheld high standards. While Satellite Beach did not require major innovation, her balanced approach—combining clear communication with operational structure—fostered a respectful and productive environment.

Ms. Sherman kept both staff and supervisors appropriately informed and showed sound judgment in when and how to communicate updates. She remained active in the community, attending events and consistently representing the city with professionalism. Her calm and respectful presence was noted even in complex or tense meetings.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Ms. Sherman was viewed as a trustworthy and capable leader. Her departure was considered a loss for the city, and Ms. Rozycki expressed full confidence in her ability to succeed as a City Manager or in any executive role. Ms. Rozycki would hire Ms. Sherman again without hesitation.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Calm,
- Respectable,
- Knowledgeable,
- Trustworthy,
- Strong leader, and
- Poised.

Strengths: Reliable, efficient, composed under pressure, respected by colleagues, team-focused, excellent communicator.

Weaknesses: Sometimes demonstrates a low-profile leadership style in supporting roles, which may be perceived as less visible. However, her approach results in strong behind-the-scenes execution and trust from the council.

Holly Tanner – President, LH Tanner Construction, Palm Bay, FL

Ms. Tanner has known Ms. Sherman since 2022. They collaborated while Ms. Sherman was City Manager and Ms. Tanner was Board Chairperson for the Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Tanner also worked with Ms. Sherman in her role as a private contractor and owner of a construction company operating in Palm Bay.

Ms. Sherman was engaging, professional, and a strong listener. She was solution-oriented, responsive, and had strong follow-through on issues brought to her attention. She was described by many as the Chamber's "go-to" contact at the City of Palm Bay, particularly for resolving problems in the permitting process.

Ms. Sherman was a strong communicator and highly active in the community. She frequently attended local business openings and public events with a welcoming presence. She built trust with business owners and connected them with the right city staff to resolve concerns.

Ms. Sherman's leadership was action-based, and she followed through on commitments. One challenging situation involved a veterinary hospital project. Ms. Sherman intervened and helped resolve delays caused by the engineering and permitting departments, ultimately getting the project approved. The successful opening of the veterinary hospital addressed a critical community need and left a lasting positive impact.

Reference Notes Suzanne Sherman

Ms. Tanner would hire Ms. Sherman. She has significant talent and can take on major responsibilities. She was disappointed by Ms. Sherman's departure and the decision to let her go was not supported by many in the community.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Sherman:

- Approachable,
- Action-driven,
- Present in the community,
- Good communicator,
- Results-oriented, and
- Trusted leader.

Strengths: Approachability, visibility, problem-solving, communication, reliability, and leadership.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Camille Altfillisch
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Suzanne Sherman** is listed below.]

Quality Cities
August 5, 2025

FLC Recognizes 2025 Home Rule Heroes

The Florida League of Cities recognized more than 180 municipal officials with Home Rule Hero Awards for their work during the 2025 legislative session.

Home Rule Hero Award recipients are local government officials, both elected and nonelected, who consistently responded to the League’s request to reach out to members of the legislature and help give a local perspective on an issue. They worked tirelessly throughout the legislative session to promote local voices making local choices, protect the Home Rule powers of Florida’s municipalities and advance the League’s legislative agenda.

“The dedication and effort of these local officials who tirelessly advocated for local decision-making was a difference-maker this legislative session,” said FLC Chief of Legislative Affairs Casey Cook. “On behalf of the League and its legislative team, we’re proud to recognize each of them and thank them for their service.” Each Home Rule Hero will be presented with their award at a future date.

Suzanne E. Sherman, Asst. City Manager, City of Satellite Beach

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
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FCCMA.org (FL)
March 2025

March 2025 President's Message

Author: Mark

Congratulations to the four cities selected as internship host recipients: Crystal River, Flagler Beach, Lauderdale Lakes, and Palm Beach Gardens.

2025 FCCMA Annual Conference – Registration is now open for the FCCMA Annual Conference in Orlando! The conference will be held May 28-31 at the Rosen Shingle Creek. Register by May 9, 2025, for the early bird registration rate. We have amazing speakers lined up for the conference. This year's keynote speakers are Mark Zeigler, Kyle Schelle, and Jia Jiang. Visit our conference webpage and click on the speakers' photos to learn more about them.

Elections – On February 28th, the FCCMA Nominating Committee convened to interview candidates for the 2025-2026 Board of Directors. The Committee is recommending Satellite Beach Assistant City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** as President-Elect. **Suzanne** currently sits on the Board as Vice President. Hardee County Manager Terry Atchley has been recommended as Vice President, and Greenacres City Manager Andrea McCue for the open At-Large Director seat. The Slate of Officers for the program year 2025-2026 will be presented to the general membership at the Annual Business Meeting on Friday, May 30, during the conference.

April Webinar – Don't miss our upcoming FREE Coaching Webinar, "Emergency Management for Senior Officials." As leaders of their communities, FCCMA members are uniquely positioned to unite the various community stakeholders to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from various emergencies.

2025-2026 FCCMA Committees – Are you looking to get involved and contribute to the Association? Sign-ups for the FCCMA committees will open next month. Participating in a committee is a fantastic way to connect with colleagues, share expertise, and contribute to shaping the future of FCCMA.

You matter!
Mark

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The Palm Bay
November 26, 2024

Palm Bay City Council Holds Workshop on City Manager Termination: Transparency and Legal Concerns

How Sunshine Law Compliance and First Amendment Rights Shaped Palm Bay's City Council Workshop

Thomas Gaume

On November 25, 2024, at 6:00 PM, the Palm Bay City Council convened in the Council Chambers to discuss city management following the recent dismissal of City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**. The meeting was broadcast live on the city's website and televised on the Space Coast Government TV channel. Council members, city leaders, and residents explored changes needed at the top of Palm Bay's administration.

1. Setting the Stage: The Backdrop of Leadership Change

The sudden, unannounced termination of City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** has ignited debates about transparency and governance in Palm Bay. The November 25 workshop was a key moment for the council to clarify its direction, discuss the qualities needed in a new city manager, and address community concerns.

Mayor Rob Medina opened the meeting, emphasizing the council's responsibility during this transitional phase. However, questions were raised about whether **Sherman's** termination adhered to Florida's Sunshine Laws, particularly regarding adequate notice and public input.

2. Public Comments: Transparency and Leadership Expectations

The council opened the floor to public comments, allowing approximately 15 residents to voice their opinions and recommendations for the new city manager. Key topics included transparency, fiscal responsibility, and the need for experienced leadership.

Chilling Effect on Free Speech

During the session, Mayor Medina intervened multiple times to limit public comments, citing off-topic remarks such as discussions on unrelated city infrastructure projects and personal grievances not on the agenda. Some residents felt their comments were directly related to the council's broader discussions on leadership and transparency, yet these points were dismissed. This contributed to the perception that the interventions were overly restrictive, raising concerns about a potential chilling effect on free speech.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of speech, especially in forums such as city council meetings. Courts have ruled that public meetings are considered limited public forums, where reasonable, viewpoint-neutral restrictions may apply. However, any content-based restrictions must meet strict scrutiny, as highlighted in *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia* (1995) and *City of Madison Joint School District No. 8 v. Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission* (1976). Mayor Medina's interventions could

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potentially be viewed as viewpoint discrimination, thereby infringing on residents' First Amendment rights.

Sunshine Law Compliance Concerns

The city attorney contended that the termination of **Sherman** was carried out in compliance with legal requirements, but did not cite any specific statutes to support this claim. However, the manner in which the termination was handled has been questioned for potential violations of Florida's Sunshine Law, particularly regarding notice and public input.

Florida's Sunshine Law (§286.011) mandates that public meetings must be open and provide reasonable notice, generally at least 24 hours in advance. For example, the City of Miami recently provided clear notice two weeks in advance for a similar leadership change, which allowed ample time for public participation and input. In contrast, other municipalities have faced legal challenges when failing to give adequate notice, leading to decisions being invalidated.

In the case of **Suzanne Sherman's** termination, this significant action was not listed on the agenda at all. Council reports are meant to provide updates rather than create action items, and using this section to terminate the city manager violated the requirement for ample notice under the Sunshine Laws, which is crucial for ensuring transparency and public participation. The Florida Supreme Court, in *Town of Palm Beach v. Gradison* (1974), underscored that failure to provide proper notice or opportunities for public input can invalidate decisions. Additionally, Florida Statute §286.0114 strengthens public participation by requiring public input on propositions before a decision is made. By not listing **Sherman's** termination as a specific agenda item, the council may have compromised the transparency required by law.

Community members, such as former commissioner Christine Judeus, expressed concerns that proper procedures had not been followed. Many residents stressed the importance of a transparent and inclusive hiring process for the next city manager, avoiding internal biases and ensuring a fresh perspective for the city.

3. Community Expectations for Future Leadership

The workshop also highlighted residents' priorities for the next city manager, focusing on key qualities needed to lead Palm Bay:

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Many residents emphasized the need for transparency in the council's decision-making process and demanded that the rationale behind leadership changes be made clearer.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Residents called for a fiscally responsible city manager who would prioritize essential services and manage city funds prudently.
- **Balanced Development:** There were concerns about unchecked development projects affecting neighborhoods and the environment. Residents urged that new housing projects align with community needs and preserve the city's cultural character.

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4. Council's Perspective on Moving Forward

Mayor Medina defended his actions not to terminate, while others including Councilmen Langevin and Hammer, defended their decision to terminate **Sherman**, stressing the need for a fresh perspective to achieve Palm Bay's ambitious growth and infrastructure goals. Councilman Langevin reiterated that the city's challenges—such as addressing infrastructure deficiencies and managing rapid growth—require decisive leadership, while Deputy Mayor Jaffe highlighted the need for performance evaluations and structured accountability.

5. What Palm Bay Needs in a New City Manager

Discussions during the workshop underscored the qualifications deemed necessary for the next city manager:

- **Municipal Management Experience:** The city requires a leader experienced in managing growth and strategic planning.
- **Strong Ethical Background:** Given past controversies involving former city officials, a strong ethical compass is crucial to restore trust.
- **Financial Acumen and Community Engagement:** Effective financial management and engagement with the community are high priorities, especially considering the financial implications of **Sherman's** dismissal.

6. Financial Implications of Termination

The financial impact of **Suzanne Sherman's** dismissal was a significant concern discussed during the meeting. **Sherman's** severance package and accrued leave payouts totaled over \$161,000. These expenses, coupled with the cost of hiring a replacement, could place further strain on the city's budget. The council and community members emphasized the importance of a transparent and fiscally responsible process in selecting the next city manager.

7. Community Involvement in the Hiring Process

To ensure a transparent and inclusive hiring process for the next city manager, the council announced plans to hold public forums and conduct surveys to gather community input. At the November 21, 2024 meeting, the council appointed IT Director Brian Robinson as the interim city manager. However, they are currently considering replacing Robinson with another interim city manager to allow him to return to his duties as IT Director, ensuring continuity in IT operations and appointing someone with more relevant experience in city management. The next council meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2024, during which the council will continue discussions on the hiring process for a permanent city manager. Many community members expressed support for avoiding costly external recruitment firms in favor of a locally focused, community-driven selection process.

8. Conclusion: Balancing Transparency and Leadership

The workshop concluded with the council reiterating its commitment to transparency, community involvement, and open government. Mayor Medina closed the meeting by emphasizing the need for unity. "We all want the best for Palm Bay," he said, encouraging residents to remain engaged as the city navigates this transitional period.

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While the mayor has the authority to maintain order during council meetings, it is vital that any restrictions on public participation be reasonable and not infringe upon First Amendment rights. Furthermore, adherence to Sunshine Law principles is crucial in maintaining public trust, particularly in decisions as significant as terminating a city manager. The upcoming selection of a new city manager will be a defining moment for Palm Bay. With transparency, accountability, and public engagement as guiding principles, the next steps will be instrumental in shaping the future of the community.

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Space Coast Daily
November 23, 2024

Palm Bay City Council Votes 3-2 to Fire City Manager Suzanne Sherman After Chandler Langevin Introduces Resolution
Palm Bay Mayor Rob Medina disagreed with the resolution to fire Sherman

New Palm Bay City Council member Chandler Langevin led the charge in a 3-2 vote last Thursday night after issuing a resolution to fire City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** during the council's first meeting since the Nov. 5 election.

Newly elected councilmen Mike Hammer and sitting councilman Kenny Johnson voted with Langevin to oust **Sherman**. "Last night, I led the charge to relieve the City Manager of Palm Bay," said Langevin. "This new council was given a mandate by the voters to enact sweeping changes to reverse the course of our city's decline. The City historically has lacked any vision or plans to accommodate our massive growth, has hemorrhaged taxpayer dollars on waste and abuse, and has stagnated our local economy. Palm Bay is in a uniquely poor state that will take strong leadership to climb out of. "My vision calls for a proven Conservative leader with heavy experience in both private executive leadership and city management. I need a manager that is capable of drastically reducing our budget while increasing services. This can be done through implementing efficiency and by working with developers and community partners to contribute to the city. We don't have an easy task ahead of us but it's a task worth accomplishing for all the residents of Palm Bay."

Langevin's resolution stated: "The City Council hereby removes **Suzanne Sherman** as city manager without cause by terminating her employment with the city of Palm Bay. This resolution shall be effective as of Nov. 21, 2024." Palm Bay Mayor Rob Medina disagreed with the resolution, saying it set a bad perception for the City of Palm Bay and suggested setting performance goals for **Sherman** would be a better alternative to immediate termination.

Sherman was named interim city manager in July 2020 and then city manager in January 2021. She worked in the city of Palm Bay's human resources and utilities departments from 2006 to 2015.

City of Palm Bay Information Technologies Director Brian Robinson was appointed interim city manager. The city council will discuss the situation during a special workshop at 6 p.m. on Monday.

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Florida Today (FL)
December 17, 2024

Ousted Palm Bay City Manager Sherman to receive more than \$160,000 in severance

Author: Dave Berman

Former Palm Bay City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** will be receiving more than \$160,000 in severance pay in the wake of her ouster by the City Council. The Council on Nov. 21 voted 3-2 to remove **Sherman**, who had been city manager since January 2021 and had a salary of \$240,772 a year. The vote was taken during the first regular meeting for three new City Council members — two of whom voted in favor of removing **Sherman** and one who voted against it. Some Council members cited **Sherman's** job performance as city manager as the reason for her firing. But **Sherman** had never been given a performance evaluation during her time as city manager, despite a clause in her employment contract that said the Council could conduct an annual review of her performance. The Council subsequently named Scott Morgan interim city manager while they search for **Sherman's** successor. Morgan has worked in governments for more than 40 years, including serving as West Melbourne city manager from 2009 through 2022, when he retired. Morgan will receive the equivalent of \$240,000 a year in pay while he is Palm Bay city manager, likely for four to six months.

The Palm Bay City Council did not publicly discuss **Sherman's** potential severance during the meeting at which they removed her, during a workshop at which Morgan was suggested to be interim city manager, or at a special meeting at which the council approved Morgan's contract. In response to a public records request, Morgan provided this breakdown to FLORIDA TODAY of **Sherman's** severance pay:

- Twenty weeks of salary, under terms of **Sherman's** employment contract, for being let go without cause: \$92,604.60.
- Annual leave (unused vacation) payout of 250 hours at \$115.7559 per hour: \$28,938.98.
- Sick leave payout of 256 hours at \$115.7559 per hour: \$29,633.51.
- Administrative leave payout given to management employees of 82 hours at \$115.7559 per hour: \$9,491.98.
- Total severance: \$160,669.07.

Palm Bay Seat 2 Councilman Mike Hammer — who was one of the new Council members who voted to fire **Sherman** — said he has no regrets about his move, which came after Seat 3 Councilman Chandler Langevin Introduced a resolution to do so. Hammer said the action was needed to get the city back on track and to get an experienced person in the position. He said **Sherman** is "an amazing person," but he had issues with her performance as city manager, and wanted to make a change. "It's a decision that had to be made," and one in which the best time to do is immediately after the new Council took office, Hammer said. Hammer and Langevin in November joined the Council following their elections, along with Seat 5 Councilman and Deputy Mayor Mike Jaffe, who voted against the firing.

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No performance reviews as city manager

Sherman's 256-page personnel file shows that she never received a performance review from the City Council members while she was city manager, although her employment agreement indicated that the City Council had a right to conduct an annual review and evaluation of her. **Sherman** was named city manager in January 2021, when she received an initial salary of \$185,000. During the two years before **Sherman** became city manager, she had been Palm Bay's deputy city manager and acting city manager. **Sherman** also worked for the city in various capacities from January 2006 to November 2015, when she left to become assistant city manager in Satellite Beach before returning to Palm Bay.

Sherman's previous performance reviews in her Palm Bay personnel file — related to previous jobs during **Sherman's** tenure as a city employee — showed that she always received the highest scores. There also were several letters of commendation in **Sherman's** file and no letters of criticism. During a half-hour City Council debate on the issue on Nov. 21 prior to **Sherman's** firing, Palm Bay Mayor Rob Medina urged the council to instead set goals and performance measures for **Sherman**, and give her a chance to meet them, before taking any action on her future employment with the city.

Sherman told the Council members that she would welcome such targets for improvement, and would be willing to work with the returning and new Council members to meet their expectations. But the majority of the Council did not take Medina's suggestion, and opted to fire **Sherman** on the spot. Hammer said, at a future City Council meeting, he plans to address the need to have regular performance reviews of the city manager and other Palm Bay officials who are under the supervision of the City Council.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Bay (FL)
November 22, 2024

The financial impact of firing Palm Bay City Manager Suzanne Sherman

Author: Thomas Gaume

The recent decision by the Palm Bay City Council to terminate the employment of City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** has significant financial implications for the city and its residents. **Sherman**, who served as City Manager since 2020, held a well-compensated position, and her unexpected removal will lead to substantial costs. This article examines the terms of her employment contract, her salary history, and the financial repercussions of this decision.

Sherman's Compensation History

Sherman's employment contract, approved at the January 21, 2021, City Council meeting, specified the conditions under which she could be terminated and the compensation she would receive upon termination. According to the terms, **Sherman** was entitled to severance pay equivalent to 20 weeks of her salary in the event of an involuntary termination without cause, as per state law. Such clauses are common in employment contracts for high-level roles, as they help protect the stability of the position and ensure that leaders can make decisions without fear of sudden job loss. Given her 2023 salary of \$251,452, the severance payment alone could cost the city approximately \$96,712.

Additionally, the city may need to cover the cost of accrued leave, such as vacation or sick time, which could add further to the financial burden. The specifics of these payouts depend on the city's policies for accumulated benefits, which typically allow for a payout of up to 480 hours of accrued vacation leave and 50% of accrued sick leave. **Sherman's** contract terms included a severance payment of 20 weeks' salary upon termination without cause, full payout of all accrued vacation time, and 50% payout of accrued sick leave.

Terms of the Employment Contract

The financial implications of terminating **Sherman** extend beyond her severance package. These include recruitment costs, potential increased salaries for her replacement, and other administrative expenses. The city will need to allocate funds to conduct a search for her replacement, which typically involves hiring external recruiters or consultants. This could lead to additional costs that are passed on to residents through budget reallocations or adjustments in city spending.

Moreover, the city may need to provide incentives to attract a qualified candidate, which could involve a salary package equal to or greater than **Sherman's**. Given that her salary had steadily increased over the years, the new City Manager's compensation could start at an even higher rate due to factors such as inflation, competition for qualified candidates, and potentially increased responsibilities. This would add further financial pressure on city budgets.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Impact on Future City Budgeting

Residents should also consider how these expenditures might impact future city projects and services. The severance payments, recruitment costs, and potential higher salary for the incoming City Manager may lead to budget cuts in other areas, including infrastructure, community services, or emergency services funding. Mayor Medina expressed concern at the November 21 council meeting, stating, "We must balance the need for leadership changes with our responsibility to our residents and our budget." The city's ability to fund essential projects, including road repairs and public safety initiatives, could be constrained as a result of the unplanned expense of **Sherman's** firing.

Conclusion: What Does This Mean for Palm Bay Residents?

The firing of City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** will undoubtedly have a financial impact on Palm Bay. With her severance package, recruitment costs, and the potential for higher future salaries, the decision carries significant financial weight. It remains crucial for residents to stay informed about how these costs will be managed and how they might affect city services moving forward.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The City of Palm Bay Florida (FL)
March 12, 2024

City of Palm Bay to hold groundbreaking ceremony for new building E

Author: City of Palm Bay Florida

The City of Palm Bay is proud to announce the groundbreaking ceremony for its highly anticipated new Building E, a project that marks a significant milestone in the City's development. The event will take place on Monday, March 18, 2024, at 9:00 AM in the grassy area next to Palm Bay City Hall located at 120 Malabar Road SE Palm Bay, FL 32907. The event is open to the public and members of the media. With a total square footage of 39,142, this state-of-the-art facility will serve as a customer service center, housing Utilities Customer Service and the Building Department. Additionally, it will house the IT Department and will be hardened to function as the City's Emergency Operations Center, equipped with a generator capable of powering the entire building for 96 hours in the event of an emergency.

The construction contract for this monumental project was awarded to W&J Construction, out of Rockledge, Florida, by Palm Bay City Council on January 4, 2024, for a total of \$16,519,379. Funding for this project is a combination of ARPA grant funds and Building Department funds, showcasing the City's commitment to investing in its infrastructure for the betterment of its residents. Designed by Silling Architects from Orlando, Florida, the new city building features tilt wall construction, expanded parking, and new landscaping to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the surrounding area. Moreover, sustainability initiatives such as LED lighting with occupancy sensors, a roof prepped for future solar installations, and sub-surface water retention under new parking lots highlight the City's dedication to environmental responsibility.

"This groundbreaking event represents a significant step forward for Palm Bay as we continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of our community," said City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**. "This new city building will not only provide improved services to our residents but also serve as a hub for emergency operations during times of crisis."

In addition to serving current operational needs, the new building includes a third-floor shell for future expanded City operations, providing flexibility for future growth and development. Security features such as enhanced access control, cameras, and new city signage have also been incorporated to ensure the safety and security of staff and visitors. The project is anticipated to be complete in the Summer of 2025.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Suzanne Sherman** is listed below.]

Quality Cities
2023-2024

Finance, Taxation and personnel Committee

The Finance, Taxation and Personnel Committee addresses municipal roles in several areas. Those areas include general finance and tax issues, Home Rule revenues, infrastructure funding, insurance, local option revenues, pension issues, personnel and collective bargaining issues, revenue-sharing, tax and budget reform, telecommunications and workers' compensation.

Suzanne E. Sherman, City Manager, City of Palm Bay

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The City of Palm Bay Florida (FL)
November 2, 2023

Palm Bay City Manager Suzanne Sherman credentialed by International Local Government Management Orgnaization

Author: City of Palm Bay Florida

Palm Bay City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** recently received the Credentialed Manager designation from ICMA, the International City/County Management Association. Ms. **Sherman** is one of over 1,300 local government management professionals currently credentialed through the ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program.

ICMA's mission is to advance professional local government through leadership, management, innovation, and ethics and by increasing the proficiency of appointed chief administrative officers, assistant administrators, and other employees who serve local governments and regional entities around the world. The organization's 13,000 members in 27 countries also include educators, students, and other local government employees. To receive the prestigious ICMA credential, a member must have significant experience as a senior management executive in local government; have earned a degree, preferably in public administration or a related field; and demonstrated a commitment to high standards of integrity and to lifelong learning and professional development.

"I am honored to have earned the ICMA Credentialed Manager designation, as it is a reflection of the high level of commitment and dedication that local government managers can make to this profession," **Sherman** said. "It is indeed a blessing to serve as Palm Bay's City Manager, and I appreciate the opportunity to work with our City Council, employees, and the entire Palm Bay community to build a bright future for our City."

Ms. **Sherman** boasts a long history with the City of Palm Bay, having been initially hired in January 2006 as a Budget Management Analyst. Ms. **Sherman** served as Assistant to the City Manager and Acting Deputy City Manager for Palm Bay until 2015, when she was hired as the Assistant City Manager for the City of Satellite Beach. With nearly 20 years of service in local government, Ms. **Sherman** has served as Palm Bay City Manager since July 2021.

In addition to her extensive experience working in Brevard County, Ms. **Sherman** is active in several professional organizations, including the Florida City and County Management Association, the Space Coast Public Management Association, and the Florida League of Cities. She also attained her Certified Public Manager designation in 2012.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today (FL)
July 11, 2023

Palm Bay fire rescue Chief Leslie Hoog resigns, criticizes City Manager Suzanne Sherman
Author: Rick Neale

Facing possible disciplinary action, Palm Bay Fire Rescue Chief Leslie Hoog — the first female chief to lead a Brevard County agency — quit last month, turning her resignation letter into a salvo against City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** whom she said lacks leadership skills. Hoog's resignation after five years on the job, however, came as she was facing disciplinary action — up to and including termination. **Sherman** had questioned Hoog's management of high profile projects. These included the sizing of a new fire station on Palm Bay Road, brush truck funding and fire dispatch issues, personnel records show

And in a memo, **Sherman** said fire rescue personnel "are fearful to speak up and concerned about being targeted by department leadership if they do." "This is a personnel matter that has concluded with the Chief's resignation," **Sherman** said in an email. "On behalf of the City, I wish Chief Hoog well in the future. At this time, Assistant Fire Chief Richard Stover is serving in the position in an acting capacity," the email said. "The Fire Department team is moving forward with a continued focus on providing excellent service to our great community and prioritizing a positive, collaborative, and progressive workplace for our team," the email said.

Hoog replaced former fire chief Russell "Rusty" Nail in 2018 after he was named Escambia County's fire chief. Her last day of work was June 16. She earned an annual salary of \$133,317. Hoog's resignation letter referenced her attorney, Maurice Arcadier. FLORIDA TODAY called Arcadier's office Monday seeking comment on Hoog's resignation. A person who answered the phone said he was unable to discuss the matter. Asked Monday for information on plans to find a new fire chief, City Hall spokesperson Christina Born said officials had no comment to share at this time.

Hoog began her career as a firefighter-EMT in 1986-88 with the Cocoa Beach Fire Department. Then she worked with Brevard County Fire Rescue from 1988 to 2014, rising the ranks to serve as assistant chief of administrative services, assistant chief of strategic programs, district chief and other roles, her resume shows. Hoog submitted her resignation letter on June 2. She has submitted written rebuttals defending her record, and she wrote that **Sherman's** interpretation of facts is "dystopic and ineffective." "I have lost all trust in you. I believe your character and 'leadership skills' are grossly lacking, and, if you are left to do your whims, the entire City will suffer. Therefore, I have no other choice but to voluntarily resign," Hoog said in her resignation letter.

In a May 26 human resources letter, **Sherman** wrote that she had observed in Hoog "a lack of knowledge and understanding and failure to properly plan and execute projects." **Sherman** also cited two recent formal complaints filed by fire rescue personnel. In April, a lieutenant who is an International Association of Fire Fighters officer voiced concerns about his future career opportunities, citing "retaliatory behaviors directed towards me." In June, an investigation

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

recommended a written reprimand and management training for an assistant fire chief who used a racially offensive word while telling a personal story about his own discriminatory workplace experiences.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Click Orlando
July 6, 2023

‘Lost all trust in you:’ Palm Bay fire chief resigns over disputes with city manager
Leslie Hoog was the first woman to lead any Brevard County fire department
James Sparvero

She made history as the first woman to lead Palm Bay Fire Rescue, but now Leslie Hoog says she doesn't want the job anymore. In her letter of resignation last month, Hoog accused city manager **Suzanne Sherman** of creating a hostile work environment. "I have lost all trust in you," Hoog wrote. "I believe your character and 'leadership skills' are grossly lacking, and, if you are left to do your whims, the entire City will suffer. Therefore, I have no other choice but to voluntarily resign."

Hoog said **Sherman** interfered with the fire department by micro-managing operations, which Hoog said obstructed her from doing her job as chief and created safety concerns for employees and the public. Hoog's writing also showed how their disagreements — including one about how big a new fire station should be — led to **Sherman** considering disciplinary action against the chief. The city manager's office provided the resignation letter Thursday.

News 6 also asked whether the city manager would like to respond to what the chief wrote and has yet to receive a response.

Back in May, **Sherman** wrote to Hoog in a notice before an HR meeting between the two, "I am increasingly concerned about your ability to lead critical and high-priority projects for the Fire Department." **Sherman** said some firefighters spoke up about how Hoog treated them. Hoog responded that mistreatment and intimidation complaints were unfounded or not true. Thursday, News 6 talked to Hoog on the phone, but she said she's not comfortable being interviewed without speaking to her attorney first. An acting fire chief is now working in her place.

News 6 on Friday received the following statement from the city manager:

This is a personnel matter that has concluded with the Chief's resignation. On behalf of the City, I wish Chief Hoog well in the future. At this time, Assistant Fire Chief Richard Stover is serving in the position in an acting capacity. The Fire Department team is moving forward with a continued focus on providing excellent service to our great community and prioritizing a positive, collaborative, and progressive workplace for our team.

Suzanne Sherman

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The City of Palm Bay Florida (FL)
October 31, 2022

City of Palm Bay launches strategic plan survey

Author: City of Palm Bay Florida

The City of Palm Bay has kicked off a citywide strategic planning process, a visioning effort aimed to identify the mission, vision, values, and priorities of the organization. The City started the process with individual meetings between the Mayor and each member of City Council with the City's consultant, Baker Tilly Management Partners (formerly Management Partners) followed by meetings with each department director. The City, in partnership with Baker Tilly, has released an online community surveys seeking input from members of the community. The survey is intended to solicit input on the mission, vision, and values of the organization, which will ultimately guide the City's operational and fiscal priorities. The surveys are now available on the City's website at www.pbfl.org/strategicplan, and printed flyers with QR codes directing the public to the survey can be found at City facilities, community centers, and public libraries. The survey closes on November 14, 2022.

The citywide strategic plan is another step in a series of strategic planning and visioning studies conducted by the City. In 2019, the City kicked off a 2040 Visioning Study and Comprehensive Plan Update, which is nearing completion in March 2023 and is intended to guide the future development of Palm Bay. In 2021, the City also commissioned an Economic Development Strategic Plan, intended to conduct a scan of Palm Bay's existing industries and development infrastructure and identify opportunities for strategic and favorable development, providing a diversified mix of industry, employment opportunities, and an enhanced quality of life for residents. The Economic Development Strategic Plan is expected to be completed in Fall 2022. The Palm Bay Strategic Plan will serve to identify the mission of the City as an organization, differing from the Comprehensive Plan and the Economic Development Strategic Plan in that it establishes the purpose of the organization, and provides a vision statement that employees and the community can support.

"I want to emphasize how important these planning exercises are for the future of our City," said City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**. "Taking the time to bring together ideas and perspectives from our elected officials, employees, and community members is a key component in setting expectations and charting the right path toward success. The Economic Development Strategic Plan will provide a roadmap to target specific commercial and industrial development, and the public input we have received through our Comprehensive Plan update process is essential to establishing how the City will develop in future years. Now we need more input, both from our community and our employees, as we release surveys to engage and gather ideas to create a focused mission, vision, and values approach for the City of Palm Bay. We are looking forward to hearing from everyone as we want to create something that is meaningful and aspirational, something that we can get excited about and use to direct and inform our planning and actions." The Palm Bay Strategic Plan is expected to be completed in March 2023, just in time for budget preparations for Fiscal Year 2024.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today (FL)
July 28, 2022

‘Doing more with less is not an option anymore’: Palm Bay police chief on staffing shortages
Author: Rick Neale

Palm Bay residents who call 911 seeking help during emergencies — think active shooters, sexual assaults, even drowning swimmers — are waiting an average of 2 minutes longer for police officers to respond than they did in 2020. The thinly spread Palm Bay Police Department ranks 241st out of Florida’s 246 municipal police departments in number of sworn officers (1.31) per 1,000 residents, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement reports. That's 161 officers serving a city of 122,765 people, according to 2021 statistics. And out of 40 dispatch positions in the growing city's police communications center, only 21 positions are filled. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, dispatchers have been forced to work mandatory 16-hour double-shifts, amplifying stress, burnout and job turnover.

Palm Bay's population grew 18% during the last decade. But City Hall investment in infrastructure and personnel, including police, hasn't kept up. “We’re at a point to where doing more with less is not an option anymore. And I know past administrations, with the police department, took pride in that — I don’t,” Police Chief Mario Augello said during the July 7 Palm Bay City Council meeting. “Because it’s putting our men and women, and our community, at risk,” Augello said. As the City Council works through its annual budget-planning process, Augello publicly warned that since the COVID-19 pandemic began, his department has failed to meet response-time performance measures for critical “in-progress” emergency calls.

In 2020, the police department's average response times clocked in at 5 minutes, 34 seconds, City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** said during a July 14 budget workshop. But average response times this year have climbed to 7 minutes, 29 seconds. That's an increase of 34%, **Sherman** said. “That is truly a critical need. You can save several lives in two minutes,” Mayor Rob Medina said during the budget workshop. “When every second counts, I cannot — I cannot — be responsible to the citizens of this city and not think of their lives when the rubber hits the road,” Medina said.

Response times on the rise

Police emergency response times remain on the rise in Palm Bay's four geographic quadrants. In some instances, Augello said officers are forced to drive long distances across Brevard's biggest city, spanning more than 88 square miles:

- Northeast: 5 minutes, 55 seconds in 2020 to 8 minutes, 34 seconds this year.
- Northwest: 4 minutes, 42 seconds in 2020 to 6 minutes, 47 seconds this year.
- Southeast: 5 minutes, 52 seconds in 2020 to 7 minutes, 47 seconds this year.
- Southwest: 5 minutes, 48 seconds in 2020 to 6 minutes, 48 seconds this year.

Palm Bay's 2022-23 municipal budget remains in the discussion stage among City Council and the Citizens' Budget Advisory Board, and no final decisions have been made. But council members

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

have signaled support for a proposed \$2.2 million police-budget boost that would add six officers with new vehicles and new mobile and desktop radios to phase out today's outdated system, Budget Administrator Angelica Collins said.

Today, about 60 police vehicles need to be replaced, ranging from patrol cruisers to unmarked vehicles to crime scene investigation vans, said Christina Born, city spokesperson. Proposed capital funding would add another eight new police vehicles, bringing the total to 14. Historically, City Hall officials have pointed to the 1990 bankruptcy of General Development Corp. as the root of Palm Bay's widespread infrastructure woes. Worsening matters, City Hall finances plummeted 57% from 2008-13 in the wake of the Great Recession, setting the stage for personnel shortcomings. Palm Bay's population grew about 18% the past decade, from about 103,000 residents in 2012 to more than 122,000 residents in 2021. During that decade, city employment in departments financed by Palm Bay's general fund — including police — only increased 6%, **Sherman** said.

By November 2018, city voters overwhelmingly approved up to \$150 million in long-neglected road repaving across at least 357 miles of streets requiring reconstruction and 167 miles of streets needing repair — including weather-beaten roadways that had devolved into "grassphalt." In the near future, administrators are eyeing possible construction of a new police facility in the southern portion of Palm Bay, helping reduce emergency response times. This project could be a major factor in the city's 2027 budget, Collins said. "If the city grows, so must the public safety grow. And this council has been neglecting that concept for the past 20 years," Council Member Peter Filiberto, a former Surfside police dispatcher, said during Augello's July 7 presentation. "And I feel like council now feels, 'We have to catch up now.' So we're all full-steam ahead. We want to work with you and get you everything you need," Filiberto said.

Palm Bay ranks 241st in Florida

Palm Bay's staffing level of 1.38 sworn officers per 1,000 residents ranks as the lowest in Brevard County, FDLE reported. By comparison, neighboring Melbourne staffed 153 officers for its population of 85,800, FDLE reported. That ratio equals 1.78 officers per 1,000 residents. What's more, Augello pointed out that Melbourne measures about 51 square miles, while Palm Bay encompasses more than 88 square miles. Cocoa staffs 3.51 officers per 1,000 residents, while Rockledge staffs 2.01, the FDLE report shows. Augello said FDLE's state average is 2.33 officers per 1,000 residents. Midway, a tiny community outside Tallahassee with 3,617 residents and four police officers, had FDLE's lowest per-capita ratio at 1.11. The highest ratio among cities with at least 100,000 residents was the Miami Police Department, which staffs 3.04 officers per 1,000 people. Worsening matters, Augello told the City Council his department has vacancies in uniform and community services (23), criminal investigations (six) and the records unit (three), in addition to the 19 communications center job openings. This shortfall is exacerbated by vacations, injuries, sick time and training sessions. What's more, during his State of the City Address, Medina said Palm Bay's population has now surpassed 126,000 residents — but the city remains only 40% built-out.

An International Association of Chiefs of Police survey in 2019 showed 78% of law enforcement agencies had difficulties recruiting qualified candidates. Since then, COVID-19 and historically low

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

unemployment have exacerbated staffing shortages nationwide, not just in Palm Bay. Melbourne Police Cmdr. Mark Renkens retired as Palm Bay's police chief in 2017 after working more than 27 years with the department. Wednesday, he said Melbourne's police communications center has 32 positions, and nine are vacant. Renkens also said Melbourne's staff of 170-odd sworn officers is down 27 positions. "We like to be proactive. The problem is, when you don't have enough people, you tend to be reactive," Renkens said. "Because you don't have the luxury of people being out there doing proactive things: traffic enforcement, targeting locations that are having crime issues, stuff like that," he said.

'It's a compounding stress'

On the second floor of the police station, Palm Bay's communications center features 10 dispatch stations. Each has up to seven monitors, multiple keyboards and an array of paperwork and charts. Employees answer calls from residents around the clock: "Palm Bay police. May I help you?" "With any critical incident, these are our eyes and ears on the telephone for our first responders heading to the house," Palm Bay Police Lt. Mike Roberts said, standing in the communications center. "With the initial 911 blast, and relaying information from phones through the radio to our officers, and then answering any officers' questions — while all of this is going on at the same time — it's just a whole lot coming at one individual," Roberts said. "And then you compound that with the minimum staffing, the no lunch breaks. It's a compounding stress," he said. Ideally, Roberts said eight or nine dispatchers would work at once. Shifts last from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; 4 p.m. to midnight; and midnight to 8 a.m.

But at today's 52% staffing capacity, only six dispatchers are working during the first two shifts. And supervisors have reduced third-shift staffing from five dispatchers to four because of lack of personnel. During his July 7 presentation, Augello said if a dispatcher finishes a shift and the next shift has an unfilled position, that dispatcher is mandated to work a second consecutive 8-hour shift. This could stretch from 8 a.m. to midnight, for example. "So I'm working a total of 16 hours. And that's happening every day of every week to our folks," Augello told council members. "So it's concerning," he said.

\$10K bonuses offered on Facebook

Palm Bay's police shortfall comes amid similar staffing shortages at Brevard Public Schools, Brevard County government and other agencies. Brevard's unemployment rate sank to a new record low of 2.2% in April — compared with 4.2% in April 2021. Nationwide, police departments have faced "severe shortages of qualified job seekers" in recent years, the IACP reported. Example: The Fort Lauderdale Police Department spent \$60,000 to post a wintertime recruitment billboard facing Chicago's Kennedy Expressway — showing palm trees and a sunny beach — in December, January and February, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

This month on Facebook, Palm Bay police has promoted \$10,000 signing bonuses and up to \$2,500 in relocation expenses for certified officers. The department is advertising starting salaries of \$42,500, climbing to \$50,577 by October 2023. Police union contract negotiations are underway. Augello is a 22-year departmental veteran who was appointed police chief in March. He replaced Nelson Moya, who retired to take a job as Suffolk County deputy executive for probation

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

and juvenile intervention on Long Island, New York. Augello had worked as deputy chief since 2019 after serving in an array of capacities across the Palm Bay Police Department, ranging from neighborhood policing unit coordinator to patrol watch commander to SWAT team commander. Council Member Randy Foster previously worked as a narcotics officer with the Fayetteville Police Department in North Carolina. During the July 7 meeting, he said he was concerned about vacancies in Augello's department. "I don't want to be ranked — what, 241? I want to be ranked No. 1," Foster said. "I don't want crime in Palm Bay to be like crime in Orlando," he said. "Because that's not only the police department's responsibility. That's everyone who's elected on this dais' responsibility," he said.

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today (FL)
May 25, 2022

Dignity Bus with 16 beds unveiled as ‘shelter on wheels’ for Palm Bay homeless people

Author: Rick Neale

Bathed in blue LED light, J.R. Gonzalez walked past 16 bunk-bed-esque sleeping pods and stood near a wall of white shelves, deep within the Dignity Bus. “Everyone gets on the bus, one at a time. They come to the bench. They sit down here. They take their shoes off, sneakers or whatever. They put (them) on top of the shelf,” Gonzalez said, gesturing at the shelves. “And then they go into a pod,” he said. Gonzalez serves as head of maintenance for the Dignity Bus, a 40-foot customized motor coach that offers overnight beds to needy people living on the streets of Palm Bay. Since debuting in late January, the Dignity Bus has accommodated 100 people and housed 1,160 “sleeps,” said Bruce Brosnahan, president of St. Vincent de Paul of St. Joseph’s Parish. Tuesday afternoon, the Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce conducted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Dignity Bus while it idled in the City Hall parking lot. “The Dignity Bus, being a mobile solution, can go where the need is to meet the needs of the community. So that’s pretty exciting,” Nancy Peltonen, chamber president and CEO, told the crowd. “We appreciate what they are doing to assist the homeless population, and look forward to finding some permanent solutions to this growing problem,” Peltonen said.

The Source, a Vero Beach-based Christian outreach ministry, operates the Dignity Bus in partnership with the city of Palm Bay and St. Vincent de Paul of St. Joseph’s Parish, which manages passenger registration. The bus features 16 sleep pods outfitted with privacy curtains, lights and electrical outlets. Also inside: a restroom, pet pods for companion animals, storage space, video surveillance cameras and an onboard overnight security person. The Dignity Bus can provide up to 5,840 safe “sleeps” per year. Passengers are charged \$2 per night. Before parking for the night at 10 p.m., the Dignity Bus picks up people at:

- RaceTrac at the intersection of Babcock Street and Malabar Road.
- Walmart on Malabar Road.
- 7-Eleven at the intersection of Palm Bay and Minton Roads.
- St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry on Palm Bay Road.

In March 2021, The Source unveiled its first, larger, 20-bed Dignity Bus during a similar ribbon-cutting event hosted by the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce in Vero Beach. The Source estimates it will cost \$120,000 per year to operate the Palm Bay Dignity Bus, including staffers, bedding, laundry, air conditioning, maintenance, insurance, security and gasoline. In January, the Palm Bay Municipal Foundation — which is headed by the five-member City Council — approved an \$8,500 grant for Dignity Bus operations. The grant paid for 16 mattresses for \$2,866 and \$5,635 to help cover insurance.

During Tuesday’s event, Mayor Rob Medina and City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** noted that the Palm Bay City Council earmarked \$5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding to address

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
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homelessness on May 5. Next, city officials will accept applications from June 1 through Aug. 1 from organizations that provide public services, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing.

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (FL)
May 28, 2021

City Manager honored with Home Rule Hero Award

Author: Unknown

The Florida League of Cities (FLC), the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments, recently recognized Palm Bay City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** with a 2021 Home Rule Hero Award for her hard work and advocacy efforts during the 2021 Legislative Session. City Manager **Sherman** worked tirelessly throughout session to promote local voices making local choices, protect the Home Rule powers of Florida’s municipalities and advance the League’s legislative agenda.

“These local officials went above and beyond during the 2021 Legislative Session,” said FLC Director of Legislative Affairs Casey Cook. “They made an extraordinary effort, were actively engaged and highly effective in their advocacy efforts. Even with all the various challenges present this year due to the pandemic, they stepped up. They engaged with legislators, shared their stories, and made their voices heard, and it made a difference. On behalf of the League and its legislative team, it’s my sincere honor to recognize this year’s award recipients and thank them for their service.”

Home Rule is the ability for a city to address local problems with local solutions with minimal state interference. Home Rule Hero Award recipients are local government officials, both elected and nonelected, who consistently responded to the League’s request to reach out to members of the legislature and help give a local perspective on an issue. “It is an honor to work side by side with many others in local and state government to build relationships and encourage decision-making that will strengthen our communities for the future,” said City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**.

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The City of Palm Bay Florida (FL)
May 27, 2021

Florida Legislature grants Palm Bay \$300,000 for stormwater improvements

Author: City of Palm Bay Florida

The City of Palm Bay is pleased to announce that a \$300,000 funding appropriation for stormwater improvements has been approved by the Florida Legislature as part of the 2021-2022 session. The funding appropriation will be used as a 50% cost-share to install two nutrient separating stormwater baffle boxes.

Considered a Best Management Practice by the Department of Environmental Protection, baffle boxes assist in the removal of sediment, debris, litter, and harmful nutrient contaminants including nitrogen and phosphorus from stormwater runoff. The structures are typically positioned at stormwater outfalls to prevent damaging pollutants from entering a body of water. Palm Bay's two new baffle boxes will be strategically placed in locations that flow toward Turkey Creek to improve water quality within the waterway and protect the Indian River Lagoon.

On December 3, 2020, Palm Bay City Council voted unanimously to authorize the City's State lobbying team to pursue grant funding for stormwater system improvements. Supported by State Senator Debbie Mayfield and Representative Randy Fine, the \$300,000 funding allocation will enable the City of Palm Bay to improve the City's stormwater infrastructure and serve as a responsible steward of our local natural resources.

"We are truly grateful to our local legislators for their support of Palm Bay's request this year," said City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**. "Installing these baffle boxes will be one of many steps that the City of Palm Bay will be taking in the coming years as we work to do our part to improve and protect our precious natural resources." Governor DeSantis is expected to sign the 2021-2022 budget allocations into law on or before July 1, 2021.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today (FL)
January 18, 2021

Suzanne Sherman set to ink contract as Palm Bay's permanent city manager

Author: Rick Neale

After serving as Palm Bay's chief executive officer in an interim capacity since July, **Suzanne Sherman** is poised to sign an employment contract and become permanent city manager of the Space Coast's biggest municipality. "She's moved her way up throughout different departments. She's got the education. She's got the backing of the staff," Palm Bay City Council Member Randy Foster said during the Jan. 7 regular meeting. "She uplifted morale when she took over a situation during a pandemic, (with) a city manager being removed," Foster said.

The City Council voted 4-1 on Jan. 7 to appoint **Sherman** as permanent city manager of Palm Bay — which just surpassed the 120,000-resident mark, **Sherman** said. Thursday night, council members are scheduled to vote on her proposed employment contract, which calls for a base salary of \$185,000. "It is truly an honor to have the opportunity to continue to serve Palm Bay in this capacity," **Sherman** said last week in a press release. "Working with City Council and our leadership team, we will strive every day to meet the needs of our growing community by providing high quality, responsive services with integrity, prioritizing infrastructure improvements and support for our expanding residential and commercial sectors," **Sherman** said.

Deputy Mayor Kenny Johnson negotiated contractual terms, and Foster made the motion to hire her on a permanent basis. **Sherman** worked from 2006-15 in the City Hall human resources and utilities departments. She was serving as acting deputy city manager/assistant to the city manager when she resigned and headed to Satellite Beach City Hall. There, she worked as assistant city manager and support services department director. **Sherman** returned to Palm Bay January 2019 to become deputy city manager. In July, council members appointed her acting city manager after former city manager Lisa Morrell resigned. "**Suzanne Sherman** has my utmost support. And I've shared that with her multiple times," Johnson said during the Jan. 7 meeting.

Foster, Mayor Rob Medina and Donny Felix were elected in November as newcomers to the five-member City Council. During the Jan. 7 meeting, Medina said **Sherman** was doing "a spectacular job." Bailey cast the no vote. He said he preferred a formal job search process, and the city manager discussion had only been placed on the agenda the previous day, giving the public little notice. What's more, a pipe burst Jan. 4 and flooded the council chambers — forcing the City Council to vacate City Hall and meet at the Tony Rosa Community Center.

Bailey congratulated **Sherman** in his Facebook post. "I look forward in working with Ms. **Sherman**, a longtime city resident by the way, to continue to improve city services. She has my confidence that she will put her all into her new position which should be solidified with a contract at the next council meeting. If you see **Suzanne**, please join me in congratulating her!" Bailey wrote.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The City of Palm Bay Florida (FL)
January 12, 2021

City Council appoints new City Manager

Author: City of Palm Bay Florida

On Thursday, January 7, 2021, the Palm Bay City Council voted to appoint Acting City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** to be the new City Manager of the City of Palm Bay. Ms. **Sherman** was hired as Palm Bay's Deputy City Manager in January 2019 and has been serving in an interim capacity since the departure of former City Manager Lisa Morrell in July 2020. "We have a new year and we need a new City Manager," said Councilman Randy Foster, who brought the item forward for consideration.

Mayor Rob Medina expressed his support in Ms. **Sherman** saying, "**Suzanne Sherman** is a servant leader and what I've observed is not only a high level of morale, but a dedication to the people that work with her, a dedication to the City of Palm Bay, and a level of ethics that's unwavering." Following the decision to appoint Ms. **Sherman**, the Palm Bay City Council voted to select Deputy Mayor Kenny Johnson to serve as the Council representative to handle contract negotiations.

Contact details will be presented to City Council at the January 21, 2021 Regular Council Meeting. Ms. **Sherman** boasts a long history with the City of Palm Bay, having been initially hired in January 2006 as a Budget Management Analyst. She subsequently held the positions of Risk Manager and Business Operations Division Manager. Ms. **Sherman** also served as Assistant to the City Manager and Acting Deputy City Manager for Palm Bay, until 2015 when she was hired as the Assistant City Manager for the City of Satellite Beach.

In addition to her extensive experience working in Brevard County, Ms. **Sherman** is also active in several professional organizations including the *Florida City and County Management Association*, the *Space Coast Public Management Association*, and the *Florida League of Cities*. She also attained her Certified Public Manager designation in 2012 and is an ICMA Credentialed Manager Candidate.

"It is truly an honor to have the opportunity to continue to serve Palm Bay in this capacity," **Sherman** said. "Working with City Council and our leadership team, we will strive every day to meet the needs of our growing community by providing high quality, responsive services with integrity, prioritizing infrastructure improvements and support for our expanding residential and commercial sectors."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Business News Magazine (FL)
December 8, 2020

Palm Bay, Florida – Revival Season

Author: Unknown

Despite 2020 being a challenging and unpredictable year due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the ‘global picture’ of Palm Bay, Florida suggests the kind of solid growth that happens only under the right leadership and favorable economic conditions. **Suzanne Sherman**, Acting City Manager, says the City of Palm Bay is on a path to reinvent itself; to reestablish its position as a leading community on the Space Coast. “We’re cranking ahead in all aspects,” says **Sherman**. “Whether you’re talking about how we conduct internal business as a government, as an employer of the City; whether you’re talking about the residential component, multi-family and commercial building, or the corporate groups in our community, we’re firing on all cylinders. We’re building a firm foundation to become a more mature city. One that can shed some of the old stigma of being a bedroom community.”

The City’s Growth Management Department is in the process of updating the goals and policies of its Comprehensive Plan – the City’s master land use plan – to chart a course for growth and development over the coming decade, and to ensure that Palm Bay doesn’t lose momentum as an economically viable, livable, sustainable city. “It’s long overdue,” admits Joan Junkala-Brown, Director of Community and Economic Development. “We’ve received a lot of rezoning applications and a lot of future land use amendments. That tells us that the current zoning districts don’t serve the needs of the development community.” The Comprehensive Plan amendment process encourages responsible zoning and development within Palm Bay and ensures transparency relating to zoning and land use through community engagement, seeking input from residents, property owners, and key stakeholders.

Sherman states that the City is focused on resetting the mission for the City’s future, “We’re only 40% built out in terms of landmass. That’s obviously starting to change as we get all this new development, but we’ve still got ample space. Folks that want to develop would prefer a more streamlined process. That’s critical to the success of most businesses. So we’ve been rebuilding our team internally, adding staff and staffing the right people in the right positions to make sure that businesses feel welcome and that they can join their vision with the City’s.”

In November 2018, the residents of Palm Bay approved a road bond referendum to fund a series of repaving projects citywide, known as the GO Roads Bond Program. In May 2019, the City Council approved a preliminary \$50 million draw from the \$150 million fund for Phase One of the project, which is now complete, and an estimated \$44.1 million for Phase Two currently underway. When complete in fall of 2024, Palm Bay will have made over 200 miles in road infrastructure improvements.

Palm Bay’s current population sits at around 119,000. All the projections indicate that will rise as the City’s residential real estate market continues to boom and business relocations and expansions

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

further bolster the housing sector. “Historically, we’ve had a lot of vacant lots scattered throughout the city,” admits **Sherman**. “Someone buys a lot, builds a house, and then the next five lots next to it remain vacant. It’s been that way for a long time. But now, we’re starting to see a lot of infill development on those individual lots. Builders are seeing the roads being paved and it’s spurred a lot of activity.” According to **Sherman**, another key factor in Palm Bay’s accelerating housing market are the larger sized lots that have become available since the road improvements. She notes, “They’re sized for a range of subdivisions. It could be hundreds of homes. It could be 20 or 30 homes. But they’re all being developed and we’re seeing that happening in all quadrants of the city, so that’s exciting.”

This past summer, the City of Palm Bay held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of a new segment of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway. The Parkway, intended to serve as an alternative beltway for the western portion of the city, promises to reduce travel time and traffic, as well as provide residents with additional access points for critical emergency evacuation routes. **Sherman** recalls, “A few years back, the City completed the first segment of the Parkway within city limits. That was on the northwest section. Last August, we completed one of the furthest south segments. That’s important because it connects to I-95 via a new interchange funded by the Florida Department of Transportation. With the opening of the interchange and the Parkway in the south part of the city, we’ve cleared the way for one of our biggest and most interesting developments: Emerald Lakes.”

The concept for Emerald Lakes is a regional activity center, like what you’d find in a major metropolitan city, common in South Florida. Largely visible from Interstate 95, this major mixed-use development proposes 2.8 million square feet of mixed-use professional office, retail, institutional, medical and research facilities supported by 3,760 housing units. Now that the interchange is open, the City is working with the developer on development agreements and the developer is beginning to secure letters of intent with retailers, hoteliers and other end-users.

Preliminary site plans for Emerald Lakes have already been given the stamp of approval, which includes a Crystal Lagoon. “We’re talking about acre upon acre of Caribbean-blue crystal waters,” says **Sherman**. “Think of a pool, but multiply that several times over. I can’t possibly do it justice. It’s a large Crystal Lagoon surrounded by multi-family commercial and residential buildings, plus a hotel. It’ll be almost a city unto itself when it’s fully built out.”

Creating a “downtown district” in the City’s Bayfront area, which encompasses the City-owned Pelican Harbor Marina at the mouth of Turkey Creek off U.S. 1, is also in the cards for the City of Palm Bay. “The City and the Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency own about 7.5 acres of waterfront marina property in the Bayfront,” Junkala-Brown explains. “This past year, we’ve secured a commercial real estate broker who is actively presenting our marina property to developers for commercial waterfront and retail. We’ve had a lot of interest. Ideally, this would be the catalyst for what would potentially be a downtown commercial waterfront district.”

Sustainable stormwater management rounds out Palm Bay’s revival as a City rebuilt around practical, community-minded growth. **Sherman** describes theirs as a formalized approach: “We’ve

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Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

strategically aligned our stormwater projects to be stormwater improvements. I'm talking about replacing older pipes, updating the infrastructure, those types of things. All those projects are lined up to happen in advance of each segment of road paving under the GO Roads Bond Program. The priority is those projects that lead the way to making the stormwater system underground safe and ready for road resurfacing." The City has already contracted over 300 culvert pipe replacements in southwest Palm Bay.

"I'm especially glad to say that we've been able to address most of our long-outstanding culvert replacement projects and that means a lot to the folks, locally," **Sherman** shares. "There were roads that we had to close years ago because a significant portion of a stormwater system had failed, and the City was unable at the time to put the money together to solve the problem." Junkala-Brown describes 2020 as "a stellar year" for Palm Bay in terms of creating change and facilitating development in the City and she looks forward to what the future will bring, emphasizing, "I can't wait for what 2021 is going to look like."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today (FL)
August 11, 2020

Palm Bay officials celebrate opening of I-95 St. Johns Heritage Parkway interchange

Author: Rick Neale

Palm Bay officials discussed a potential Interstate 95 interchange amid undeveloped cattle pastures and forests south of Malabar Road for "many, many, many years," Acting City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** said. That vision became reality last August, when the Florida Department of Transportation finished building the \$28 million I-95 St. Johns Heritage Parkway interchange. But it remained closed to traffic. Why? Palm Bay officials had to finish building a \$9.9 million east-west "connector road" linking the interchange with Babcock Street, roughly 1 mile south of Sunrise Elementary. After a year's worth of delays, the new I-95 "diverging diamond" interchange and connector road at Exit 166 opened to traffic about noon Tuesday, said Keely Leggett, city spokeswoman. "This southern interchange will provide Palm Bay residents with a new access point to the 95 corridor, reducing travel times and traffic congestion surrounding the next-closest interchange at Malabar Road," **Sherman** said during a morning ribbon-cutting ceremony. "This new road will also provide residents with additional access to critical emergency evacuation routes," **Sherman** said. "We are thrilled to see this third interchange open up in Palm Bay, and are excited to see the potential for growth in our city that this location will support," she said.

Cattle grazed along the new roadway Tuesday near bulldozers and earth-moving equipment, which are prepping the nearby Cypress Bay development for future construction of 1,058 residential and commercial units. **Sherman** said Palm Bay has more than 119,000 residents across 88 square miles — much of which is not yet built out. Near the new interchange, developers have planned several large-scale developments: Cypress Bay, Emerald Lakes, Waterstone, Calumet Farms and Rolling Meadows. "This is so important to the city of Palm Bay, and to its future," Mayor William Capote told the crowd. "It's going to bring a lot of businesses into the area. It's going to bring more rooftops into the area."

During a similar ceremony in June, officials opened the new \$39 million I-95 interchange at Ellis Road, improving transportation access to and from West Melbourne, Melbourne, Palm Bay and Orlando Melbourne International Airport. A new \$11 million northern segment of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway opened at the same time, leading 2.2 miles from the Ellis Road interchange southward to U.S. 192. A Palm Bay priority since 2008, when development plans for "Emerald City" emerged, the I-95 interchange and St. Johns Heritage Parkway connector road evolved from developer-financed construction projects to projects that could cost the city \$16.4 million, a state audit found last October.

Deputy Mayor Kenny Johnson drew laughter by describing how long the project took: "I'm in high school learning about algebra while discussions for this road and this interchange were happening." When **Sherman** returned to Palm Bay City Hall as deputy city manager in January 2019, she was assigned oversight of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway project. She was named acting city manager last month after Lisa Morrell resigned. The City Council has approved \$250,000 for a forensic audit

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

to probe the history of the interchange-connector road projects. **Sherman** said the audit will likely go out for bid during the fourth quarter.

In a January 2019 letter, an FDOT official said Palm Bay's construction delays had added about \$475,000 in FDOT costs for rerouting a main power supply line to the interchange, sign modifications and traffic maintenance. Those costs had increased to \$810,000 by Tuesday, Department of Transportation spokeswoman Jessica Ottaviano said. Florida Rep. Randy Fine, R-Palm Bay, requested the state audit that examined the interchange. Two weeks ago, he criticized the ribbon-cutting ceremony in a Facebook post. "After a year of delays and ripping off taxpayers to the tune of tens of millions of dollars that was supposed to come from developers, Palm Bay politicians have announced a taxpayer-funded 'celebration' and 'ribbon cutting' for the #InterchangeToNowhere on Tuesday, August 11, at 9 a.m.," Fine wrote. "The Florida Department of Transportation, which completed the difficult part of the project — the \$28 million overpass on time one year ago — has chosen not to participate in the taxpayer-funded 'celebration' of these politicians," Fine wrote.

Capote defended development of the I-95 interchange. "This project has history. It has good ones, and it has bad ones — there were some good decisions, there were some bad decisions. But just like in a family. Things happen and you move on. And that's the reality of being here today," Capote said. "Don't judge this opening until five, 10, 15, 20 years down the road. You're going to say, 'Palm Bay made the right decision,'" he said. "Because this is going to be the catalyst that propels us into the next 25 to 50 years," he said.

Palm Bay 'connector road' timeline

- May 2014: Palm Bay city staffers request approval to begin negotiating and executing right-of-way acquisition agreements with property owners.
- January 2017: City officials seek bids to design-build the stretch of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway connecting Babcock Street with the future interchange.
- July 2017: Construction bid protest filed by Jr. Davis Construction Co.
- January 2018: Construction contract awarded to Community Asphalt.
- May 2018: Work begins, following design delay and gopher tortoise relocation.
- June 19, 2019: Original substantial completion date. Officials add 127 days, postponing the date to Oct. 24 (citing 56 days for gopher tortoise removal, 17 days of weather delays, 11 days for additional embankment, and 43 days for a right-of-way access issue).
- Oct. 24, 2019: Substantial completion date postponed after 38 additional days of weather delays.
- April 2020: After months of negotiations, the Palm Bay City Council and Brevard County Commission reach agreement to finish the last 96 feet of connector road and the Babcock Street signalized intersection.
- June 2020: \$321,526 contract awarded to MJC Land Development to finish the road and construct a Babcock Street southbound left-turn lane.
- Aug. 11, 2020: Connector road and interchange open to traffic.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (FL)
January 11, 2019

Palm Bay Deputy City Manager named

Author: Unknown

The city of Palm Bay announced that **Suzanne Sherman** is its new Deputy City Manager . Ms. **Sherman**, a former employee of the City of Palm Bay, was initially hired in January of 2006 as a Budget Management Analyst. She subsequently held the positions of Risk Manager and Business Operations Division Manager. Ms. **Sherman** also previously worked in the Palm Bay City Manager’s Office, where she served as Assistant to the City Manager until 2015 when she was hired as the Deputy City Manager for the City of Satellite Beach.

“I am so pleased to bring **Suzanne** back to Palm Bay. She is a resident of Palm Bay and has great knowledge of our residents’ needs,” said Lisa Morrell, Palm Bay City Manager. “I am confident that she possesses the leadership qualities necessary to collaborate among department heads, employees, and community partners.”

In addition to her extensive experience working in Brevard County, Ms. **Sherman** is also active in several professional organizations including the Florida City and County Management Association, the Space Coast Public Management Association, and the Florida League of Cities. She also attained her Certified Public Manager designation in 2012. Ms. **Sherman** started her new role with the city of Palm Bay on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019. “I am honored to have the opportunity to work for the city of Palm Bay once again,” Ms. **Sherman** said. “We have many opportunities ahead of us to accomplish amazing things. It is indeed a privilege to be a part of the team that will work together to serve our great community.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today (FL)
January 9, 2019

Palm Bay hires back Deputy City Manager Suzanne Sherman from Satellite Beach

Author: Rick Neale

Suzanne Sherman has returned to her former post as Palm Bay deputy city manager, leaving Satellite Beach after a similar three-year stint. "Welcome aboard to **Suzanne Sherman**. Thank you for coming back," City Councilman Harry Santiago said during last week's City Council meeting. "You've done a wonderful job before. I know you're going to continue doing a wonderful job," Santiago said.

Sherman previously worked at Palm Bay City Hall from 2006-15. After logging years in the human resources and utilities departments, she was acting deputy city manager/assistant to the city manager when she resigned. She worked as assistant city manager the next three years in Satellite Beach, where she served in a dual capacity as the beachside community's support services department director.

"I am so pleased to bring **Suzanne** back to Palm Bay. She is a resident of Palm Bay and has great knowledge of our residents' needs," Palm Bay City Manager Lisa Morrell stated in a press release. "I am confident that she possesses the leadership qualities necessary to collaborate among department heads, employees, and community partners," she stated. Morrell replaced former city manager Gregg Lynk, who was fired by a 3-2 vote the night before Thanksgiving by a reshaped City Council. Days later, Morrell fired both of Lynk's deputy city managers, Ron Clare and William Curry.

Sherman's annual salary is \$120,000. She joins Andy Anderson, whom Morrell appointed deputy city manager on an interim basis. Anderson is Palm Bay's economic development and external affairs director. "The City posted both Deputy City Manager positions on November 30th. The applications that were received as part of that job posting were screened for minimum qualifications and are still in consideration for the second position," Keely Leggett, city spokeswoman, wrote in an email.

"Per City policy, job applications are considered valid for six months from the closing date (Dec. 9, 2018 in this case). With the recent addition of Ms. **Sherman** and an interim Deputy City Manager in place, the City is focusing on filling some other key vacancies at this time and will revisit the search for our second Deputy City Manager soon," Leggett wrote. From 2003-05, **Sherman** was a fiscal projects coordinator/accountant in the Brevard County Sheriff's Office accounting department in Titusville.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

VeroNews.com (FL)
September 13, 2018

Tale of 2 cities: Budget realities wildly different

Author: George White

It's a matter of the "haves and have-nots" when comparing the proposed fiscal 2018/2019 budgets of neighboring cities Indian Harbour Beach, where no tax increase is planned, and Satellite Beach, which is proposing an 8.2 percent property tax increase – largest in six years. What Indian Harbour Beach has is more than \$7 million in reserves due to frugality, less population (8,381 compared to Satellite Beach's 10,832) and fewer city services. Subsequently, Indian Harbour Beach remains in good financial shape although it faces major expenditures like a new police station and canal muck dredging costs.

The increase in Indian Harbour Beach property values (7.72 percent) enabled the budget to be balanced with no change to the millage rate from the current tax rate of \$5.64 per \$1,000 of taxable property value. The resulting \$350,000 helped Indian Harbour Beach hold the line on taxes, even with an expected \$250,000 loss in revenues as Amendment 1 is expected to pass and increase Florida's Homestead Exemption by \$25,000 for homes with an assessed value greater than \$100,000.

Satellite Beach, which has more city services, is faced with a \$600,000 homestead revenue decrease along with the challenge of addressing several significant financial pressures. The city has to compensate for being impacted by two hurricanes within the same fiscal year with delays in FEMA reimbursements, and must address pressing stormwater and other infrastructure maintenance and replacement needs.

The proposed Satellite Beach millage rate is \$8.82 per \$1,000 of taxable property value, 8.2 percent higher than the previous year and 16.12 percent higher than the roll-back rate of \$7.59 per \$1,000 of taxable value. Over the past six years, the city has either dropped the millage rate or kept the rate the same as the prior year. "Raising taxes was not something that we wanted to do, but ... it became clear to both City Council and staff that increasing the millage rate is the responsible thing to do to support the city's financial future," said assistant City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the city has established a new operating line item with a budget of \$100,000. If this money is not needed for hurricane response, it will be added to reserves each year. It's a start, but the cost to the city for its response to the recent hurricanes has averaged between \$300,000 and \$500,000 per storm. "Without a millage rate increase to begin rebuilding reserves, and with the anticipated passage of the additional homestead exemption, the city would be limited in its ability to respond to a significant storm event, and sufficient funding for infrastructure maintenance and replacement needs would be restricted as well," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

VeroNews.com (FL)
June 15, 2018

Satellite Beach to be LED into the future

Author: George White

A new light will soon be shed on Satellite Beach. Lots of them, in fact. Florida Power & Light is upgrading all of the city's 372 streetlights to state-of-the-art LED technology to save money on electricity. LED (Light Emitting Diode) streetlights provided by FPL have a whiter, brighter and more consistent light, do not use mercury, and offer cost savings of approximately 60 percent over older lights. The change, to be completed in phases of about 100 streetlights at a time over the next six months, will reduce the city's current monthly electricity costs for street lighting from \$3,044 to \$2,961, a monthly reduction of just under \$100.

There is no cost to the city for the removal of the old lights or the installation of the new LED models. The new lights will provide a similar level of lighting compared to the current lights, said Assistant City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**. They will be adjusted to provide the appropriate amount of light at each location. The FPL project approved June 6 covers all streetlights in Satellite Beach except those on South Patrick Drive and State Road A1A, which have to be dealt with through a different process, **Sherman** said. FPL delivers electricity to approximately 700,000 streetlights in Florida and provides maintenance to about 500,000 of them through separate agreements.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

VeroNews.com (FL)
June 15, 2018

Study found public works employees are underpaid

Author: George White

A consultant's study of city worker salaries resulted in a lump-sum pay increase at the Satellite Beach City Council meeting June 6 and supported what Public Works Director Allen Potter has contended for years: The city was not paying its public works employees a living wage. The city contracted with Cody and Associates Inc. to perform a salary study looking at public works, initially in 2013 and again more recently, to come up with a salary structure and advancement opportunities for the city to "remain competitive in the labor market and to successfully obtain and retain personnel."

The more recent study was expanded to include all city personnel, but still ended up focused on public works deficiencies. To help give them an incentive for advancement, the study suggested the creation of a career ladder component. The change provides three levels for the positions of Facilities Maintenance Specialist, Grounds Maintenance and Street Maintenance Specialist. The study results concluded, as expected, that pay adjustments were needed in several salary ranges within public works.

"We're looking at this more urgently now because of the issue with public works employees. They are among the lowest paid in the city and we kept losing them to jobs making a dollar more an hour. There is value in maintaining competitive wages," said Assistant City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**. The pay hikes include many positions, but not all. It uses an equation involving years of service to determine if salaries are below what they should be, she said.

Potter said he has lost nine employees over the last three years, including three retirements. The low pay situation has been made even more difficult because the city requires contributions for employee savings programs and for employees' share of medical insurance coverage, sometimes making their first paycheck their only one, said City Manager Courtney Barker. "When they look at their paycheck after the deductions, with as low as the starting salary is ... they go find a job elsewhere," she said. Added Potter: "You tell them up front but when they get their first paycheck and all the deductions come out, reality sets in. We had one guy less than two weeks." The pay increases to bring public works salaries up to competitive levels will cost the city about \$35,000 over two years.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

VeroNews.com (FL)
April 12, 2018

Cities try to navigate new beach use law

Author: George White

While many other Florida beachside communities are just learning of dramatic public beach use-rights changes approved by the state for private property, the city councils in Satellite Beach and Indian Harbour Beach took last-minute steps to help their cities in future legal action. Both cities lobbied heavily against HB 631 because it removes the authority of local governments to determine the use of private beachside properties. Simply put: Dry sand is the property owners'; wet sand has customary use by public.

The similar 11th-hour ordinances approved by both councils were an attempt to "grandfather" some of the cities' authority in relation to beach use before the legislation takes effect July 1. However, like many aspects of HB631, it is not clear if the local ordinances will be allowed to be grandfathered or which local properties will be impacted by the new rules. Customary use, as explained by Satellite Beach City Manager Courtney Barker: "If an activity has continued for a long time without interruption, the law will eventually recognize that activity and provide a legal right for it to continue."

One positive change resulting from HB631 announced by Barker on Facebook is that the public access easements that Brevard County obtained from property owners for the recent Mid-Reach Beach Nourishment Project appears to secure public access to those areas of the beach otherwise affected by HB 631.

Satellite Beach Assistant City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** said the city is pleased to have reacted so quickly in response to the legislation which she said is best described by the word "sweeping" in terms of its potential impact on the public beach use. The local ordinance was initially requested by Satellite Beach resident John Fergus. He remains skeptical that the local ordinances will be allowed to help the situation, but believes the last-chance effort was worth a shot, considering the stakes.

The Indian Harbour Beach ordinance approved March 27, patterned after Satellite Beach's ordinance, contains the phrase "no individual, group or entity shall interfere with the public's ability to continue its long-standing customary use of the dry sand areas." The Satellite Beach City Council will discuss the issue at the April 18 City Council meeting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

VeroNews.com (FL)
March 29, 2018

Measure may limit public's beach access

Author: George White

The future of beach-going in Florida is at stake as legislators have approved a bill which potentially removes the public's customary right to access and use the "wet sand" portion of the beach on the ocean side of the mean high-water line. It is believed that this effort would make it easier for beachfront property owners to put up fences, post "No Trespassing" signs and sue to keep more of Florida's coastline off limits to the public.

Satellite Beach City Attorney James Beadle on March 21 explained to the Satellite Beach City Council on March 21 the measure, if signed by the governor, may not result in immediate installation of fences but "flips the coin" on the law in terms of preference of property owners' rights over customary public use. The bill was presented to Gov. Rick Scott that same day, March 21, for his signature. If he takes no action by April 5, the bill becomes law.

A homeowner's property line can extend all the way to the mean high tide line – the point the water reaches at high tide. With beach erosion, that line becomes a moving target, but it's typically identified as the "dry" sand area and the dunes. The "wet" sand area, or the sea side of the line of seaweed that washes ashore, has traditionally and by statute belonged to the public. In an attempt to head off the state possibly upending this arrangement, the Satellite Beach City Council has approved a related ordinance regarding maintaining customary public use and access to the wet sand area of a beach on the ocean side of the mean high water line and the dry sand area addressed in the state bill – even if on private property.

In contrast, the bill before the governor states that a common law claim of customary use must apply to a particular parcel and must be determined by a court, said assistant Satellite Beach Assistant City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**. "This change effectively precludes the use of local government ordinances to establish broad rights to access private property," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

VeroNews.com (FL)
December 28, 2017

Satellite Beach taps into FEMA funding for debris removal

Author: George White

During years with no hurricanes, as had been the case in Brevard County for decades prior to the 2004 storms, the business of beachside governments included setting money aside as “reserves or contingency funds” to pay for expected post-hurricane debris removal. In years like the last two, with hurricanes Matthew and Irma, debris removal costs, and subsequent reimbursements by FEMA, became priority number one for barrier island cities in terms of the post-storm quality of life. If left too long, the debris piles become a hazard, an eyesore and a matter of contention for residents. If debris is not completely picked up, the remnants of the piles left behind can clog drains for future storms, as was the case in some areas of Indian Harbour Beach with the Oct. 1 flooding following Hurricane Irma. With the largest population and most neighborhoods, Satellite Beach is the only of the four beachside towns in Southern Brevard to file for debris removal funds as a separate line item from FEMA, said Assistant City Manager **Suzanne Sherman**.

The remaining cities – Indian Harbour Beach, Indialantic and Melbourne Beach – contract with the county for debris removal, paying only the amount left over after FEMA reimbursements to the county for hurricane-related expenses. The total cost of debris removal in Satellite Beach after Hurricane Matthew that was billed to FEMA was \$129,000, of which the city only recently received an \$80,000 payment. Debris removal from Hurricane Irma is estimated to cost Satellite Beach \$139,000, but city officials are optimistic they will receive the money sooner through a new web-based FEMA program for making the claims, **Sherman** said. “We are entering the claims directly to FEMA online so we are hopeful” for more timely reimbursements, she said.

Indian Harbour Beach, which contracts with the county, had City Manager Mark Ryan explain the process in the November/December 2016 city newsletter following Hurricane Matthew: “It became clear from previous storms local resources to collect and remove disaster debris quickly was not available and outside forces would be needed to remove the debris for future storms. This agreement was entered into to provide an orderly and efficient cleanup of debris, providing FEMA with one entity to deal with for record keeping along with one entity to make application for payment and receive reimbursement.”

Indialantic Town Clerk Joan Clark said the contract with the county includes debris removal as part of hurricane recovery services, meaning the city did not file a separate FEMA claim. After working in several cities during hurricanes in South Florida, Melbourne Beach Town Manager Bob Daniels said he understands that debris removal is a key part of hurricane recovery and should be planned for annually, even if no storms are on the horizon. “I know hurricanes real well. That’s why you start out right away with your planning every January. It was always a key to make sure have your debris removal contacts in line now. Now is the time to get it all set up to make sure everything is all mapped out,” Daniels said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today (FL)
April 6, 2017

Satellite Beach skate park reopens

Author: Rick Neale

The rotting wooden halfpipe is history: Team Pain has rebuilt Satellite Beach's aging skate park as a new street course featuring a concrete bowl, banks, hips, quarterpipes and ledges. City officials reopened the course Friday after the Winter Springs skate company installed \$204,000 in upgrades. Since then, skaters have flocked to the facility. "I had a hard time keeping them out when it was a construction site," City Manager Courtney Barker said.

Next, a grand opening ceremony takes place at 4 p.m. April 15 at 751 Jamaica Blvd. "Saturday, we were doing the Hook Kids On Fishing thing there. I could see the skate park. What a ton of people — and there were more than kids there," Councilman Dominick Montanaro said during Wednesday's Satellite Beach City Council meeting. "There were a ton of people there using it."

Team Pain designed and built Satellite Beach's skate park in 1998 and Cocoa Beach's skate park in 2005. In tandem with the revamped facility, council members unanimously authorized a series of operational changes.

Among the highlights:

- User fees have been eliminated. "The funds that we take in don't really cover the cost of the park. In fact, we think that the charge actually is an impediment to the use of the park," Barker told the city council.
- Hours have expanded to 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. "We've gotten a lot of requests from the older skaters that they would rather go there in the morning," Barker said.
- By popular demand, helmets and pads are now mandatory only for minors ages 17 and younger.
- Staffers will only monitor the park during evening peak hours, for the short-term. "The only people that are willing to work there are kids. Because it's minimum wage, part-time. You're not going to find somebody my age that's willing to sit out in heat and do that," Barker said. "So, it's really another skater. And skaters don't like telling their friends what to do. So we're not really getting anything out of this relationship with the employees," she said.

Rather than rely on staffers, city officials will install cameras at the skate park to deter bad behavior. Satellite Beach resident Mark Quavillon, founder of Villon Clothing, will market the skate park under contract. Barker said a management agreement may be struck at a later date. "After the park has been open for a couple months, we're going to revisit where we want to go from here, in terms of events and how we'd like to expand the offerings of the park," Assistant City Manager **Suzanne Sherman** said.

The west side of the skate park has been redesigned for younger skaters, Recreation Director Cassie Warthen said. Satellite Beach High senior Robbie Sanders, an accomplished surfer, took second

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

place in the high school men's division in last year's NSSA East Coast Regional Championships in New Smyrna Beach. On dry land, he has zoomed across the skate park since he was in second grade. "It's a lot better — a lot more flow to it. There's a lot more you can skate. It's better for a huge crowd of people," Sanders said Wednesday at the skate park. "This one's more like street skating. Cocoa Beach is just like strictly bowl," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today (FL)
December 29, 2015

Palm Bay City Hall turnover claims 12 officials in 2015

Author: Rick Neale

As 2015 draws to a close, a dozen key Palm Bay City Hall officials boasting nearly 233 years of combined experience have left their posts this year as a new management team settles in. The mass departure of key administrators occurred after the pivotal November 2014 election, when Tres Holton and Jeff Bailey narrowly won City Council seats and forged a new conservative majority with Harry Santiago. The latest to leave City Hall was **Suzanne Sherman**, acting deputy city manager/assistant to the city manager. After nearly a decade of service in Palm Bay, she resigned Nov. 20 and started work Dec. 3 as Satellite Beach's assistant city manager.

Palm Bay City Manager Gregg Lynk, who started work in late April, said the majority of the dozen departees left of their own free will. "No matter what, you're not going to please everyone. Here's how I judge things: I sleep very well at night. So that tells me I'm doing the right things," Lynk said. He said he is implementing City Council's vision focusing on public safety, roads and economic development. "The employee morale is great. Staff is motivated. A lot of things are getting done. People are being heard. I don't have the answers to everything. I want people's input — and that speaks volumes about the administration," he said. "You're always going to have naysayers. And here's what I say to the naysayers: Just judge us by our results," he said.

Other Space Coast governments have hired some of Palm Bay's departed administrators. Former city manager Sue Hann — who resigned in April, days before a City Council discussion on her employment contract — is director of planning and project management for Brevard Public Schools. Chad Shoultz (deputy city manager) now works at West Melbourne City Hall as deputy city manager/engineering director. Edyie McCall (business development administrator) is now the city of Titusville's economic development director, and Tim Ford (Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency administrator) is Titusville's redevelopment planner. Yvonne Martinez (community information coordinator) now works as the Cocoa Police Department's public information officer. Elia Twigg, public works director, was placed on paid administrative leave in May and offered a separation agreement, which she declined. She was fired in late August. The following month, she was hired as senior project engineer/local agency manager with Target Engineering Group, a Coral Gables-based firm specializing in road and bridge construction projects. Mary Greene expressed alarm over the City Hall exodus. "It kind of scares me, and it's not even necessarily as the Brevard Democratic Party chair. This kind of scares me as a citizen. They definitely said they were going to take the city in a different direction while they were running for office — and they did. Whether that will end up being a good thing or a bad thing remains to be seen," Greene said.

Greene's husband, Ken, served on City Council from 2002-05 and 2010-14. He lost his Seat 5 race against Bailey, who won 50.2 percent of the vote. Mary Greene said Palm Bay city workers still talk to Ken, and they are afraid to speak out publicly for fear of losing their jobs. However, Ron Clare,

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

human resources director, offered a different view. "I think that the general mood of the city is better. Naturally, some folks would like to have bigger raises faster because they feel that they've given stuff up for years, and things are better so we should make everything right. Well, obviously you can't. But this administration is doing everything it can to bring all of the infrastructure-type items up to speed, including police cars, fire engines, all of those kinds of things," Clare said. "It's awfully tough for a city to recover (from) the economic downfall that we've had," he said.

Lynk said he does not dwell on the past. As recent accomplishments, he cited a series of right-of-way agreements and impact-fee credits negotiated with developers to help set the stage for construction of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway near the future Interstate 95 interchange near Micco Road. Interchange construction is scheduled to start in summer, and Palm Bay leaders hope the new roadway will lead to development of thousands of acres as the long-discussed Emerald City community. In Palm Bay, Lynk noted that the unemployment rate going down, household income is increasing, the crime rate is dropping, and residential and commercial building permits are on the rise. "These are all tremendous things that should be shared," Lynk said. He predicted that "2016 is going to be an exciting year for Palm Bay."

City Hall shake-up: A dozen key Palm Bay officials have left their posts this year.

In chronological order:

- Doug Muldoon, police chief, resigned effective Jan. 23 (employed with the city for 38 years, five months)
- Edyie McCall, business development administrator, resigned effective Feb. 27 (employed for four years, four months)
- Alice Passmore, city clerk, terminated by City Council on April 14 (employed for 42 years, two months)
- Sue Hann, city manager, resigned effective April 15 (employed for 17 years, four months)
- Tim Ford, Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency administrator, resigned effective June 1 (employed for 32 years, nine months)
- Chad Shoultz, deputy city manager, resigned effective June 12 (employed for 16 years, five months)
- Heidi Lapin, parks and recreation director, resigned effective June 12 (employed for three years, 11 months)
- Bill Pehaim, housing and neighborhood development services specialist, resigned effective June 27 (employed for 16 years, nine months)
- Dave Watkins, growth management director, retired effective Aug. 7 (employed for 30 years, two months)
- Elia Twigg, public works director, terminated on Aug. 28 (employed for 10 years, one month)
- Yvonne Martinez, community information coordinator, resigned effective Sept. 16 (employed for 10 years, seven months)
- **Suzanne Sherman**, acting deputy city manager/assistant to the city manager, resigned effective Nov. 20 (employed for nine years, 10 months)

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Suzanne Elizabeth Sherman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Space Coast Daily
October 2, 2014

New Assistant Manager Named For Palm Bay

A new assistant to the city manager has been appointed to manage a significant part of the city's future, facilitating the long-term growth and development that will change the face of central Florida's second-largest city.

A new assistant to the city manager has been appointed to manage a significant part of the city's future, facilitating the long-term growth and development that will change the face of central Florida's second-largest city. **Suzanne Sherman**, above, a native of Miami who moved to Palm Bay in 2000 has worked for the city in various capacities since 2007. Her new role as assistant to the city manager puts her at the forefront of managing some of the most significant growth and development projects that will be the foundation of the city's future.

Among **Sherman's** most significant projects is the new I-95 and Palm Bay Parkway Southern Interchange. The project is not only vital to the region's overall long range transportation plan, it is also a key driver of future growth in the city's southern sector. "We almost have a blank slate when you look at the southern portion of the city," **Sherman** said. "I'm fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a lot of great people and great organizations to build that area for the long term benefit of the city as a whole."

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
Colin Baenziger & Associates



Section 10

P. Nathan Somers

Cocoa Beach

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

NATE SOMERS



Dear Members of the Cocoa Beach City Commission,

I am writing to express my interest in serving as the next City Manager of Cocoa Beach. With more than 25 years of executive leadership across military, municipal, and federal institutions, including roles equivalent to city management, I bring a proven track record of guiding complex organizations through fiscal constraints, infrastructure revitalization, and community renewal. I am excited by Cocoa Beach's vision for a proactive, people-centered leader, and I am ready to be a long-term, visible partner in the City's success.

As a former Mission Support Group Commander and "City Manager" for a city-sized Air Force installation serving 60,000 residents, I directed full-spectrum operations across civil engineering, logistics, public works, force support, and emergency response. I oversaw a \$5.8 billion infrastructure plan, a \$1.3 billion contracting portfolio, and led budget strategies that improved service delivery without raising taxes, precisely the kind of stewardship needed in a fiscally conservative community like Cocoa Beach.

I understand that Cocoa Beach is at a crossroads: managing infrastructure needs and budget pressures, preserving its unique charm, and ensuring responsive, high-quality services in the face of tourism fluctuations. I have led city-scale operations under similar conditions, balancing the needs of permanent residents with transient populations while protecting the environment, engaging stakeholders, and safeguarding public trust. My approach is rooted in data-driven decision-making, performance accountability, and community presence, not behind a desk, but in the field, listening and leading.

Your call for stable, values-driven leadership is something I take seriously. I have been entrusted as Chief of Staff to senior government leaders, from Members of Congress to senior military commanders and executive cabinet officials. I know what it means to provide honest, apolitical advice and to implement the policy direction of elected leaders with integrity, clarity, and consistency.

I bring not only leadership, but a passion for public service, a deep respect for the community, and a desire to build long-term relationships with residents, staff, and business owners. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how I can contribute to Cocoa Beach's future with steady hands, creative thinking, and people-first leadership.

Sincerely,
Nate Somers

NATE SOMERS**CITY MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE • STRATEGIC PUBLIC SECTOR LEADER • ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

Proven People & Talent Management Director, Chief of Staff, and Senior Leader with 25 years of experience delivering impactful public service results across federal, military, and intergovernmental domains. Demonstrated success leading large teams, overseeing complex budgets, managing infrastructure and operations, and guiding strategic policy implementation. Recognized for innovation, collaborative leadership, and balancing organizational growth with community preservation. Adept at aligning vision with execution, building coalitions, navigating interagency partnerships, and stewarding public trust through transparent, data-driven decision-making.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- **Strategic Leadership & Stakeholder Engagement** – Collaborated with executive leadership, government operations, and veteran resource groups to embed military hiring and inclusion strategies within organizational priorities.
- **Data-Driven Workforce Planning** – Analyzed hiring, retention, and engagement metrics, using insights to refine recruitment strategies and optimize program impact.
- **Expert in Talent Acquisition & Retention** – Spearheaded enterprise-wide hiring strategies, aligning recruitment pipelines with corporate hiring objectives.
- **Industry Partnership & Community Engagement** – Built and maintained relationships with military organizations, Veteran Service Organizations, and educational institutions to enhance recruitment pipelines.
- **High-Impact Communication & Influence** – Strong ability to engage executives, develop persuasive presentations, and represent the company at high-profile events and industry forums.
- **Government & Congressional Affairs** – Skilled in building relationships with policymakers, advising senior leaders on legislative matters, and shaping policy initiatives to align with organizational goals.
- **Legislative & Policy Analysis** – Expertise in evaluating, interpreting, and influencing legislative policies to drive strategic decision-making and compliance.

EXPERIENCE**Director and Chief of Staff, Assistant Secretary, Manpower/Reserve Affairs, Pentagon** **07/2024 – Present**

- Principal advisor to the Assistant Secretary on personnel, policy, and resourcing for over 700,000 military and civilian employees.
- Oversaw operations of 195-member team and guided strategic execution of human capital, infrastructure, and policy programs across the Air and Space Forces.
- Delivered new quality-of-life initiatives across 181 installations, balancing modernization with service member needs.
- Directed HR policy, pay, recruitment, performance management, and workforce recognition programs to align with legislative and mission goals.

Mission Support Group Commander (City Manager), Joint Base Andrews, MD **06/2022 – 07/2024**

- Led largest Mission Support Group in the Air Force, managing 1,900 personnel and supporting 60,000 joint service members.
- Managed \$5.8B infrastructure strategy, \$1.3B in contracting, \$850M construction program, and a \$91M annual budget.
- Drove base modernization and local economic development, overseeing 600+ capital actions worth \$165M, contributing \$4B in regional economic impact.
- Directed city-like functions including engineering, logistics, and public support, mirroring municipal management.

Director – Military Human Resource Policy Division, Headquarters Air Force, Washington, DC **08/2021 – 06/2022**

- Shaped national military HR policy for 507,000 members; led team overseeing \$1.8B in assignments and retention programs.
- Reformed aviation retention initiatives, improving strategic workforce outcomes by 75%.
- Managed large-scale program and fiscal planning to sustain workforce capacity amid evolving mission demands.

Department of Defense Fellow, Wilson Center for Strategic Policy, Washington, DC **08/2020 – 08/2021**

- Competitively selected as the only Department of Defense Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars serving as a National Defense Fellow. Served as the sole advisor to the Wilson Center on talent management for the DoD.
- Focused on talent management initiatives for the Air Force, global leadership, veteran issues and international policy/relations.

Chief of Staff to the Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Staff, Pentagon, DC **05/2018 – 08/2020**

- Developed execution of 300 White House & National Security Council engagements; provided military advice to POTUS
- Articulated strategist & critical thinker; harmonized Secretary of Defense and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff strategy
- Led Department of Defense through stand-up of United States Space Force, and COVID Task Force; for over 700,000 personnel.

Section 10

Director, Air Force Talent Management Office, Headquarters Air Force, Washington, DC

07/2016 – 05/2018

- Oversaw strategic planning and program execution for the newest military service's senior leader management division. Led a highly successful, diverse team composed of both military and civilian members that provided talent management operations and policy for the Department of the Air Force Senior Leaders
- Led \$1.4 million Air Force Senior Leader Development Program for 300 Air Force Senior Leaders for 50 courses
- Innovated new Air Force assignment initiative; bolstered Air Force Senior Leader retention—saved \$7.7 million for the Air Force

Commander, Force Support Squadron, Patrick AFB, FL

06/2014 – 07/2016

- Commanded 395 personnel; managed \$5 million annual budget with assets valued at \$21 million and 140 facilities. Directed programs & activities for installation sustaining 10,000 military/family members, civilian employees & contractors.
- Founded virtual professional development program; enabled 56,000 members and saved over \$240,000 year for the Air Force
- Led squadron to #1 in Air Force! Won Eubank Award for best Squadron + Hennessy Award + 19 Major Command Awards—historic!

Deputy Chief, Congressional Liaison to the Commander USCENTCOM, Washington, DC

12/2013 – 06/2014

- Developed and executed CENTCOM legislative engagement strategies supporting Commander, United States Central Command joint requirements. Key advisor to senior staff on matters relating to Defense, Veteran's Affairs, State and Foreign Operations. Prepared CENTCOM Senior leadership for Congressional hearings/briefings before House/Senate Defense committees.
- United States Central Command voice to Congress; 40 House/Senate meetings to assuage combat theater concerns

Department of Defense Legislative Fellow, Washington, DC

07/2012 – 12/2013

- Competitively selected for Defense Legislative Fellowship program. Served as Military Legislative Advisor and provided oversight of 10 Department of Defense Installations, supporting 150,000 employees with a \$2.8 billion impact. Advised Congressional leaders on \$813 billion in Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Department of Homeland Security legislation.
- Planned high-stakes engagements for senior military leaders to secure Congressional enactment of the \$110 billion Air Force budget to ensure National Military Strategy effects achieved.

EDUCATION

Wilson Center for International Scholars, Washington, DC / Air University ▯ Master of Arts in Strategic Security Studies

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR ▯ Master of Science in Human Resources

Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS ▯ Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

RECOGNITION/SKILLS

- Eubank Award for Best Squadron (Air Force-wide)
- Hennessy Award for Excellence in Base Services
- Numerous Major Command Awards for Innovation & Leadership
- Microsoft Office Suite • Strategic Planning Tools • Data Analysis Platforms • Budgeting Systems • HRIS Systems

Candidate Introduction

NATE SOMERS

EDUCATION

- Wilson Center for International Scholars, Washington, DC / Air University
 - Master of Arts in Strategic Security Studies
- University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR □ Master of Science in Human Resources
- Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS □ Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

EXPERIENCE

Director and Chief of Staff, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Pentagon	2024 – Present
Mission Support Group Commander, Joint Base Andrews, Washington, DC	2022 – 2024
Director, Air Force Military Human Resource Policy Division, Washington, DC	2021 – 2022
Air Force Strategic Policy Fellow, Washington, DC	2020 – 2021
Chief of Staff to Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Pentagon, DC	2018 – 2020
Director, Air Force Talent Management Office, Washington, DC	2016 – 2018
Commander, Force Support Squadron, Patrick Air Force Base, FL	2014 – 2016
Deputy Chief, Congressional Liaison, U.S. Central Command, Washington, DC	2013 – 2014
Air Force Legislative Fellow, Washington, DC	2012 – 2013
Commander's Action Group, HQ Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, VA	2010 – 2012
Executive Officer, HQ Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, VA	2008 – 2010
Operations Director, Maintenance Group, Eglin AFB, FL	2007 – 2008
Executive Officer to the Commander, 33rd Operations Group, Eglin AFB, FL	2006 – 2007
Deputy Director, 33rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Eglin AFB, FL	2004 – 2006
Program Director, Customer Support/Employment, Little Rock AFB, AR	2001 – 2004
Various Deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq and UAE	

BACKGROUND

As a proud military dependent and the son of a 30-year U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer, I was raised with a deep appreciation for service, discipline, and global perspective. Growing up around the world, I learned adaptability, cultural awareness, and a strong commitment to mission, values that have anchored my own 25-year career in the U.S. Air Force.

I graduated from Mississippi State University in 2001 and dedicated my professional life to leading at the highest levels of the Department of Defense. Throughout my career, I deployed to every major location in the Middle East, where I commanded teams, advised senior leaders, and helped shape national policy under complex, high-pressure environments. One of the most formative experiences for my family and me was being stationed at Patrick Air Force Base, where we fell in love with the Space Coast's natural beauty, innovative spirit, and strong community values.

NATE SOMERS

My journey has not been one of service alone, but of family and shared purpose. I've been married to my wife, Carly, for over 20 years, and we are raising three incredible boys: Landon (16), Connor (12), and Grant (7). Together, we've experienced the challenges and rewards of military life, and we've always found strength in community. That's one of the reasons we feel such a deep connection to Brevard County and the City of Cocoa Beach; it's a place that reflects our values, offers opportunity, and feels like home.

Now, as I look to transition from military service to public service in a civilian leadership role, I bring with me a proven track record of strategic vision, team leadership, and mission success, alongside a personal commitment to seeing Brevard County and the City of Cocoa Beach continue to grow, innovate, and thrive for generations to come.

MY CURRENT CITY BREAKOUT:

In my most recent locality, I lived and worked in Fairfax County, Virginia, home to over 1.15 million residents and recognized as the largest county in the Commonwealth. Fairfax County government employs approximately 12,400 staff across a broad spectrum of public services, with an annual general fund budget exceeding \$4.5 billion. Throughout my leadership career, I've directly supervised cross-functional teams of up to 15 personnel while influencing enterprise operations impacting over 700,000 individuals. As a senior human capital executive and trusted advisor to C-suite leaders, my role demanded daily collaboration with legal, budget, and policy stakeholders to drive operational excellence.

THE THREE MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FACING FAIRFAX COUNTY ARE:**1. Fiscal Sustainability and Budget Shortfall Management**

Fairfax County is facing a significant projected budget shortfall of approximately \$292.7 million. This challenge stems from a combination of rising service demands, lagging revenue growth, and reduced federal funding, which the region historically relies upon due to its proximity to Washington, D.C. This shortfall puts pressure on:

- Core public services such as education, public safety, and health programs
- The county's ability to maintain competitive employee compensation and staffing levels
- Consideration of new revenue measures, such as a meals tax or real estate tax increases, to fill funding gaps

2. Aging Infrastructure and Deferred Capital Investments

Despite its size and affluence, Fairfax County faces a growing backlog of infrastructure needs, particularly in long-deferred maintenance and modernization of government facilities. This includes:

- Deteriorating critical infrastructure in fire stations, libraries, and community

centers

- Growing strain on public transportation and roadways, especially in rapidly urbanizing corridors
- Limited resources for major capital projects due to competing budget priorities

3. Economic Uncertainty and Workforce Stability

Fairfax County's economy is closely tied to the federal government, making it highly sensitive to workforce reductions, remote work trends, and federal budget shifts. These economic dynamics create instability in the county's tax base and labor market. Specific challenges include:

- Declining commercial real estate occupancy and its effect on revenue
- Retaining a skilled and diverse workforce in a high-cost-of-living environment
- Balancing economic development initiatives with housing affordability and inclusive job creation

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Cocoa Beach's coastal identity, tight-knit community of approximately 11,400 residents, and commitment to balancing tourism, environmental stewardship, and public safety deeply align with my values and leadership experience. With over 25 years of senior executive leadership across government and military sectors, I've consistently delivered transformational outcomes in complex, people-centered organizations. The City Manager role presents a natural progression in my career path, where I can apply my expertise in human capital, operations, and stakeholder engagement to elevate city services, empower staff, and foster a thriving, resilient community.

My leadership style is collaborative and coaching oriented. I empower teams by cultivating a high-trust environment, aligning resources strategically, and listening first, building ownership and mission clarity throughout the organization. If you asked my staff, they would likely describe me as a leader who is accessible, values their input, and champions their growth. Elected officials would likely point to my skill in translating policy into execution with transparency and professionalism, as well as my strategic mindset and steady leadership in navigating complex issues.

Among my greatest strengths are workforce development, operational planning, and cross-sector collaboration. I excel at aligning people, systems, and policy to drive measurable results, always keeping the mission and people at the center. Earlier in my career, I tended to hold on to initiatives too tightly out of a desire to get it right, but I've learned to delegate more effectively by building trust and setting clear expectations. I measure performance using a mix of qualitative and quantitative tools, employee engagement data, HRIS dashboards, retention and recruitment metrics, and service delivery benchmarks, to ensure outcomes remain aligned with council priorities and community needs. One innovation I led

NATE SOMERS

was the creation of an enterprise digital dashboard that integrated real-time workforce metrics, reducing hiring timelines by 20% and improving compliance across multiple units. Challenges in user adoption were overcome through training and leadership advocacy, ensuring sustainability of the tool.

My proudest accomplishment was leading a workforce transformation across 700,000 personnel, integrating data, coaching, and policy to improve retention and readiness while reinforcing culture and morale. Conversely, a key lesson came from launching an HR policy early in my career without sufficient buy-in, it taught me the critical importance of stakeholder engagement and pilot testing, both of which I now make foundational in any initiative.

Yes, I have had to terminate employees, and I approach such situations with compassion, due process, and integrity. While difficult, it's essential to uphold performance standards while treating people with dignity. I also bring experience working with the media and representing organizations with clarity and accountability, my record is one of public trust and service without controversy or reputational risk. I actively support the responsible use of social media to connect with residents, celebrate community wins, and build civic trust. In previous roles, I've implemented content strategies that increased engagement, fostered transparency, and kept residents informed on city policies and events. I am not aware of any activists or issues that would raise concern should I be named a finalist. I have a clear, controversy-free record and a leadership style built on respect, inclusion, and collaboration.

Outside of work, I value time with family, volunteering, and enjoying the outdoors...baseball with my three boys and especially near water, making Cocoa Beach not only a professional match, but a personal one as well.

Finally, I'm a change leader, unafraid to confront challenges head-on. I've led national recruiting reforms, stood up new military services like the U.S. Space Force, and crafted policies that reshaped workforce development for hundreds of thousands. I bring a systems-level view, a strong ethical compass, and the operational discipline to deliver results for citizens and employees, and elected officials alike. The City of Cocoa Beach is on the cusp of major growth and opportunity, I am ready to lead with bold vision, operational excellence, and unwavering commitment to public service.

THE CHALLENGES I SEE FACING THE CITY OF COCOA BEACH ARE:

Cocoa Beach is a vibrant and unique coastal city, but like many great communities, it faces a distinct set of challenges that require experienced, collaborative, and future-focused leadership. The first and most pressing issue is fiscal sustainability. With many residents on fixed incomes, limited appetite for tax increases, and looming uncertainties around property tax legislation in Florida, the next City Manager must guide the city through prudent

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financial stewardship, innovative budgeting, and strategic prioritization of services. My executive background overseeing multi-billion-dollar budgets and resource-constrained environments in both military and federal government contexts has honed my ability to lead teams through tough fiscal climates without sacrificing service delivery. I've built coalitions across agencies to secure alternative funding streams, driven efficiencies without compromising performance, and maintained trust through transparent communication with stakeholders.

The second key challenge is preserving community character and environmental integrity in the face of development pressures. Cocoa Beach's allure as a beachfront destination and redevelopment hotspot, especially with the growth of short-term rentals, requires careful management to safeguard family-friendly neighborhoods and protect sensitive ecosystems along the Banana River. As a former Mission Support Group Commander and Chief of Staff to senior Air Force leaders, I've led interagency efforts to balance growth with environmental stewardship. My approach centers on collaborative policy development, robust community engagement, and aligning vision with action, ensuring development enhances, rather than diminishes, the city's unique identity and natural assets.

Finally, Cocoa Beach needs stable, consistent leadership to unify staff, align with the City Commission, and reinvigorate long-term planning efforts. Having served in executive roles that demanded stability during times of organizational transition, I understand how to foster trust, galvanize teams, and build long-lasting relationships. I am committed to putting down roots in Cocoa Beach and bringing the kind of steady, transparent, and value-aligned leadership that earns the confidence of elected officials, employees, and residents alike. I've led strategic planning initiatives at the national level and would bring that same inclusive, metric-driven approach to refresh Cocoa Beach's strategic plan, ensuring alignment with community needs and future opportunities.

In short, my leadership ethos, anchored in partnership, service, and high-performance teams directly aligns with Cocoa Beach's most urgent needs. I bring not only executive experience but the personal commitment to lead this city with integrity, resilience, and vision.

CHALLENGES FACING THE NEXT CITY OF COCOA BEACH CITY MANAGER

The next City Manager of Cocoa Beach will face a complex set of interrelated challenges that demand steady, strategic, and community-centered leadership. Among the most pressing is the financial landscape, where limited future funding, potential reductions in property tax revenue, and a community resistant to both service cuts and tax increases will require creative fiscal management and the ability to do more with less. Cocoa Beach has already invested in critical infrastructure, but maintaining and upgrading remaining assets will necessitate innovative funding strategies and alternative revenue streams. With 25 years of executive leadership in military and federal government roles, where managing constrained

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multimillion-dollar budgets while sustaining mission-critical services was routine, I bring the financial acumen and resource stewardship required to navigate this fiscal reality.

In addition, protecting the city's identity amidst rising development pressures will be a significant test. Cocoa Beach must strike a careful balance between redevelopment, particularly along the Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway, and environmental preservation of its wetlands, mangroves, and island ecosystems along the Banana River. Short-term vacation rentals further complicate community cohesion and long-term livability. My background in policy development, interagency coordination, and community engagement equips me to lead thoughtful, inclusive development efforts that honor Cocoa Beach's values while fostering responsible economic growth. I've led cultural transformations and navigated politically sensitive challenges at the highest levels of government, ensuring that stakeholder voices remain central.

Lastly, organizational stability and strategic direction will be vital. With recent turnover in the City Manager role and a strategic plan that hasn't been updated since 2022, Cocoa Beach needs a leader who will bring continuity, vision, and long-term commitment. As a former Chief of Staff and Mission Support Group Commander responsible for hundreds of employees and billions in infrastructure, I have consistently delivered steady leadership through transition. I know how to realign organizations around shared purpose and can work with the Commission to refine and execute a strategic plan that reflects the current needs and future aspirations of the city. My leadership philosophy, rooted in service, collaboration, and results makes me uniquely prepared to meet Cocoa Beach's challenges head-on and help shape its next great chapter.

DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS MY EFFORTS WILL INVOLVE:

During the first six months as City Manager of Cocoa Beach, my focus will be on listening, assessing, and aligning. I will begin by conducting a comprehensive internal review of city operations, evaluating current projects, staffing structures, budget priorities, and service delivery performance. Equally important, I will prioritize one-on-one meetings with department heads, city staff, community leaders, local businesses, and elected officials to understand their perspectives, challenges, and aspirations. Establishing trust, open communication, and a shared sense of purpose will set the tone for a collaborative leadership environment.

I will also launch an initiative, an inclusive outreach and engagement campaign designed to solicit input from residents and stakeholders across all neighborhoods. This will provide a refreshed strategic framework that identifies short-term wins and long-term priorities across infrastructure, economic development, public safety, and quality of life. Using my background in strategic planning and intergovernmental affairs, I will work closely with the City Council to ensure all initiatives are data-informed, community-driven, and fiscally responsible.

NATE SOMERS

Operationally, I will begin aligning city resources to meet growth demands, accelerating key infrastructure projects, modernizing service delivery through technology, and identifying funding opportunities through state, federal, and private partnerships. I will also assess the city's talent pipeline and workforce development strategies, ensuring we recruit, retain, and empower top-tier public servants who reflect the City of Cocoa Beach values and diversity.

Equally important during my first six months will be my presence throughout the city, walking the neighborhoods, visiting local businesses, attending community events, and meeting directly

with residents where they live and work. Leadership cannot happen solely from behind a desk; it requires understanding the heartbeat of the community firsthand. I will make it a priority to be visible and accessible, listening to the concerns, hopes, and ideas of those who call Cocoa Beach home. Whether it's engaging with youth programs, touring infrastructure sites, or speaking with small business owners, these real-world interactions will shape a people-centered approach to governance, ensuring that every decision reflects the lived experiences and aspirations of our citizens.

Ultimately, my goal in the first six months is to build momentum through trust, transparency, and clear execution. By setting a high bar for collaboration, accountability, and innovation, I will ensure Cocoa Beach is positioned to thrive, not only as a leader in space and technology, but as a livable, inclusive, and future-ready community for all its residents.

I work well and extensively with the media and try to ensure accurate, quality coverage for citizens. Part of my effort is designed to help the media keep up to date on the City's operations and programs. My personal appearances in the media can range from occasional to frequent, as I defer to the Mayor and elected officials as they prefer. Further, I do not anticipate anyone contacting the City with negative recommendations or reservations about my leadership.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

1. **Mission-Focused Leader**
2. **Strategic and Forward-Thinking**
3. **Collaborative Bridge-Builder**
4. **Results-Oriented Executive**
5. **People-Centered Public Servant**
6. **Resilient and Adaptive Innovator**

NATE SOMERS

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

I am retiring from the United States Air Force after 24 years of honorable service, culminating in senior executive leadership roles that spanned strategic policy, operations, and human capital management at the highest levels of the Department of Defense. As I am transitioning from military service, I am seeking to continue serving the public in a meaningful way, applying my leadership, operational expertise, and passion for community development to a local government role where I can make a direct and lasting impact. The City Manager of Cocoa Beach represents a natural continuation of my lifelong commitment to service, mission excellence, and community-focused leadership.

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation at United States Air Force was \$214,000, including housing allowance.

Section 10

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
PAUL NATHAN “NATE” SOMERS**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Fairfax County, VA	No Records Found
Arlington County, VA	No Records Found
Prince George’s County, MD	No Records Found
District of Columbia	No Records Found
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Virginia	No Records Found
Maryland	No Records Found
District of Columbia	No Records Found
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Fairfax County, VA	No Records Found
Arlington County, VA	No Records Found
Prince George’s County, MD	No Records Found
District of Columbia	No Records Found
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Virginia	No Records Found
Maryland	No Records Found
District of Columbia	No Records Found
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Virginia	No Records Found
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Credit

Very Good

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for
PAUL NATHAN “NATE” SOMERS**

Education	B.A. and M.S. are Confirmed, M.A. is Pending
Employment	Confirmed
Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used be in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

Background Check Summary for PAUL NATHAN "NATE" SOMERS Personal Disclosure

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Paul Nathan Somers

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ☐ No ☒
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
Facebook - Nate Somers Instagram - Nate Somers
X - Nate Somers LinkedIn - Nate Somers
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes ☐ No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
N/A

Attested to:

Paul N. Somers

Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes

Nathan “Nate” Somers

Rob Novotny – Former Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Pentagon, Arlington, VA

Mr. Novotny has known Mr. Somers since 2016. Mr. Novotny served as a Military General at the Pentagon in Arlington, while Mr. Somers held the position of Senior Leader and Action Officer. They worked closely together until Mr. Novotny relocated in 2018.

Mr. Novotny came to know Mr. Somers as a capable leader, a reliable colleague, and someone who consistently rises to meet the demands of high-pressure environments in joint military service capacities. He consistently exemplifies professionalism and maintains a consistently positive attitude. Mr. Somers keeps senior leaders informed by communicating clearly and regularly about progress and any workplace issues.

Mr. Somers demonstrates strong judgment in talent hiring. He selects candidates based on their character, capability, and alignment with the mission. He adapts well to change, encourages new ideas, and communicates clear expectations. His leadership consistently reflects in his team’s high performance and morale.

Mr. Somers maintains a visible leadership presence. He spends time in the field and work centers, talking with employees, listening to their concerns, and maintaining high morale. He ensures all voices are heard and that people feel connected to the job.

Mr. Somers deeply values the well-being of his team. He works hard to ensure their professional and personal needs are met, especially during times away from family. In 2017, Mr. Somers was tasked with deploying a team downrange in less than 48 hours. To ease the workload on the administrative team, he helped coordinate logistics, readiness, and family support, ensuring every detail was covered. Thanks to his clear communication and hands-on leadership, the mission was successful, demonstrating his ability to manage time-sensitive operations independently.

Mr. Somers is actively involved in his community, regularly participating in youth sports and school events with his family. He volunteers for and supports nonprofit organizations and educational events. Being highly visible in local activities, he has helped strengthen the bond between military personnel and the local community.

Mr. Somers is customer service oriented, efficient, and thoughtful at problem-solving. He completes tasks on time and demonstrates patience when advancing initiatives. He would work well with elected officials who have differing agendas, because of his professionalism, adaptability, and calm presence in public-facing settings.

Mr. Novotny is not aware of any controversy involving Mr. Somers’ background or conduct that would concern an employer.

Reference Notes Nathan “Nate” Somers

Mr. Somers would excel as a municipal manager. He is experienced and confident in complex environments, communicates effectively, and has elite leadership skills. He would feel at home in the role, naturally adapting to unique demands.

As a leader, Mr. Somers motivates his team with energy, holds friendly competitions to boost morale, and creates a healthy, high-performing workplace culture.

Words or phrases used to describe Nate Somers:

- Friendly,
- Good communicator,
- Team builder,
- Perseverance,
- Honest, and
- Good-natured.

Strengths: Innovative, team-focused, mission-driven, adaptable under pressure.

Weaknesses: Would benefit from taking more personal time with family.

Jade Black – Former Community Support Director, Brevard County, FL 321-745-5438

Ms. Black has known Mr. Somers since 2014. They worked together in the Installation Command section at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida for two years. Although their time as coworkers was brief, they maintained a professional relationship grounded in mentorship, trust, and mutual respect.

Mr. Somers is a natural leader and an innovative thinker. He is highly proactive, energetic, and always two steps ahead. He consistently demonstrates professionalism, integrity, and concern for the people he works with.

Mr. Somers has a strategic hiring process. He selects candidates who are motivated, driven, and capable of keeping pace in a high-performance environment. His decision-making is based on integrity, safety, and the well-being of the people he works with. He creates a culture of friendly competition and mirrors the high expectations he sets.

Mr. Somers stays connected to daily operations and often has face time with his team. A strong leader, he engages with team members, understands their challenges, and maintains high morale. He consistently prioritizes welfare and values the perspective of others.

Mr. Somers places a high priority on quality of life and organizational needs. During one instance at Patrick Air Force Base, specific appropriated funds became available with a short window for execution. Mr. Somers swiftly led the allocation of millions of dollars for supplies

Reference Notes Nathan “Nate” Somers

and equipment. This met the strict financial deadline and significantly enhanced unit effectiveness across the installation.

Mr. Somers regularly volunteers with youth sports and actively supports the local school baseball team. Whether in a family or community setting, he remains authentic, demonstrating a family-oriented and hardworking individual.

Mr. Somers is customer-service oriented, decisive, and highly capable of navigating complex systems. He works well under pressure, is patient, and works well with diverse personalities and agendas. He would collaborate effectively with elected officials. Mr. Somers brings a professional, calm, and adaptable presence to public roles.

Ms. Black is not aware of any controversy or conduct concerns involving Mr. Somers that would raise a flag for an employer. His professionalism, ethics, and character are of the highest caliber, and if she could hire him in her workplace, she would.

Mr. Somers possesses leadership experience, a public service mindset, and the practical skillset to thrive in a community management role. His ability to juggle multiple priorities, communicate effectively, and lead with compassion makes him well-suited for high-responsibility positions in local government. He is energetic, visionary, and people centered. He inspires performance, encourages innovation, and fosters a culture of excellence.

Words or phrases used to describe Nate Somers:

- Strong leader,
- Mentor,
- Motivated,
- Energetic,
- Compassionate, and
- Friendly.

Strengths: Integrity, decisiveness, emotional intelligence, leadership under pressure.

Weaknesses: Deserves to schedule more time off work for life balance, stress relief, and enjoying family time.

Matt Wallace – Group Commander, Brevard County, FL 321-637-5390

Mr. Wallace has known Mr. Somers since 2014. They worked together at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida for two years, where Mr. Somers was Mr. Wallace’s subordinate. They worked closely together during this time and remained professionally connected in the years that followed.

Reference Notes

Nathan “Nate” Somers

Mr. Somers is an outstanding leader. He displays exceptional job performance, communicates effectively at all levels, and treats everyone with respect. He interacts smoothly with peers, coworkers, and subordinates, fostering a team environment that builds trust and boosts morale.

Mr. Somers’ hiring choices demonstrate a strong sense of team dynamics and mission alignment. He involves peers when appropriate and seeks input to ensure well-rounded selections. His decision-making is thoughtful, and inclusive.

Mr. Somers embraces change, leads by example, and maintains a positive attitude. He also establishes high performance standards and ensures that everyone has the opportunity to learn.

Mr. Somers communicates priorities promptly and consistently offers solutions during crises. When he is not in his office, he remains present, engaged, and actively leads his team. He balances leadership and management, ensuring his team meets long-term objectives and goals.

One instance of Mr. Somers’ leadership occurred when the base dining facility faced significant operational and safety challenges. Mr. Somers took action by communicating directly with the staff to understand the root causes. He addressed the problems by enhancing education, improving on-the-job training, and implementing process changes. Under his leadership, the dining facility was rated the Best in the Air Force, an extraordinary achievement considering it had previously been at risk of permanent closure.

Mr. Somers is committed to delivering exceptional customer service. He is responsive, results-driven, patient, and process-oriented. Although he works quickly, he adheres to policy guidelines and prioritizes safety and people.

Mr. Somers would make an exceptional municipal manager. He has held senior leadership positions in the military, overseeing infrastructure, personnel, services, and logistics. He leads with integrity, listens to his team, and brings strategic, people-centered leadership to every mission.

Mr. Wallace is not aware of any controversy involving Mr. Somers’ background or conduct that would concern an employer. He also does not know of any personal or professional conduct that would raise concern. If given the opportunity, Mr. Wallace would hire Mr. Somers again, no application needed.

Words or phrases used to describe Nate Somers:

- Positive,
- Energetic,
- Detail-oriented,
- Good listener,
- Strategic, and
- Hard worker.

Reference Notes
Nathan “Nate” Somers

Strengths: Ethical, decisiveness, perceptive, remains calm in difficult circumstances.

Weaknesses: Occasionally needs encouragement to take personal time away from work due to his high drive and commitment.

Lauren Courchaine – Former Advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Arlington, VA

Ms. Lauren Courchaine has known Mr. Somers since 2015. Mr. Somers and Colonel Courchaine worked together supporting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, contributing to strategic planning across the Department of Defense. They developed a professional relationship grounded in trust, shared responsibility, and mutual respect.

Ms. Courchaine describes Mr. Somers as a man of integrity, a strong leader, and a professional. He is an excellent communicator, quick to understand and tackle complex topics, and consistently maintains high standards. His job performance is exemplary, and he is recognized for quickly adapting to new environments and taking decisive actions.

Mr. Somers’ strengths include strong communication and adaptability. He interacts professionally with coworkers and peers, fostering teamwork, accountability, and mutual respect. While he occasionally becomes frustrated when bureaucratic systems slow progress, he quickly adjusts, maintains a positive attitude, and continues to work without complaints.

Mr. Somers identifies talent and makes sound decisions in the hiring process. Peers trusts him to provide guidance that benefits the entire organization. He keeps his colleagues well-informed. He communicates expectations, changes, and developments. He visits workplaces, builds rapport, seeks feedback, and collaborates with everyone.

Mr. Somers is both innovative and adaptable. He maintains high performance across all work centers and is comfortable leading change. He listens to teammates, gathers ideas, and brings people together to execute a shared vision.

One example of his leadership came during his time as Group Commander (City Manager) at Bolling Air Force Base. At the time, the base was experiencing significant challenges with lodging and overall quality of life standards. Mr. Somers immediately led the effort to identify issues, implement improvements, and ensure facilities met acceptable standards for those living and working on the installation. His work significantly enhanced day-to-day conditions and morale across the base.

Mr. Somers is an active member of the community, frequently participating in local events and activities. He is actively involved in youth sports and is well known for his positive presence outside the workplace.

Reference Notes

Nathan “Nate” Somers

Mr. Somers is customer-service oriented. He responds to concerns and builds positive relationships across diverse groups. He is often described as an “amoeba,” someone who adapts effortlessly to different personalities and helps others feel heard.

Mr. Somers is action-oriented, but he balances urgency with diplomacy, asks questions, and seeks clarification to ensure proper outcomes are achieved. His patient and thoughtful presence is an asset in public-facing situations.

Colonel Courchaine is not aware of any controversy or conduct in Mr. Somers’ background that would concern an employer. She also does not know anything that would raise red flags in the hiring process.

If she had the opportunity, Colonel Courchaine would hire Mr. Somers immediately, without hesitation or application. He would make an outstanding City or County Manager. In the military, he was often referred to as the “mayor” of the installation, overseeing infrastructure, lodging, security, marketing, workforce, quality of life, and more. He has already performed in a role similar to a municipal executive, and with distinction.

Words or phrases used to describe Nate Somers:

- Humorous,
- Adaptable under pressure,
- Successful,
- Biased for action,
- Empathetic, and
- Strong.

Strengths: Communication, adaptability, team player, humor.

Weaknesses: Occasionally frustrated by bureaucracy due to his drive to act quickly, but this is balanced by adaptation and effective stress management.

Jim Nardelli – Former Executive Officer, Joint Base Andrews, MD 201-575-3174

Mr. Nardelli has known Mr. Somers since 2022. Mr. Somers served as the Group Commander on the installation (City Manager) while Mr. Nardelli worked directly under him for two years.

Mr. Nardelli describes Mr. Somers’ job performance as excellent and above reproach. Mr. Somers led with clarity, integrity, and purpose. He navigated complex issues, maintained high standards, and ensured morale and cohesion throughout the unit.

Mr. Somers’ strengths include managing complex challenges, leading diverse teams, and connecting with people at all levels. He treats everyone with respect, regardless of rank or

Reference Notes

Nathan “Nate” Somers

background, and fosters strong working relationships. His interaction with others is approachable and engaging.

Mr. Somers often hired new personnel into the workplace. He brings in individuals who meet requirements and complement the team’s dynamics. The individual Mr. Somers selected for a new Executive Assistant in the office exceeded expectations. The office’s increase in efficiency, morale, and communication was a direct result of his strategic hiring approach.

Mr. Somers is both innovative and inspiring. His leadership style motivates others to strive for excellence, and his morale is contagious. He regularly communicates with everyone in the workplace, ensuring information is shared clearly. His ability to maintain open lines of communication is one of his best leadership traits.

Mr. Somers is not a passive leader. He is present, active, and supportive. When an urgent leadership position opened, Mr. Somers ensured the replacement felt welcomed, supported, and adequately trained. He took a hands-on approach to mentorship, showing patience and compassion. His goal was to stabilize the team, help the new leader succeed, and maintain standards.

Mr. Somers has experience in roles equivalent to a City or County Manager. As a military commander, he oversaw infrastructure, security, personnel, lodging, marketing, and quality-of-life initiatives. He worked daily in an environment filled with prominent personalities, conflicting priorities, and public visibility. Mr. Somers handled public meetings and competing agendas with professionalism, diplomacy, and steadiness.

Mr. Nardelli is not aware of any controversy involving Mr. Somers. Mr. Nardelli also has no knowledge of anything in Mr. Somers’ background or conduct that would raise concern.

If given the opportunity, Mr. Nardelli would hire Mr. Somers and work alongside with again. Mr. Somers would be an outstanding City or County Manager. He brings experience, calm leadership, and commitment to the job and people. He leads with vision, communicates effectively, and builds environments where people and organizations thrive.

Words or phrases used to describe Nate Somers:

- Decisive,
- Encouraging,
- Mentor,
- Communicator,
- Calm and present, and
- Optimistic.

Strengths: Patience, problem-solving, innovation, professionalism.

Weaknesses: None listed.

Reference Notes

Nathan “Nate” Somers

Erika Cashin – Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Arlington, VA

Ms. Cashin has known Mr. Somers since 2024. She currently serves as the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs at the Pentagon, where she works closely with Mr. Somers in a high-paced, mission-driven environment.

Ms. Cashin describes Mr. Somers as fast-moving, highly reliable, and results oriented. He follows through on commitments, maintains a high work ethic, and seems to know everyone. His job performance is efficient, consistent, and he has a natural ability to build rapport.

Mr. Somers’ strengths include people management, customer service, and program execution. He leads with clarity and energy, working closely with the team to execute tasks effectively. He makes the workplace better with his positive attitude, often infusing humor and optimism into even the busiest days.

Mr. Somers navigates complex decision-making with professionalism and compassion. He knows how to communicate concerns effectively up the chain of command. He is patient, thoughtful, and dedicated to service. He is customer-service oriented and strives to enhance quality of life.

Mr. Somers demonstrates innovation by seeking fresh ideas and encouraging creative problem-solving. He brings together diverse perspectives to drive meaningful improvements and foster an inclusive environment. Mr. Somers is a strong communicator. He keeps his team and leaders updated on significant changes and issues.

One example of Mr. Somers’ problem-solving skills was when his unit needed support from an outside organization to make some workplace improvements. Using his network of peers, he invited a team to assist with training. He welcomed the new personnel, clarified roles, and set clear expectations. The new squad adapted quickly, trust was built, and they operated as one cohesive unit. The result was a seamless integration, and the training increased the unit’s overall performance.

Ms. Cashin is not aware of any controversy or conduct in Mr. Somers’ background that would raise concern for an employer. She considers him a strong leader and dedicated colleague.

If given the opportunity, Ms. Cashin would recommend Mr. Somers for any leadership role. Mr. Somers would make a fantastic City or County Manager. He embraces complexity, brings people together around common goals, and leads with authenticity. He would thrive in a civic leadership role and make an immediate, lasting impact.

Reference Notes Nathan “Nate” Somers

Words or phrases used to describe Nate Somers:

- Moves fast,
- Strong background and experience,
- Strong memory,
- Advisor,
- Team player, and
- Gets along with everyone.

Strengths: Talent management, leadership, empathy.

Weaknesses: Occasionally cautious about change that appears unnecessary, but he ultimately embraces innovation and adapts quickly for the betterment of the team. That said, he embraces change as a necessary and valuable part of progress. He is open-minded, highly innovative, and welcomes the ideas of others. He is not afraid to challenge when appropriate and encourages different perspectives and ideas.

**Ola Ayodeji – Deputy Mission Support Group Commander, Joint Base Andrews, MD
240-612-5824**

Mr. Ayodeji has known Mr. Somers since 2022. They worked together for two years in a professional military setting, where Mr. Somers served as the Group Commander (City Manager).

Mr. Ayodeji describes Mr. Somers’ leadership approach as direct, engaging, and empowering. Mr. Somers consistently motivated those around him, provided clear direction, and ensured his team had the support and autonomy to excel.

Mr. Somers’ strengths include his ability to motivate people, his strong listening skills, and his dedication to allowing everyone to contribute. He brings out the best in his team by recognizing individual strengths and fostering a culture of inclusion and performance.

Mr. Somers consistently applies sound judgment in both hiring and leadership decisions. He is innovative, open to new ideas, encourages creative thinking, and explores new approaches.

Mr. Somers places a high value on communication. He consistently keeps peers and senior leaders informed of relevant happenings when appropriate. His open and proactive style contributed to a well-informed and positive team environment.

One example of Mr. Somers’ leadership occurred when the installation was scheduled to host a public air show. At the time, funding was insufficient to meet the event’s requirements. Rather than escalate the issue to higher headquarters, Mr. Somers reached out to the local community,

Reference Notes
Nathan “Nate” Somers

building partnerships and leveraging support to close the funding gap. As a result, the air show was held at no cost to the public and was a major success.

Mr. Somers is well-prepared to work in environments with multiple stakeholders and competing agendas. He carries himself with confidence, communicates clearly, and frequently serves in high-profile settings. He is actively involved with the local area's major sports leagues, hosting events on the field for military personnel. His professionalism in these interactions makes him ideally suited for roles involving elected officials and public engagement.

Mr. Somers places a high priority on quality-of-life initiatives. He works exceptionally well with other organizations, including those in joint operations, education, and training. His cross-functional experience and focus on personnel well-being make him a valuable asset in any organization.

Mr. Ayodeji is not aware of any controversy involving Mr. Somers. He also has no knowledge of anything in Mr. Somers’ background or conduct that would cause concern.

If given the opportunity, Mr. Ayodeji would recommend Mr. Somers for hire. He interacted well with everyone he worked with peers, subordinates, and outside organizations alike.

Mr. Somers would thrive as a City or County Manager. His leadership experience, problem-solving skills, and ability to collaborate across departments closely align with the responsibilities of local government leadership. Any organization would be fortunate to have him.

Words or phrases used to describe Nate Somers:

- Innovative,
- Team-oriented,
- Motivating,
- Communicator,
- Confident, and
- Community-focused.

Strengths: Leadership, motivation, community engagement, communication, decision-making, innovation.

Weaknesses: None listed.

Shannon McGuire – Assistant Secretary for General Council, Joint Base Andrews, MD,

Ms. McGuire has known Mr. Somers since 2022. They worked together as senior leaders at Joint Base Andrews, interacting frequently in a professional capacity. Ms. McGuire describes Mr.

Reference Notes

Nathan “Nate” Somers

Somers as a trustworthy leader and mentor whose presence and leadership have a positive impact on everyone around him.

Ms. McGuire characterizes Mr. Somers’ job performance as meticulous. He pays close attention to detail, follows through on commitments, and ensures operations run smoothly. His consistency set a high standard in a fast-paced and demanding environment.

Mr. Somers’ strengths include collaboration, charisma, and empathy. He brings energy into the room, lifts morale, and motivates others with his big personality and positive attitude. He is particularly empathetic when it comes to people facing family challenges or stress, always finding time to support and uplift his team.

Mr. Somers interacts with others as a mentor, leader, and compassionate co-worker. He regularly checks in on teammates to ensure they are doing well personally. Whether someone is going through a difficult time or needs a moment of encouragement, Mr. Somers creates a supportive environment that builds trust and team cohesion.

Mr. Somers is innovative and ensures his organization operates at a high-performance level. He embraces change and leads others with confidence and clarity. He proactively keeps people informed by frequently communicating updates about the unit and installation to ensure alignment across all levels.

An example of Mr. Somers’ leadership came during a recent Air Force recruiting challenge. He assembled a team, explored the root issues, and proposed using social media for outreach. Although public affairs was initially hesitant, he shared a clear plan, welcomed input, and led a successful effort that significantly improved recruitment outcomes.

Mr. Somers is a patient and calm presence in high-pressure settings. He is highly professional, compassionate, and effective. His ability to lead with empathy and clarity makes him a respected figure.

Ms. McGuire is not aware of any controversy involving Mr. Somers. She also has no knowledge of anything in Mr. Somers’ background or conduct that would raise concern.

Ms. McGuire strongly recommends Mr. Somers for a leadership position. He would make an outstanding City or County Manager. His combination of strategic vision, people-first leadership, and ability to thrive in complex environments makes him exceptionally well-suited for the role.

Words or phrases used to describe Nate Somers:

- Professional,
- Personable,
- Dedicated leader,
- Compassionate,
- Effective communicator, and
- Patient.

Reference Notes
Nathan “Nate” Somers

Strengths: Collaboration, empathy, leadership, innovation, communication, attention to detail.

Weaknesses: None listed.

Prepared by: Camille Altfillisch
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Section 10

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Joint Base Andrews (MD)
July 10, 2024

New commander takes helm of 316th mission support group

Author: Airman 1st Class Gianluca Ciccopiedi, 316th Wing Public Affairs

U.S. Air Force Col. Mindy A. P. Davitch assumed command of the 316th Mission Support Group during a ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, Tuesday. Davitch, who previously served as the chief of staff to the director of manpower and personnel, Joint Staff, Pentagon, Washington, D.C., brings extensive leadership experience to her new role. She previously served across various operational and staff assignments, including the North American Aerospace Defense Command and the United States Northern Command. As commander, Davitch will lead the group's installation and combat support services, including logistics, force support, engineering and contracting. She will manage more than 1,500 members and assets valued at \$5.2 billion, including 868 buildings and 7,465 acres of land, essential for the operation of Joint Base Andrews and its tenant units.

During the ceremony, Davitch emphasized the importance of the group's mission, particularly in supporting Air Force District of Washington's strategic goals and ensuring Joint Base Andrews' operational readiness. She highlighted her commitment to maintaining the high standards of excellence that have defined the group's legacy. "At the heart of our success are the men and women who provide unwavering support to our military and civilian personnel," Davitch said. "Your reputation as the cornerstone of AFDW's collective success extends far beyond these base gates. Standing with you is not just a privilege, but a profound honor."

Outgoing commander, U.S. Air Force Col. **Nate Somers**, reflected on his tenure and expressed confidence in Davitch's leadership, acknowledging her experience and capability to lead the group forward. U.S. Air Force Col. Jun S. Oh, 316th Wing and installation commander, presided over the ceremony and praised both Davitch and her predecessor for their dedication and service. Oh noted that under Davitch's leadership, the 316 MSG is well positioned to continue its critical role in national defense and community support.

The ceremony was attended by service members and civilians, including senior military officials and local community leaders. Their presence underscored the vital importance of the 316th MSG's mission to both the base and the broader National Capital Region, reflecting the group's significant impact on military and civilian operations alike.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Southern Maryland News (MD)
April 29, 2024

Joint Base Andrew celebrates Earth Week

Author: Airman 1st Class Danial Walderbach 136th Wing

Joint Base Andrews celebrated Earth Week with multiple events across the base, April 24-26, 2024. Earth Week 2024 events included a base-wide cleanup and household hazardous waste recycling event. The events encouraged the base community to pick up any trash and recycle to help keep the natural spaces green and preventing the wildlife from being exposed to potential hazards.

"Ultimately, we're celebrating Earth Day, which was Monday, and [Wednesday] is our base cleanup to try and make sure that we are good stewards of the Earth and take care of our base, make sure that things are clean and orderly," said Jeffrey Wenck, Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants program manager.

A tree planting ceremony was held Friday, in which leadership planted four willow oak trees near the base theater. "This event with Tree City USA and planting trees is vitally important to Joint Base Andrews because it establishes a partnership with our local state of Maryland, and contributing natural resources is important as we grow the base not only from a mission aspect but also we grow from a nature aspect," said Col. **Nate Somers**, 316th Mission Support Group commander.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.505ccw.acc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3693066/new-wheels-steeped-in-old-tradition-joint-base-andrews-fire-truck-push-in-cerem/>

505TH COMMAND AND CONTROL WING
March 1, 2024

New wheels steeped in old tradition: Joint Base Andrews fire truck push-in ceremony

By Senior Airman Matthew-John Braman

Base leaders and community members gathered at Fire Station 2 for a fire truck push-in ceremony, celebrating the arrival of two new firefighting assets, Friday. The tradition of the push-in ceremony dates back more than a century in the fire service when equipment was horse-drawn, and communities came together to physically push the equipment back into the bay. As technology improved, this tradition remained as it symbolized good luck for the new equipment and as a demonstration of community pride. The 316th Logistics Readiness Squadron, responsible for the assets utilized by the fire department, played a lead role in the ceremony. "This event is quite important to the LRS," remarked Michael Cassidy, 316th LRS fire truck foreman. "It signifies a shift in how the fire service here treats their assets. Our mission at Fire Truck Maintenance is to support the fire department in keeping the airfield open and safe, and this ceremony underscores the significance of their apparatus in fulfilling that mission." The event's pinnacle was the truck wet down, a tradition where the new fire trucks are sprayed with water as a symbol of good fortune. Attendees participated in the symbolic act of pushing the new fire trucks into their bays, marking their official entry into service. "We teach our Airmen and our civilian firemen here that tradition and pride are very important things," said Michael Melson, Fire Station 2 station chief. "It's big for the Air Force, having two new vehicles come in this short period of time."

The 316th Comptroller Squadron was responsible for acquiring the funding for the new vehicles and their timely arrival. "We utilized unused funds from other projects throughout the Air Force," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Trivendhiran Pillai, 316th CPTS commander. "If we had gone the traditional route, the trucks may not have been here for another 3-4 years." U.S. Air Force Col. Todd E. Randolph, 316th Wing and installation commander, highlighted the strength of the community and dedication of the Andrews fire house during the ceremony. "Today's fire truck push-in ceremony is a testament to the strength of our community, the dedication of our teams, and the leadership that guides us forward," Randolph remarked. "Let us continue to work together, push forward as one, and uphold the proud traditions that define Joint Base Andrews."

Picture: U.S. Air Force Col. **Nate Somers**, 316th Mission Support Group commander, and Col. Trivendhiran Pillai, 316th Comptroller commander, prepare to spray down two new fire trucks during a "Push-In" ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, Md., March 1, 2024. These new trucks replaced fire trucks that were more than 30 years old

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Navy Facilities Engineering Systems Command
February 6, 2024

**NAVFAC Washington Celebrates Air Force Consolidated Communication Center
Construction Milestone**

From Natasha Waldron Anthony

The Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Washington has achieved a significant milestone in the construction of the \$57.8 million Air Force Consolidated Communication Center at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. A topping out ceremony was held to celebrate reaching the highest structural point of the building, January 2024. NAVFAC Washington’s Acting Program and Project Management Director, David Wolfel acknowledged the extraordinary effort of the construction team. “We are facilitating improved collaboration amongst multiple agencies responsible for our national security with the successful execution of this project. Extraordinary things don’t happen with ordinary efforts, it’s a true compliment to the team what has been accomplished to date,” he said.

Resident Officer in Charge of Construction, Lt. Cmdr. Cory Devonis said, “The CCC is proof that partnership works and the topping out on this particular project is symbolic. The team overcame multiple unforeseen conditions. However, our construction management team working with the contractor, Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Air Force District of Washington and 316th Civil Engineer Squadron proved teamwork and resiliency can overcome any obstacle.”

Assistant ROICC and Construction Manager Lt. Sharadan Rorabaugh reiterated the value of working together on this project. “The team tackled enormous challenges in the face of extreme circumstances. Ultimately these challenges forged stronger bonds of trust between the stakeholders,” she said. Rorabaugh said the work is on track to meet the March 2025 deadline.

The CCC will house more than 400 personnel from the U.S. Air Force’s 89th, 744th and 83rd Communications Squadrons to provide communication support to the Air Force and Defense Information System Agency. Commander of the 844th Communications Group, Col. Patrick Rienzi said, “We have 18 more months of outfitting this building with the right communication to do the mission and functions that we intend to do from this very facility.”

Those who attended the topping out ceremony, included NAVFAC Washington construction team, Col. Ingemar Westphall, commander of the 89th Airlift Support Group, and 316th Mission Support Group Commander Col. **Nate Somers** signed the truss. The beam will be installed at the peak of the roof over the entryway to the building. The CCC is a Design-Bid-Build project that was awarded to Balfour Beatty in Fall 2021. The Designer of Record is Wiley Wilson/Burns McDonnell Joint Venture.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Dvidshb

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES

March 2, 2023

JBA welcomes new honorary commanders

316th Wing

JBA welcomed 16 community and civic leaders into the 2023 Honorary Commanders Program during an induction ceremony at The Club at Andrews on March 2, 2023. The JBA Honorary Commander Program has been in existence for almost 20 years to allow communication and partnerships between key leaders of the base and surrounding community. The diversity of JBA's five wings, two headquarters and more than 80 tenant organizations not only impact missions and surrounding communities in the National Capital Region, but also missions across the entire Department of Defense and around the world. Honorary commanders are invited to attend events on base and in the surrounding communities that Airmen and Sailors from Joint Base Andrews support. In turn, Honorary Commanders also invite the units they are paired with to participate in events in the local community.

Today's ceremony inducted new honorary commanders, recognized returning honorary commanders and Andrews Ambassadors, and welcomed honorary commanders who transitioned to the Andrews Ambassador position. “We highly encourage leaning into your partnerships for one-on-one engagements and networking with your military counterpart,” said Col. Todd E. Randolph, 316th Wing and installation commander, while addressing the honorary commanders and JBA leadership during the ceremony. “It is imperative that we learn from one another and create opportunities to develop our local community and beyond.”

Citing new Maryland Governor Wes Moore’s inauguration speech in which he pledged to “build a better Maryland,” Capt. Page Felini, Naval Air Facility Washington commanding officer, told attendees that the honorary commander program offers the JBA community to support the governor’s plan. “Although we are all from different backgrounds, we share a common bond in our willingness to serve,” Felini said. “Whether it is service to our city, service to our state, or service to this incredible country, everyone in this room shares a common bond in our commitment to learn from one another and to develop a strong and diverse community.”

Blaire Houston, Washington Wizards manager of fan development, was inducted as an honorary commander paired with Col. **Nate Somers**, 316th Mission Support Group commander. Houston said that she is looking forward to joint opportunities between the NBA team and JBA. “It means a great deal to me to actually partner with the base,” Houston said. “Working for the Wizards, we’re surrounded by multiple different bases. The opportunity to actually get to know these individuals on a much deeper level, and not only have them out to a game but also support them in any way is very important to me.”

Another new honorary commander, Dr. Evalyne Bryant-Ward, served in the Army as did her husband. She also has one son in the Army and another in the Air Force. As the director of

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

operations for the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Group, she said she is looking forward to strengthening the bond between the civilian and JBA communities. “The opportunity to sew into another segment of our country and have an impact and make a difference is going to be exciting,” Bryant-Ward said. “Also, we can learn from (JBA military members) and how our communities are really similar and make them better.”

The Andrews Ambassadors serve as mentors to incoming honorary commanders, instilling in them the significance of community partnership and how it positively impacts service members and their mission accomplishment. Andrews Ambassador James Estepp Jr., president and CEO of the Greater Prince George’s Business Roundtable, welcomed the new Andrews ambassadors and shared his insight on the program. He stressed the importance of maintaining and enhancing relations between JBA and the local communities.

During the luncheon, each inductee was presented a certificate of induction and an honorary commander lapel pin.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.jba.af.mil/News/Article/3315198/joint-base-andrews-hosts-quality-of-life-council/>

Joint Base Andrews
March 1, 2023

Joint Base Andrews hosts Quality of Life Council

By Senior Airman Tyrone Thomas

Andrews hosted multiple organizations and helping agencies from across the installation to speak on the various ways people can get involved and feel connected here—all with a vision to improve the quality of life for the base community, Feb. 27.

The meeting included a variety of briefings, to include hiking and brewery trips hosted by Outdoor Recreation, the status of new AAFES facilities on base, upcoming themed events and fun-runs on base, and volunteer and scholarship opportunities through private organizations for service members and dependents. The meeting concluded with an open forum for audience members to ask questions directly to base leadership about any questions or concerns pertaining to their overall quality of life at Joint Base Andrews.

The council meets quarterly to share updated information and report on the status of previously discussed items. One recent quality of life improvement for JBA that sparked from this council is the onboarding of the rideshare program, Uber, which allows vetted and pre-approved Uber drivers to pick-up and drop-off personnel on base as of March 1, 2023.

In his closing remarks, Col. Todd E. Randolph, Joint Base Andrews installation commander and 316th Wing commander said, “For all the organizations, thank you for your leadership and providing quality products for our community.” Col. Randolph continued, “We want productive ideas to put on the table that we can get after. This forum is an opportunity for us to improve our community. It's up to us to make it as best as we can and identify things that may not look right or could be better. We're all ears.”

The next Quality of Life Council meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 2023. More information will be advertised through JBA's social media platforms and through official announcements for personnel to attend the next meeting and be a part of quality of life improvements at JBA.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Joint Base Andrews (MD)
June 22, 2022

316th MSG welcomes new commander

Author: Staff Sgt. Daniel Brosam, 316th Wing Public Affairs

Col. **Nate Somers** accepted command today of the 316th Mission Support Group from Col. Tyler Schaff, 316th Wing and Joint Base Andrews installation commander, during a change of command ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, Md., June 22, 2022.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: This was written by **Paul Nathan Somers**. Only the disclaimer, preface and first paragraph are shown. To read the whole paper, please follow the link below.]

https://aul.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/delivery/01AUL_INST:AUL/1295172160006836

Air University Library Digital Collections
AIR FORCE FELLOWS
AIR UNIVERSITY (AU)
June 2021

**THE FIGHT FOR TERRITORIAL LEGITIMACY WITHIN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA
– HOW CHINA’S MILITARIZATION COULD SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE
REGION**

By **Paul N. Somers**, Colonel, USAF

A Research Report Submitted to the Air Force Fellows in Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the official policy or position of the US government or the Department of Defense. In accordance with Air Force Instruction 51-303, Intellectual Property—Patents, Patent Related Matters, Trademarks and Copyrights, 1 September 1998, this research paper is not copyrighted but is the property of the United States government.

Preface

During my time as a Legislative Fellow, I worked for a member of the Senate who served on the Senate Committee for Foreign Relations. One of the key focus areas and discussion points over my tenure was China, the South China Sea, and freedom of navigation. Those discussions, meetings and hearings led to my interest in researching the South China Sea and how China’s militarization could shape the future of the region.

In an international security environment described as one of renewed great power competition, the South China Sea (SCS) has emerged as an arena of U.S.-China strategic competition. China’s actions in the SCS in recent years including actions by its maritime forces to assert China’s claims against competing claims by regional neighbors such as the Philippines and Vietnam have heightened concerns among U.S. observers that China is gaining effective control of the SCS, an area of strategic, political, and economic importance to the United States and its allies and partners.

Chinese domination of China’s near-seas region meaning the SCS and ECS, along with the Yellow Sea could substantially affect U.S. strategic, political, and economic interests in the Indo-Pacific region and elsewhere.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

This paper would not be possible without the help of several individuals. I would like to thank those who have greatly contributed to the research of this paper. First of all, I would like to thank my research advisors, Rob Litwak the Senior Vice President and Director of International Security Studies at the Wilson Center for International Scholars, and the Joint and Combined Warfighting School team of Jeffrey Turner and LtCol Andrew Dausman. Their insight, time, and patience were invaluable to me in this research project. Finally, I would like to thank my patient family for all their assistance.

Chapter 1

Intro - Checkers vs. Chess

Halfway across the globe, in waters rarely of concern to those in the Western Hemisphere, a strategic and cunning expansion of territorial sovereignty has been slowly transpiring within the South China Sea (SCS), creating a domino effect in the INDOPACOM region. Furthermore, Russia’s re-emergence and increased dominance in energy markets throughout Europe are shaping new geopolitical landscapes. The United States’ reign as a unipolar hegemon “is nearing its end, and the world has entered a multi-polar system with China and Russia emerging as dominant and influential competitors. Commonly referred to as the “Great Power Competition,” these adversaries will vie to control political, economic, and social spheres. Sectors including trade, investment, security, and technology will facilitate the reshaping of worldwide norms. “These frictions will play out over decades, not only in Beijing, Washington, and Moscow, but in Africa and Europe, the Arctic, outer space, and cyberspace.”¹² One could argue the United States will vie for renewed supremacy, yet it appears this fading giant is playing checkers while its opponents are mastering chess.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Paul Nathan Somers** is listed below.]

Congress.gov
2020

PN1666 — Air Force
116th Congress (2019-2020)

Nominees

There are 427 nominations, beginning with DAVID M. ABEL, and ending with STEVEN M. ZOLLARS

Organization

Air Force

Latest Action

03/20/2020 - Confirmed by the Senate by Voice Vote.

Date Received from President

03/03/2020

Committee

Senate Armed Services

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE
INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION
624:

To be Colonel

Nominee

PAUL N. SOMERS

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://spacecoastdaily.com/2016/07/patrick-air-force-officers-cut-ribbon-on-newly-renovated-tiki-deck-at-base-marina/>

Space Coast Daily
July 15, 2016

Patrick Air Force Officers Cut Ribbon On Newly Renovated Tiki Deck At Base Marina
By 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

BREVARD COUNTY • PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA

On hand to spotlight the opening were Lt. Col. **Paul Somers**, 45th Force Support Squadron commander; Brig. Gen. Wayne Monteith, 45th Space Wing commander; Leiane Roche, 45th FSS Marina manager; and Chief Master Sgt. Jason Lamoureux, 45th SW command chief.

The group cut the ribbon to the renovated Tiki Deck on Wednesday at the Marina at Patrick Air Force Base.

During the six-month renovation several improvements took place, which improved the quality of life here for Airmen and their families.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Space Launch Delta 45 (FL)
February 3, 2016

45th Force Support Squadron prepares for Hennessy Evaluation

Author: 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

Excitement at the Riverside Dining Facility has built as the team anticipates competing for the Air Force's prestigious John L. Hennessy Award for excellence in AF Food Service. The Best Never Rest is the 45th Force Support Squadron's motto, who is eager to showcase the RDF during the Air Force Hennessy evaluation, which begins Feb. 11. The Hennessy Award is based on the entire scope of an installation's food service program exhibiting excellence in management effectiveness, force readiness support, food quality, employee and customer relations, resource conservation, training and safety awareness.

The Hennessy Trophy Awards Program has three essential purposes. The first is to promote excellence in customer service and meal quality throughout the service by recognizing outstanding dining facility operations and management. The second is to inspire high morale, motivation, mission support, and a professional image through pride and spirited competition. The third is to improve management concepts and practices. The food service officer, Pete King said, "Patrick AFB has won the Air Force award three times and the Air Force Space Command award 12 times, but the competition is much tougher as a Food Transformation Initiative (FTI) Dining Facility." The evaluation team consists of Master Sgt. ShaErica Waters, the Air Force's Food & Beverage Manager, Mark Freeman, Senior Manager-Global Services Dining for Microsoft, and Jim Wulforst, a Hospitality Consultant formerly with Duke University.

This competition will decide the "Best of the Best" in Air Force food service. "Dining facilities are all about boosting the quality of life for our meal card holding Airmen," said Maj. **Paul Somers**, 45th FSS commander. At Patrick AFB under the FTI campus dining concept, meal card holders can use their meal cards to eat at the DFAC, the Bowling Alley, Golf Course Snack Bar, Beach House and the Tides Club. The variety of food options has increased significantly for meal card holders. "The best part of being a meal card holder is the different variety of eating options offered to me," said Senior Airman Aron Escobedo.

An added benefit of operating a FTI dining facility, one of only 12 in the Air Force, is the RDF is open to everyone on-base. Civilians, retirees, officers and family members can eat at the RDF whenever they want, which improves the morale of the entire base, according to **Somers**. Since FTI was launched in 2011, the number of meals served has increased to well over 185,000 annually. This is no challenge for the Brevard Achievement Center's staff, which has more than 20 years' experience serving RDF customers, coupled with oversight from ARAMARK's head chef. RDF customer satisfaction has shown a significant increase and was key to the 45th FSS earning the best customer satisfaction rating of any main operating base in the Air Force 2015, said King. "Besides the great food and friendly staff, the RDF is ideally situated overlooking the panoramic Banana River," said King. "The freshly renovated facility boasts a huge screened-in patio for individuals or groups, a specialty room for heritage events and two large dining rooms.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The RDF provides fresh foods and convenience to all Airmen while providing an open and friendly atmosphere to enjoy lunch with all civilian and 45th Space Wing personnel. Needless to say, the Riverside Dining Facility is ready and anxious to host the Hennessy Award Team evaluators -- The best never rest."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Facebook
September 18, 2015

Happy 68th Birthday, Air Force

Maj. **Nate Somers**, 45th FSS commander, launches Air Force Birthday T-Shirts to members of Team Patrick-Cape during the Air Force birthday celebration.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Space Launch Delta 45 (FL)
September 10, 2015

Base community partnership initiative kicks off with ‘field of dreams’

Author: Chrissy Cuttita, 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

The ongoing clearing of a ball field located near Patrick AFB's south housing area is the first step of innovation for Team Patrick-Cape's partnership initiative with the community. A memorandum of agreement, effective Sept. 1, between the 45th Space Wing and Satellite Beach, Florida, provided the foundation for the community's long-term use of one of the wing's multi-purpose athletic fields located in South Patrick Housing. "As good stewards of the community, we see it as our responsibility to pursue useful and effective partnerships that deliver needed community services, in turn, building and fostering a greater sense of community for our Airmen, their families and our neighbors," said Brig. Gen. Wayne Monteith, 45th Space Wing commander.

The first initiative was in action once a memorandum of agreement was signed locally in July and Satellite Beach began mowing their new field. "This keystone initiative provides added quality of life programs for both the military and the general public," said Pam Jordan, Patrick Air Force Base Airman and Family Services flight chief. The base teamed up with Satellite Beach to open the ball field to the public as the first Air Force community partnership initiative for Team Patrick-Cape and its neighbors. "It is going to make a world of difference for our programs," said Kerry Stoms, Satellite Beach David R. Schechter Center director. "The field provides an enhancement to our ball fields and a possibility for future growth." Stoms said she hopes to have some of the seasons remaining football games move out of the cramped spaces they currently play to the freshly mowed larger fields near South Patrick Housing. They plan to start utilizing the field full-time by the time soccer season starts in October. Military families are already a part of the Satellite Beach football and soccer programs. Hundreds of children have joined the football, soccer, baseball and lacrosse leagues throughout the year to play sports within the Satellite Beach's two mile radius. "With military housing in the Satellite Beach community, our residents take great pride in serving both their nation and their community," said Monteith. "As part of that service, our Airman are active in city council meetings and have listened to other's ideas on ways to improve the community with existing assets."

Base and community leaders invested in the Air Force's Community Partnership Initiative, a framework through which installation, public and private sector community leaders can develop creative ways to leverage their capabilities and resources to reduce costs or reduce risks by finding shared value and benefit. "One of those ideas brought back to us was turning some unused land in South Housing into a ball field," said Monteith. "We took the idea, up channeled it and it came back approved as a win-win for both the base and the community. Not only did our team come up with the idea we also benchmarked the time it took to get these types of requests through the approval process. I call that a win all the way around."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The recently signed memorandum of agreement also opens a door to the city's dream of one day having a 15-year lease to make the field home to the Seahawks football team, Storms said. For base leaders, leasing the ball field is a step forward to align more of the base's sports and instructional programs with the Schechter Center. "Allowing non-DOD civilians to use Patrick AFB facilities and property is beneficial to both military members and civilians, which, in turn, allows our military to participate in Satellite Beach sports and instructional programs," said Maj. **Nate Somers**, 45th Force Support Squadron commander. "This fosters positive community relationships and builds esprit de corps within our community."

When the second community partnership initiative becomes effective, the 45th Space Wing will extend eligibility to Satellite Beach community families to participate in the Patrick AFB Youth Center's school age child care and open recreation programs. The 45th FSS team, in partnership with the 45th Civil Engineer Squadron, will continue to discuss future possibilities for Team Patrick-Cape facilities and real estate.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Paul Nathan Somers** is listed below.]

Facebook
June 9, 2015

Space Launch Delta 45

It is our distinct honor to announce the results of the CY15 Lieutenant Colonel Central Selection Board. Please join us in congratulating the following individuals on their selection for promotion:

45th Space Wing selects:

Major **Paul N. Somers** (45th FSS)

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Space Launch Delta 45 (FL)
March 16, 2015

PAFB, CCAFS transition to 24/7 fitness center

Author: 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

Fitness centers at Patrick Air Force Base and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station are scheduled to remain accessible to active-duty military and DOD civilians, 24/7, beginning March 19, 2015. Brig. Gen. Nina Armagno, 45th Space Wing commander, approved implementation of the Air Force's 24-hour fitness access initiative, allowing PAFB and CCAFS active-duty and DOD civilians to enjoy the benefits of fitness center access at all hours.

Active-duty and DOD civilians must first register for 24-hour fitness access at the front desk of the respective fitness centers during regular working hours, Mon. through Fri. 5 a.m. - 11 p.m. Sat. and Sun. 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. and at CCAFS fitness center during regular working hours, Mon. through Fri. 6 a.m. - 4 p.m. with their Common Access Card. Additionally, participants must sign an accident waiver, a statement of understanding, and receive a safety brief, provided during registration.

Only CAC holders who have registered with the fitness center for access during unmanned operations will have permission to use the fitness center during unmanned operations, according to Fitness Center guidelines. Guests of the registered CAC holders cannot attend during unmanned operations. During overnight operating hours, patrons will have access to the indoor basketball gymnasium, select equipment, cardio room, free weight room and locker rooms.

According to Maj. **Paul Somers**, 45th Force Support Squadron commander, PAFB and CCAFS Fitness Centers will be the first Air Force accredited 24-hour fitness facilities in Air Force Space Command. "As the world's premier gateway to space, Team Patrick-Cape has a 24-hour mission," said **Somers**. "The expanded operation allows Team Patrick-Cape to remain fit-to-fight on schedules that work best for them."

The fitness center will remain open to all PAFB and CCAFS personnel during normal operating hours. In an effort to ensure safety, the 45th Security Forces Squadron will include the fitness center in their normal patrols. "The 45th Force Support Squadron is proud to bring 24-hour fitness capability to our Airmen and DOD civilians to help ensure are on-target with the Space Wing priority and commitment of investing in people," **Somers** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Space Launch Delta 45 (FL)
August 18, 2014

Patrick AFB selected as finalist, American Airman video contest

Author: Heidi Hunt, 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Aaron Burnley, 45th Civil Engineer Squadron and Master Sgt. Robert Mills, 45th Force Support Squadron, were selected to represent Air Force Space Command for the 2014 American Airman Video Contest. "Master Sgt. Mills asked me to help him with a concept he had for the video," Burnley said. "We brainstormed and together, with multimedia, we chose to take the video in the direction of a 'We' approach verses an 'I' technique."

Initially, Mills was approached by Maj. **Paul (Nate) Somers**, 45th Force Support Squadron commander, about making a video to represent the 45th Space Wing. Mills thought it would be an excellent opportunity to get creative and show others what an outstanding team and mission we have here and combine humor into the video. "We also incorporated several Airmen from Patrick Air Force Base into the video to highlight not only the Airmen but the things that makes serving here, in Florida, so unique," Mills said. The contest launched July 1 for all total force Airmen to showcase their Air Force stories in short selfie videos. "Every Airman has a story -- and smartphone technology now allows those Airmen to share those stories with a wider audience than ever before," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, said in a release at the start of the contest.

The finalist videos from Air Force major commands and agencies are now available for public voting on the Air Force's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/AFBlueTube>. Voters can "like" their favorite videos, and the video with the most "likes" by Aug. 22 at 3 p.m. CDT wins. The winning video will be featured in a special presentation by Welsh during the Air Force Association's Air and Space Conference and Technology Exposition in September in Washington, D.C. Senior Airman Kevin Larkins, also a finalist, is a seismic maintenance technician assigned to the Air Force Technical Applications Center, Detachment 421 in Alice Springs, Australia.

For more information about the contest, visit <http://airforcelive.dodlive.mil/contest>. "Our Airmen are an amazing communication resource," Welsh said. "No one tells the Air Force story like they do."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Space Launch Delta 45 (FL)
June 18, 2014

45th FSS change of command

Author: 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

Col. Patrick Donley, 45th Mission Support Group commander, presents Maj. **Paul Somers**, 45th Force Support Squadron commander, with the 45th FSS guidon during a change of command ceremony June 13, 2014, at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. Changes of command are a military tradition representing the transfer of responsibilities from the presiding officials to the upcoming official.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CREC-2013-11-20/pdf/CREC-2013-11-20.pdf>

Congressional Record – Senate (DC)
November 20, 2013

Tribute to Major Nate Somers

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, we are now dealing with the NDAA bill, the National Defense Authorization Act, and it is our opportunity as a Senate to weigh in on one of the primary roles of government and that is the security of our country, how we can support our men and women in our military service to make sure they have the best equipment and the best support and live up to our commitments to our veterans when they return to civilian life. It is an awesome responsibility. I know each of us in our own capacities need to rely on outside help in order to be able to carry out this responsibility.

We have staff. In my case I have been blessed to have a detailee from the Department of Defense from the Air Force. That person is Maj. **Nate Somers**. I mention that because he will be leaving my assignment very shortly, within the next week or so. I wanted to take this time to let my colleagues know, but also to let all the people know, that these detailees who are assigned to our office play a critical role. He has helped me in developing provisions that are in the National Defense Authorization Act and amendments that we are offering that deal with military health issues, that deal with regional security concerns, that deal with the impact of sequestration and how we can deal with the impact of sequestration and that deal with human rights issues with U.S. leadership globally as well as within the military.

To say the least, I could not have done this as effectively as I needed to on behalf of the people of Maryland if it were not for Maj. **Nate Somers**. He comes to this assignment with an incredible background. His military record is unbelievable. Major **Nate Somers** has dedicated his life to serving our Nation. **Nate** started his career with the U.S. Air Force in 2001 when he graduated and received his commission through the Officer Training Program at Mississippi State University. He also, I might add, has two master's degrees. **Nate** then went on to serve in Arkansas, Florida, and Virginia, and was deployed in support of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Prior to joining my office, Major **Somers** served as liaison between the Air Combat Command and the Air Force Legislative Liaison Director on issues ranging from constituent inquiries to weapons systems. Over the course of his incredible career, Major **Somers** has earned 17 different major awards and decorations, including the Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal. His receiving these awards comes as no surprise to those who know him. **Nate** demonstrates his extraordinary service to our Nation and to our Armed Forces each and every day. There is hardly a day that goes by that I am not better informed because of his assignment to my Senate office.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

To say that Major **Somers** will be missed is an understatement. **Nate** has truly been an integral part of my staff. Whether ensuring our Maryland veterans get the services they need or advising me on complex defense issues, there was no task **Nate** would not do or could not do in order to help our office. The Air Force should be proud of the extraordinary talent they have in Maj. **Nate Somers**. I thank him for his service to this Nation. I also want to take this opportunity to thank **Nate’s** wife and sons for sharing **Nate** with the Senate and for his service to the country. I yield the floor.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Paul Nathan “Nate” Somers
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Paul Nathan Somers** is listed below.]

Omp.gov
October 18, 2012

FEDERAL PREVAILING RATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

579th FPRAC
SHELDON FRIEDMAN, Chairperson, Presiding
ROOM 7H31
Office of Personnel Management
Washington, D.C. 20415

Staff Specialists and Visitors:
Nate Somers, OPM-CLA

CHAIRMAN FRIEDMAN: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to this, our 579th meeting of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee. My name is Sheldon Friedman, Chair of the Committee, and as usual, why don't we introduce ourselves, starting today with you, Mark.

MR. **SOMERS**: **Nate Somers**, Air Force legislative fellow assigned to OPM.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
 Colin Baenziger & Associates



Section 11

Mark B. Taylor

Cocoa Beach

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

Mark B. Taylor, J.D.

July 8, 2025

City Council of Cocoa Beach, Florida
C/O Colin Baenziger & Associates
via email to: Recruit33@cb-asso.com

Dear Cocoa Beach City Council:

My name is Mark Taylor and I want to be your next city manager. I am an experienced local government professional with years of service as a county administrator, a county attorney, and a school superintendent. My professional life so far has been spent in Virginia. I have taken my Virginia state retirement, but I have plenty of energy, knowledge, and passion for community to work with. I am ready for a change, and I am ready to be the change in leadership that the City of Cocoa Beach needs.

I am familiar with Cocoa Beach, having visited and studied Florida's Space Coast and the federal assets there closely in connection with my work establishing the Wallops Research Park on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in cooperation with NASA Wallops Flight Facility and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Serving on Virginia's Eastern Shore as the Accomack County Attorney was a wonderful coastal community experience that included work with flood mitigation grants and other uniquely coastal issues.

With a total area of 15.19 square miles and a population of over 11,300, the City of Cocoa Beach is a good size for me at this point in my career. I have served successfully as a County Administrator in Virginia counties that are notably larger than your city. Spotsylvania County is 108 square miles in area, with a population of more than 138,000. Greene County is more than 155 square miles in area, with a population of over 20,000. Greene County's staff was similar in size to your Cocoa Beach staff. As Spotsylvania County Administrator, I led more than 1,200 employees.

Cocoa Beach will benefit from open, engaging leadership style, creative approach to problem-solving, and strict insistence upon fiscal transparency will help you maximize your constituents' trust in your city government. My approach to local management is driven by my deep respect for taxpayers. I listen carefully and actively, using questions to help constituents discern their needs and wants clearly. I draw examples from my experience to illuminate possibilities for new paths forward.

My experience also includes many public infrastructure and facilities construction projects, including their planning, programming, and financing. I can help you get the infrastructure replacement and improvement done that Cocoa Beach needs.

My open, engaging leadership style, creative approach to problem-solving, and strict insistence upon fiscal transparency will help you maximize your constituents' trust in your city government. My approach to local management is driven by my deep respect for taxpayers. I listen carefully and actively, using questions to help constituents discern their needs and wants clearly. I draw examples from my experience to illuminate possibilities for new paths forward.

M. B. Taylor, J.D. to
City Council of Cocoa Beach, FL
C/O Colin Baenziger & Associates
July 8, 2025

Your community's desire to manage growth and build your city's business base thoughtfully and strategically is laudable. Zoning, planning, and growth management were at the heart of my first two jobs in local government, and they have been a major part of my entire career. As Spotsylvania County Administrator, I led the development of a standardized approach to economic development that made our county the regional leader in business attraction and job creation. I negotiated the deal that brought re-development and more than 200 new jobs to the industrial facility that had been General Motors only plant in Virginia. I will help you chart the future that you desire for Cocoa Beach.

My non-traditional background offers unique strengths and advantages. As a licensed attorney, I was trained to learn very rapidly, identify key issues, craft efficient solutions, communicate effectively, and advocate persuasively. I have excellent experience in planning, zoning, growth management, water & sewer operations, emergency services, economic development, and all aspects of government operations. I am passionate about making creative use of existing law to maximize the effectiveness of operations and to create exceptional value for citizens. I believe in getting things done!

My brief tenure as Spotsylvania County School Superintendent was a very special time. After the failure of public education in the COVID-19 lock-downs and the confusion that followed, conservative school board leaders asked me to serve as their superintendent. I qualified for a superintendent license under Virginia law, based on my doctorate degree in law, my professional experience, and the school board's support. I worked tirelessly to improve the school division.

Outsiders are generally not welcome in Virginia public education. In the face of considerable opposition, I led major positive changes in the our school division. I drove an overhaul of Facilities Maintenance that dramatically improved the schools while reducing costs. I led changes in Human Resources that improved both teacher recruiting and the management of non-instructional staff. I shepherded and resourced the creation of self-paced teacher training and implementation of instructional pathways designed to focus students on finding and embracing their purpose in pursuing education. I led the budget process that yielded the biggest budget increase the division had gotten in more than 25 years. I resourced and supported significant expansion of career and technical training in the school division. Though unconventional, I was certainly effective.

In the election following my appointment as superintendent, the school board politics changed. Ignoring my accomplishments and simply refusing to work with me, the new school board summarily fired me, ignoring the procedures set forth in my contract. I had no choice but to sue them. I had served the division well and the improvements I made were worth many times the value of my contract. They did not fire me for non-performance. They fired me because I was an outsider who did not fit their mold and because I supported traditional values. Please do not allow my legal action against Spotsylvania County Public Schools to alarm you.

I have served Virginia communities from Fairfax County in Northern Virginia to Spotsylvania County (half-way between Washington, DC and Richmond, VA), and from coastal Accomack County to the mountains of Greene County. I have served expertly, selflessly, and honorably. I have only fought to defend my honor when I was grossly mistreated and my contract was prejudicially violated.

Respectfully, I ask you to give me a hearing and a chance to become your next city manager. I believe

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M. B. Taylor, J.D. to
City Council of Cocoa Beach, FL
C/O Colin Baenziger & Associates
July 8, 2025

you will find that I have the integrity, strength of character, knowledge, learning capacity, and advocacy skills needed to help you realize your vision of a vibrant future for Cocoa Beach.

Having improved every locality that I have served, I am excited about the prospect of serving you. I look forward to getting to know you soon.

Best regards,

Mark B. Taylor, J.D.

Mark B. Taylor, J.D.

Mark B. Taylor, J.D.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Superintendent, Spotsylvania County Public Schools, Spotsylvania, VA (\$245,000) 2022-2024 - Led >3,600 staff serving 24,000 students in 30 schools with \$430M budget - Raised SOL test scores - Raised teacher & staff pay more than 7% - Captured biggest local funding increase in 25 years - Lowered teacher vacancies - Launched innovative professional development model for teachers - Engaged community to improve school safety - Improved Special Education compliance Expanded Career Tech - Modernized Human Resources & Maintenance Depts. - Rebuilt Communications Dept. & increased outreach to parents, staff, & region.

County Administrator, Greene County, VA (\$167,900) 2019 – 2022 - Separated Greene County from Rapidan Service Authority & created county utilities department - Created county EMS dept. & built the first county EMS station - Managed COVID-19 response maintaining all Greene County services - Developed public/private partnership procurement alternative - Drove purchase & renovation of local landmark for county visitors center - Created employee performance evaluation tool - Led "re-boot" of economic development, engaging commercial & industrial property owners on process improvement & promotional cooperation - Fostered adoption of performance-based business zoning - Modified solid waste policies to follow recycling market dynamics - Completed comprehensive facilities needs assessment

County Administrator, Spotsylvania County, VA (\$168,300) 2015-2019 - Led >1,200 staff serving a community of 130,000 residents - Secured the County's first "AAA" Bond Rating by tightening fiscal policies & recognizing "hidden" assets - Led region in economic development & job creation - Maintained low local tax rates - Recruited business re-use for dark GM Plant yielding major renovation investment & job creation and 40+ ac industrial land for the county - Recruited an international industrial manufacturer to locate its US corporate HQ in our county - Led creative initiatives to build Spotsylvania brand while maintaining co-branding with the Fredericksburg Region - Standardized new business incentives, recruitment strategies and performance agreements - Kick-started "Business Walk" retention program & visited fastest-growing businesses personally - Documented public library trip generation & negotiated rent-free library space in a regional shopping mall - Created a stormwater denitrification project using native filter-feeders species to "treat" stormwater - Initiated 360-degree performance evaluations of department directors & lead staff - Implemented staff-wide training tools - Drove staff-wide pay & benefits study and funded implementation - Prototyped a new community engagement plan and hired a new Community Engagement Director - Mapped & launched computer system upgrade; completed new phone & radio

Section 11

system upgrades - Negotiated settlement of a major construction contract claim left-over from prior administration
- Discretely handled executive-level personnel issue

County Attorney, Accomack County, VA (\$149,600) 2007-2015 - Wrote VA legislation creating Wallops Research Park, a NASA, Commonwealth & County partnership enterprise - Negotiated with NASA for County access to Wallops Flight Facility assets - Negotiated sale of the first WRP site for construction of a "Class A" office/flex research building - Wrote County water agreement with the Town of Onancock to re-site the Shore's only hospital - Wrote water & sewer agreement to secure bulk service from the Town of Onancock for central Accomack County - Defended Accomack County in court (including a lawsuit attacking the County's tax levy) - advised the BOS, PC, BZA, EDA, & other entities & agencies on all aspects of Virginia government operations

Assistant County Attorney Culpeper County, VA (\$+/- 90,000) 2006-2007 - Advised Board of Supervisors & departments on operations & personnel issues, contracts, utilities, etc.

County Attorney & Deputy Attorney, Spotsylvania County, VA (\$75,000 to \$108,000) 1996-2006 - Served ('96-'00) & led ('00-'06) the County Attorney's Office (staff of 4) while county population increased more than 55% - Merged career & volunteer units into a county Dept. of Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services - Created ambulance fees - Re-wrote and updated Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Ordinance - Implemented major down-zonings - advised Board on major land use applications - Negotiated proffers and development conditions in land use cases - Framed the zoning and Virginia Dept of Health permit applications for the County's first hospital - Contracted for a major reenactment event & feature-length documentary - Wrote performance-based procurement of an 800 MHz emergency radio system - Procured reservoir & park sites - Wrote contracts for \$22 Million water treatment plant construction - Advised county departments on operations issues.

Assistant County Attorney Fairfax County, VA (\$36,000 to \$56,000 salary) 1989-1996 - Created process & cut development document review from 6 months to less than 30 days -Reviewed over 2,500 subdivisions, land transfers & public utility easements - Advised Supervisors on constituent issues & zoning case negotiations - Advised Supervisors and County agencies on floodplains & wetlands, building & fire codes, ADA issues, historic preservation, special tax districts, zoning interpretations, etc. - Defended land use cases in state & federal courts

EDUCATION:

Virginia Licensed School Superintendent
Certificate, Baldrige Six Sigma Process Management
Diplomate, National Trial Advocacy Institute, Georgetown Law Center, Washington, DC
J.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC
B.A. with University Honors, American University, Washington, DC

Candidate Introduction

Mark B. Taylor, JD

EDUCATION

Diplomate, National Institute for Trial Advocacy, Georgetown Law Center,
Washington, DC
Juris Doctorate, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Bachelor of Arts with University Honors, American University, Washington, DC

EXPERIENCE

Attorney / Consultant	2024 – present
Superintendent, Spotsylvania County Public Schools	2022 – 2024
County Administrator/Manager, Greene County, VA	2019 – 2022
County Administrator/Manager, Spotsylvania County, VA	2015 – 2019
County Attorney, Accomack County, VA	2006 – 2015
County Attorney, Spotsylvania County, VA	1996 – 2006
Assistant County Attorney, Fairfax County, VA	1989 – 1996

BACKGROUND

I love Florida's Space Coast. The love came naturally because I was raised in a NASA household. A NASA physicist, my father started with the agency the day it was formed. He spent his professional life studying planetary atmospheres. He launched research from Wallops Island, VA and Cape Canaveral, FL. I am very much a product of his boundless curiosity, scientific rigor, and passion for precision.

I was a precocious student, learning fundamentals of Calculus by the third grade. I was offered a full college scholarship in Dramatic Arts, but declined it to pursue an education in Behavioral Psychology at American University. Curiosity about the roots of behavior led me to study Neurophysiology and work in research at American University and at the National Institutes of Health. Sadly, federal changes in research funding destroyed my NIH career track.

An old friend encouraged me to consider law school. Achieving an excellent score on the LSAT, I applied both to a doctoral program in Neurophysiology and to law school at UNC-Chapel Hill. I was admitted to both programs. I chose law school because it seemed to be the clearer path to affording marriage and family responsibilities.

After completing my education and passing the bar exam, I found the private practice of law frustrating and unsatisfying. I saw lawyering as a valuable set of skills and I wanted to use my training to do something of greater and more lasting value than simply making money.

Mark B. Taylor, JD

A mentor and friend encouraged me to get involved in local government. That encouragement took me into public service in the County Attorney's Office in Fairfax County, Virginia. Fairfax is one of the leading communities in America. There, I worked in the areas of planning, zoning, and community development. I was given charge over the review of legal documents relating to real estate development. I inherited a backlog of more than 600 pending applications and a system that required months of negotiation to complete. Within six months, I cleared the backlog and created standardized templates and review procedures that reduced the review process to 21 days or less.

A senior lawyer who knew my work recruited me to serve as Deputy County Attorney for Spotsylvania County, VA. Spotsylvania is located on the I-95 corridor, midway between the nation's Capitol at Washington, DC and the Virginia Capitol at Richmond, VA. In my time serving in the County Attorney's Office, Spotsylvania was one of the fastest growing localities in America. Spotsylvania now has a population of approximately 146,000 and an area of 408 square miles. Spotsylvania County is a "full-service" county government, providing public water and sewer services and solid waste transfer and disposal services, in addition to the traditional services provided by Virginia counties.

I have served Spotsylvania County in three different leadership positions – County Attorney, County Administrator, and School Superintendent. In each recruitment, I was asked to apply for the position. Yet, I have also had struggles with Spotsylvania County leaders along the way. Disagreement on the Board of Supervisors over down-zonings led to my departure from the role of County Attorney. My resolute support for my Social Services Director after she took a removal action to save the life of a neglected child led to my departure from the role of County Administrator. My decision to remove sexually-explicit books (including descriptions of rape and bestiality) from school libraries and my association with Kirk Cameron led to my termination from the position of School Superintendent.

Long regarded as a bedroom community for Washington, DC and Northern Virginia, Spotsylvania County advanced notably during my tenure as County Administrator (2015-2019). We won Spotsylvania County's first "AAA" bond rating, due in part to my advocacy for recognition of the county's huge permitted landfill capacity as a significant asset. I also created a scoring tool and graduated incentives to make our economic development program transparent and engaging. With my system in play, we led our region in both business attraction and job creation.

While I was serving as Spotsylvania County Administrator, I was recruited to work for Greene County as their County Administrator. Greene County needed help to improve their delivery of public services. Water & sewer service had been provided in Greene County by the Rapidan Service Authority (RSA) for more than 50 years. RSA was created as a three-way partnership between the counties of Greene, Madison, and Orange. Inequities had emerged whereby Orange and Madison cooperated to in the operations of RSA to the disadvantage of Greene. The situation was so lop-sided that Greene County had made several unsuccessful attempts to remove itself from RSA.

Mark B. Taylor, JD

I devoted myself to the cause of extricating Greene County from RSA. As I told the Greene Board of Supervisors, it was a long and difficult process. Greene County's freedom from RSA was finally won and its own Water & Sewer Department was created.

Greene County was my home when the COVID 19 pandemic struck. At that time, the county's EMS service was provided by contract with the University of Virginia Hospital. The cancellation of elective surgeries at UVA due to the pandemic cost the hospital \$3 million per day. To help cut their losses, UVA canceled Greene County's EMS services contract. The cancellation left the county with only 6 months to come up with an EMS service. Soon after the contract was canceled, the county building official reported that structural issues at the EMS station that UVA had been operating would necessitate condemnation of the building. The old station was still owned by the old volunteer rescue squad organization that had been the EMS service provider prior to the UVA contract.

We quickly realized that our new EMS station could be built on the site of the old volunteer station much more quickly and affordably than developing a new site. We successfully negotiated with the volunteer agency to wind-up its affairs and donate its land to the county. A contractor had to be found and, most critically, the fastest possible design and construction methods had to be embraced. A key piece in this was to find a steel fabricator who could produce the building "kit" that was needed in our absurdly tight deadline. I personally called steel fabricators in our region, talking to corporate leaders until I found one who would put our order first on his production schedule and expedite it. I told our contractor to be standing by, but nobody seemed to believe that delivery would occur as promised. It did. When delivery day came, I went to the site and texted pictures of the materials being unloaded to the contractor, demanding instant mobilization. It was certainly a team effort, but I provided lots of the push that got this "impossible" project done on time and on budget.

After Greene County EMS was up and running in its new building and while I was recruiting a director for the Water & Sewer Department there, I was again contacted by elected officials in Spotsylvania County. This time the calls came from School Board members. Though I had no background in public education, a majority members of the Spotsylvania School Board each contacted me directly and asked me to apply for the position of superintendent. The last of the four who contacted me, Ms. April Gillespie, told me that I was the only person she would support to lead the schools. They were expressly looking for a leader who could make sense of the school division's budget, fix their maintenance issues, fix their Human Resources system, and help them deal with social & cultural issues.

Spotsylvania County's School Division educates more than 24,000 students, thanks to the dedicated service of more than 3,600 employees operating 30 instructional facilities. The School Division's FY2025 Budget totals over \$400 million. The biggest challenges facing the Spotsylvania County Public Schools have been in the areas of public funding, capital maintenance, staffing, and the expansion of career and technical training opportunities.

Mark B. Taylor, JD

I answered the call and went through the process to secure a Superintendent License from the Virginia Board of Education. The issuance of my license was a shock to many in the public education establishment. A lawsuit (supported vigorously by a member of the progressive minority on the board) was filed, seeking to overturn my license. That lawsuit was decided in favor of the Virginia Department of Education and my licensure.

Regardless of the court's validation of my license, relentless social media attacks continued throughout my brief tenure. I stood up to those attacks and plowed forward with positive changes, including the creation of instructional pathways to instill greater intentionality and sense of purpose in our students, creation of a self-directed professional development program for our instructional staff, a complete reorganization of the Facilities Maintenance Department and recruitment of a new director, overhauls of both Human Resources and Communications, and the removal of dozens of sexually-explicit materials from our school libraries.

Division CFO Phil Trayer said that I was the first Superintendent he had met who actually understood the budget. I worked with Phil and his team to refine both the budget and the budget message, resulting in the biggest funding increase the schools had seen in 25 years. Theresa O'Quinn, a former colleague, came out of retirement to work with me as our Human Resources Director. She completely overhauled that department. As my "Christmas present to the community" I invited Kirk Cameron and his Brave Books team to do a Book Fair in late 2023. I rented one of our High Schools and provided the event at my own expense.

In January of 2024, a new Progressive majority took over the Spotsylvania County School Board. They immediately set about considering how to fire me. In pursuing that course, the board utterly failed to obey the necessary procedures set forth in my contract. The board's action terminating me as of March 19, 2024 was a gross violation of my contract. By that action, they cut my contractual engagement short by 27 months, withheld payment for my accrued leave benefits, etc.

The damages caused by the termination of my contract were substantial. Supporters who recognized the good that I had done for the schools. In our community, people I did not know stopped me in stores, in restaurants, and even pumping gas to thank me for the work I had done. Many of them also encouraged me to sue the school division. I consulted an attorney, who confirmed the righteousness of my cause and the substantial nature of the damages inflicted on me. Given the gross and flagrant breach of my contract, I decided that I had to take action as a matter of my own self respect.

Having made my career in public service, suing a public body that had employed was not an easy decision, but in the end I felt that it had to be done. Please do not allow this matter to give you pause about engaging me. I only took legal action against the school division because their violation of my contract was so gross and thoughtless.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

For me, legal training has proven to be a great preparation for local government service. Lawyers are trained to assimilate information quickly, to analyze information rationally and in practical terms, and to advocate effectively using both oral and written communication. It's a unique and highly adaptive skill set.

My management style is open and engaging. I welcome inputs, learn rapidly, analyze rationally, and advocate passionately for the betterment of my team and my community. I work at connecting with every employee, from the bottom of the organization to the top. Every employee needs to be heard. I enjoy listening and learning from them.

My work has notably improved every community that I have served. I bring abundant energy and positive vision to my work as a local government leader. Whatever we are today, we have the opportunity to be better tomorrow. I believe in "better."

I am constantly driven to create effective local government systems to meet community needs. Solid systems create reliable service outcomes that outlive individual employees and build solid public trust. Greater public trust builds greater community cohesion and community pride.

I have spent many years studying public employee performance and pay systems. I have created simple, straight-forward performance evaluation tools to drive organizational improvement by bringing clarity, objectivity, and efficiency to performance measurement. I want every employee see their strengths and weaknesses clearly, and have a simple map to guide their future improvement. With their path to success clearly laid out, each employee is empowered to choose their own outcome. Each employee can choose either success or failure. While I urge every employee to choose success, I do not flinch in the delivery of consequences that are needed when an employee chooses otherwise.

The elected officials I have served would likely say that I am a creative problem-solver that is competent, decisive, energetic, fair, dedicated, and ethical. Staff would say they appreciated my vision, mentoring, clarity, availability, consistency, support, high standards, interactive approach, and recognition of accomplishments. Both groups would see me as a visionary who can also get it done.

During the first six months my efforts will involve:

- Making myself visible in the city and meeting with staff, elected officials, citizen groups, and county & state officials to assess city operations, hear concerns, and learn relationships and community dynamics
- Assessing the city's financial position and reviewing anticipated future trends
- Studying city codes and policies
- Assessing current performance measures that will be used to determine if staff and I are meeting city's goals and citizens' expectations

Mark B. Taylor, JD

I work with media to ensure accurate, quality coverage for citizens. My personal appearances in the media can range from occasional to frequent. I will defer to the Mayor and elected officials and engage media as they prefer.

I do not anticipate anyone contacting the city with negative contacts about me with the possible exception of elected officials connected with Spotsylvania County Public Schools. The School Board violated key protections afforded in my contract, leaving me with no choice but to take legal action.

In my spare time, I enjoy traveling with my wife and spending time with our family.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Not just outside the box, I think outside the warehouse the box was in
- Creative, practical, results-driven problem-solver
- Listens long, then speaks to the heart of the matter
- Careful and conservative with taxpayers' money
- Values and respects every member of our team
- Always learning, always improving

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

I was summarily terminated by Spotsylvania County Public Schools, without adherence to the processes called for in my contract. Having earned full retirement from the Virginia Retirement System, my goal is to take advantage of that opportunity and seek new experiences.

MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation at Spotsylvania County Public Schools was \$245,000.

Section 11

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
MARK BRIAN TAYLOR**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Spotsylvania County, VA	No Records Found
Greene County, VA	No Records Found
Accomack County, VA	No Records Found
State	
Virginia	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Spotsylvania County, VA	No Records Found
Greene County, VA	No Records Found
Accomack County, VA	No Records Found
Federal	
Virginia	October 2024 - Lawsuit filed by Mr. Taylor against the School Board of Spotsylvania County Disposition: Case Open <i>*See explanation included in Mr. Taylor's Candidate Introduction</i>

Motor Vehicle	
Virginia	No Major Infractions Found
Credit	Excellent
Personal Bankruptcy	No Records Found
Sex Offender Registry	Not Listed
Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed
Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
MARK BRIAN TAYLOR**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

Background Check Summary for MARK BRIAN TAYLOR Personal Disclosure

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: MARK BRIAN TAYLOR

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes ☐ No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ☐ No ☒
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes ☐ No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☒ No ☐ *See Introduction*
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
Facebook (dormant), X @SupMarkTaylor, LinkedIn Mark Taylor 3rd
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes ☐ No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
Nicole Cole et al v VA Bd of Education See Intro
I was a defendant. This case upheld my Superintendent license.

Attested to:

Mark Taylor
Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Mark Taylor

**Theresa O'Quinn – Chief Human Resources Leader, Spotsylvania County Public Schools,
VA [REDACTED]**

Ms. O'Quinn met Mr. Taylor when he became the County Attorney for Spotsylvania County in 1996. She was working in Human Resources and took a lateral move to be the Deputy Director of Utilities to gain experience. She was on the County Administrator track at the time. They primarily discussed employment law matters. They remained in contact. He recommended her in Spotsylvania County Schools as the Human Resources lead, and they worked together for about a year in this capacity. She resigned from the position for personal reasons.

Ms. O'Quinn would not have continued to work for Mr. Taylor if they did not work well together. They have similar work ethics as they were brought up to work hard and be ethical. He felt it was important to represent both the employee and the employer in his role, and he was very receptive to others. He is highly intellectual, but he can work with those at any educational level. That said, those who work directly with him tend to be at a high level.

Mr. Taylor is an excellent listener, and he is respectful of those he speaks to. He knows a great deal about land use, and other aspects related to government. He also has experience managing a county. He has good stamina to keep up with the schedule that he maintains. Ms. O'Quinn gives him very high marks.

Ms. O'Quinn was very well versed in employment law, though she was not an attorney. When Mr. Taylor stated a legal opinion, she agreed with him over 90% of the time. When she disagreed, he truly listened to what she had to say. She always felt heard and respected.

Mr. Taylor did not directly hire Ms. O'Quinn. He recommended her to the Board as someone who could move the schools in a different direction. She has a private sector background and was known in the region as being a mover. For what the Board wanted at the time, she fit well. The Board made the decision to hire her. When he is responsible for the hire, he values the opinions of others in the process. He vetted individuals independently of their verification process. He hired an excellent Finance Director.

As County Attorney Mr. Taylor was not required to be at all community meetings, though he attended some land use meetings. While working for the Schools, he was out and about. When the Board was considering pulling books from the shelves that were not appropriate for the ages of the students, he had to read through all the books in a very short time. No one else could have accomplished that herculean task, independent of politics, in the time frame that he did.

Mr. Taylor works very well with the Board and the staff. He was not the typical hire for a Superintendent position, but his contract was legally approved, and he did well. When he met with the Board on topics, he brought the appropriate staff member to the table to provide further knowledge. He gave staff the face time with the Board and allowed them to speak freely, which had not been done before.

Reference Notes

Mark Taylor

When it comes to finance, Mr. Taylor has experience on the County side and in the School system, which is unusual but tremendously helpful. When Mr. Taylor was the County Administrator, the Board did not trust the school system. As Superintendent, he was able to work well with the County and his budget was approved, a very significant achievement. During stressful situations Mr. Taylor may internalize the stress, but he goes to the gym after work to decompress.

Most Board Members were happy with Mr. Taylor. They gave him a multitude of tasks to accomplish, and he followed through. Ms. O'Quinn needed to make a decision on a personnel matter in a short time. Mr. Taylor took the issue to the Board and resolved it within the time frame. She highly respects him.

Mr. Taylor has worked for difficult Boards, but the Spotsylvania School Board was extremely politically divided. He was hired without an educational background, which tested the code, and they had to get the attorney general's opinion on his hire. He withstood the controversy. He took the job knowing that if the political majority on the Board flipped, he would likely lose his job. Also, since his children had been home schooled, it may seem like he would not be invested in the school system. However, he knew that residents were unhappy with the school system, and he was very passionate about making a difference. His daughter spoke out against his appointment as Superintendent which must have been hurtful to him. Also, in the County there was some controversy when a service provider was changed but they did not work together at the time so Ms. O'Quinn cannot provide details of the controversy.

If Mr. Taylor has the qualities that the Board is looking for, and they are aligned with what is needed, he will succeed but that is true for any administrator. Mr. Taylor's father is living in Florida and is aging. Mr. Taylor is looking for a position in Florida to be near his father.

Mr. Taylor has the experience of managing a community, as well as some unique experience. He understands the law. He is respectful of school budgets. He builds respect. Ms. O'Quinn would give him serious consideration for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Taylor:

- Hard worker,
- Tenacious,
- Problem solver,
- Cares about people,
- Understands dynamics of an elected Board and controversial issues, and
- Highly respected as a listener.

Reference Notes
Mark Taylor

Strengths: Works hard, intellectual, excellent listener, respectful, enjoyable to work with.

Weaknesses: Because he is so intellectual, he sometimes needs to bring it down a notch for people who do not have the education that he does. However, over the years this has improved.

Donald Hart – Council Member, Accomack County, VA [REDACTED]

Mr. Hart met Mr. Taylor when he was hired in 2007. Mr. Taylor was unanimously selected and was a breath of fresh air. Mr. Taylor was the County Attorney. They worked together professionally and did not interact socially. Mr. Taylor's door was open, and he was available to the Council members. Mr. Hart highly regards Mr. Taylor.

When Mr. Taylor was given a goal and parameters, he accomplished the goal to satisfaction. He is easy to work with and is not afraid to share his opinion when asked. He does not give lip service, he follows through, and he follows direction. Once a decision is made, he moves forward even when it is not the path that he recommends. He is well respected because he was in the County for so long.

As an attorney, Mr. Taylor was excellent. He worked through various scenarios and dotted his i's and crossed his t's from day one. He is someone you would not want to face in court. He asked the opinion of the Council and gave them all the information.

As a Council they were almost too informed. Mr. Taylor told them everything relevant and warned them of anything that might come back to sting them. He told them that if they did not want the details to let him know. He safeguarded the County.

Developers were suing the County and Mr. Taylor had to defend zoning and planning. He did a good job. He worked with the County staff, and they found solutions. The matter was resolved and both sides were happy, without going to court. The solution was a win/win for both sides, and brought development and jobs to the County.

Good at prediction, Mr. Taylor was very adept at looking at a case and knowing whether they could win or not. When he thought they may lose, he asked if they wanted him to try and get the best settlement possible. Once approved, he negotiated the settlement, and moved forward in the most positive way. The County always looked good in the process.

When Mr. Taylor was given a task, he wanted to complete it. He prioritized the work and was very up front with the Councilmembers on his workload and when he could reasonably do what they were asking him to do. He was trustworthy and did what he said he would do. Mr. Hart cannot recall a time when the Board split on something he brought to them; it was generally unanimous in favor of his recommendation.

Reference Notes
Mark Taylor

At one point a few Council members asked Mr. Taylor to do something outside of a Council meeting. He told them they had to secure a majority vote before he could move forward. When they did not bring the matter to the Board, Mr. Taylor did. He felt the entire Council needed to hear the information and make the decision together. He then honored what the majority vote was. He was always very composed and did not show stress.

Mr. Taylor resigned to pursue other professional opportunities because he needed to be closer to family at that time. Attorneys make friends quickly, and can make enemies quickly as well. Historically his enemies did not stay enemies long. He was not involved in any controversy in Accomack County.

Mr. Hart would hire Mr. Taylor. The Accomack Board would likely hire him back. The members on the Board still serving who worked with Mr. Taylor would paint such a strong picture that they would likely give him a chance. He lets people know what to expect. He follows the direction that he is given. He has been sorely missed.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Taylor:

- Professional,
- Follows direction,
- Easy to work with,
- Accomplished what he was given, and
- Dedicated.

Strengths: Easy to work with, follows through, follows direction, complete the goals.

Weaknesses: While he always followed the majority's decision, he sometimes let the minority know that he agreed with them. This tendency was a strength most of the time, but not when tensions were high. Also, he can be headstrong, but he follows direction.

Chris Yakabouski – Board Member, Spotsylvania County, VA [REDACTED]

Mr. Yakabouski has known Mr. Taylor since 2003 or 2004. Mr. Yakabouski has worked with Mr. Taylor as both County Attorney and then as County Administrator. Mr. Taylor did well in both regards and was a solid employee. Both of his departures were political and not related to performance.

Mr. Taylor makes good decisions both when hiring and in general. The members of the leadership team that he hired are still with the organization. He adjusted processes to optimize performance as much as he could. Their hands were very tied from the Assembly, but he was

Reference Notes

Mark Taylor

very innovative. He never just accepted that something was not possible, rather he found a legal path forward.

While Mr. Taylor was very active and visible in the community, the Board of Supervisors wanted to be front and center. He knew his place and did not step on their toes. He often attended community meetings and events, and reported back. He is good at keeping others informed but he often provides all the information. Mr. Yakabouski asked him at times to just provide the cliff notes instead of the full details, and he accommodated this request.

A large indoor mall wanted to expand at a time when outdoor malls were becoming more popular. Mr. Taylor walked the Board through the ins and outs, and the pitfalls. It is easy to allow a business to expand, but he took the time to research what it meant for the community, while also protecting his employer.

Mr. Taylor has good financial skills, and his top priority is to ensure that staff members are rewarded for doing a good job. He was always very creative in meeting priorities, and did not fall behind on any task. He did not become flustered, and he is very calm and cool. He does not lash out and he is always professional. He handles conflicts well.

While Mr. Taylor was involved in controversy as Superintendent, he was often on the right side of the issue. He led the District through some turbulent times. He did not create the mess or the controversy, and did what he could to help.

As County Administrator, Mr. Taylor had some Board members who told him to do certain things without taking an official vote. While the Board members told him they had the votes, there was no way to really know if they did unless a vote was taken. Mr. Taylor did not move forward without a vote. He was called into the backroom and incidents like this were used against him. Mr. Yakabouski stood up for Mr. Taylor because he was being railroaded. Mr. Taylor was targeted, and his separation was not based on performance.

Mr. Yakabouski would hire Mr. Taylor to lead a governmental entity. He did a great job for their County. He realized that they were running out of space for employees. He tried to move their master plan for the courthouse forward to accommodate future staffing requirements, but it required Board support. If the Board had listened to him, they could have avoided the cost of purchasing a building. Mr. Taylor tried to plan as best he could to find the path to take them where they needed to go, while understanding that elected body sets the policy.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Taylor:

- Knowledgeable,
- Caring,
- Innovative,
- Trustworthy,
- Honest, and
- Punctual in deadlines and workflow.

Reference Notes

Mark Taylor

Strengths: Cares very deeply about his work, delves in and learns every facet of the job, excels at everything he did, problem solver.

Weaknesses: He accomplished every task that he was asked to do, but he was very busy and could have delegated more.

Kelly Guempel – Deputy Superintendent, Spotsylvania County Schools, VA

Mr. Guempel has known Mr. Taylor since around 2020 or 2021. Mr. Guempel was the Interim Superintendent when Mr. Taylor was hired, and then served as his Deputy during his tenure. The staff had an impression of Mr. Taylor before he was hired, and they were not sure how it would be to work with him. He was completely the opposite of what they expected, he is a wonderful human being.

Mr. Taylor is one of the most intelligent people that Mr. Guempel has ever met. He is very open-minded. He knows government, finance, and how to work with committees and boards. He is just very gifted in all aspects. He has a broad vision and is exceptionally talented. His hiring came with some controversy because he did not have an educational background. However, he fixed glaring problems that no one had been able to fix for decades, and did so without micromanaging employees. Employees were given the highest raises they had had in almost ten years. He worked with a Board of Supervisors that was often in opposition to each other. He navigated politics in a way that opened the door to positive negotiations. He was even able to move forward during the pandemic. He is always very professional in his manner and his attire.

When Mr. Taylor can do his own evaluations, he hires good personnel. He did not hire internally as was the tradition prior to his arrival and some of his hires were unorthodox. For example, he hired their Head Maintenance Director from the Pentagon. While this individual did not have experience in education, he is an excellent Maintenance Director and has done an outstanding job for them.

Mr. Taylor is very calculated when making decisions. He listens to multiple sources, gathers information, and does not fly from the hip. He does what is in the best interest of others. He thinks about staff and their welfare. He was told to do things that would hurt others, and he refused. He was still able to make tough decisions, and he made decisions that were not popular, but he cares about the impact on people and tries to mitigate them.

When approached by a member of the public, Mr. Taylor always provided a response or put them in contact with someone who could help them directly. He does not let issues slide. If he puts his name on something, he is 100% engaged.

Mr. Taylor was great at communication. He was working with a difficult board, and the organization was understaffed when he was hired. He was still able to manage his role and take

Reference Notes

Mark Taylor

care of the issues that needed to be addressed. He is very good at finding perspectives and analyzing matters. In taxing situations, he is appropriately concerned but not stressed.

Their district has 32 buildings, and the grounds were not well kept. Parents were showing up to outdoor events when the grass had not been cut for two weeks. Mr. Taylor first worked with the Maintenance Director to try and improve performance, but it did not work out. He then hired a new Maintenance Director, and it has been a night and day change. The hiring process took longer because he wanted to find the right person for the job. Prior to this change, every time Mr. Guempel visited a school, he heard complaints of issues not being fixed, sometimes for months. With the new Maintenance Director, he never hears any complaints. The maintenance staff is quick to fix issues, and they also communicate timelines when parts need to be ordered.

Another area that Mr. Taylor addressed was the teacher pay scale. Prior to his arrival, pay and step increases were not made at the same time, which led to inconsistent salaries. Some teachers who had been there for ten years were paid less than those who had been there for four years. When teachers discovered this discrepancy, they left and were very hard to replace. Mr. Taylor did a study to determine an appropriate pay scale and then matched it to tenure. He hired new teachers at a decent wage without penalizing long term employees.

Mr. Taylor was an unorthodox hire because he did not have a background in education. He was never really given a chance. If given an opportunity in a place that is not so politically charged, he will do very well. He cared for the staff, and they were grateful for it. He is even more equipped to work in a political environment having worked in a school system.

Mr. Guempel would hire Mr. Taylor as a city or county manager. He would also be an incredible Executive Director for a private school. You cannot go wrong in hiring him, he is a person who you can trust. He has done the job before. He will hire great staff and be involved in the community.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Taylor:

- Intellectually gifted,
- Business minded and oriented,
- Cares about people,
- Fun to work with,
- Not afraid of challenges, and
- Not afraid to make tough decisions.

Strengths: Very intelligent, open minded, budgeting, working with others, problem solver.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes

Mark Taylor

Mike Jones – Consultant, Spotsylvania County, VA

Mr. Jones is a retired Police Chief who now works as a consultant. They met in 2019 when Mr. Taylor was the County Administrator for Greene County. He was over law enforcement, schools, and every aspect of County government. Greene County is a beautiful County on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Charlottesville, and it was very troubled in terms of finance and a lack of jobs. The Sheriff at the time was not oriented to the community and did not follow through on promises. Mr. Taylor handled himself well. He has been an Attorney and a Manager in multiple locations.

When Mr. Taylor became the Superintendent for Spotsylvania County Public Schools, he wanted to put some structure in place and make sure that the materials were age appropriate. He had many supporters who were grateful and many detractors as well. He is always honest, and states how he feels, but in a respectful way.

Mr. Taylor is a workaholic in a good way. If given a task, he stays with it through completion even if that means working late into the night. He is mission oriented. He will hit the ground running wherever he goes. He has experience working with talented employees and some rugged experience with staff who are very resistant to any change. The County wanted to abolish its police department because they felt they did not have enough crime to warrant one. Mr. Taylor understands that he must be respectful even when others are disrespectful. He thanked them for their opinion and always handled these conversations as a gentleman. He has what it takes to lead an organization. He is professional. If he encounters an ethical conflict, he asks advice from his peers to find the best path possible. His advice is valued and trusted.

Water and Sewer funds are carefully managed by the state. Mr. Taylor follows the guidance very closely and keeps up with changes in the field. He is very good at nicely explaining matters to people, even when they do not want to listen or they do not agree. If he cannot come to a resolution with the individual, he gently removes himself from the situation. He never starts or creates conflict.

With Councils and Boards Mr. Taylor has the consummate skill set, and his legal background is an asset. He gently explains what needs to be done. When someone makes a mistake in the organization, like the secretary, he takes responsibility and then fixes it. He does not mind making decisions, even when he knows they will not be popular. He is honest.

Removing books from school libraries that were deemed inappropriate was controversial. Mr. Taylor was treated poorly, but he did not disparage others. He was patient even when they were cursing at him. He tried to be instructive and let them know the reasoning behind decisions. He lets them know that if the defamation continues then he will have to act because he does not want his good reputation destroyed. In controversy he tries to find the answer and reaches out to those affected. He ensures that everything is done appropriately. The vast majority of employees in Green County truly enjoyed working for him.

Reference Notes Mark Taylor

Mr. Jones ran a background check on Mr. Taylor, and he passed. Mr. Jones would hire Mr. Taylor and gives him the highest possible recommendation.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Taylor:

- Professional,
- Honest,
- Hard worker,
- Very nice person,
- Experienced, and
- Ethical.

Strengths: Handles himself well, very professional, very honest, ethical, experienced, respectful.

Weaknesses: He feels responsible and works overtime to get everything done. He cancels vacation plans if something comes up. He could do better at setting boundaries.

Whit Robinson – Attorney, Spotsylvania County Public Schools, VA [REDACTED]

Mr. Robinson met Mr. Taylor when he was asked to negotiate a contract with him for Superintendent. Mr. Robinson had negotiated thousands of contracts in his career but did not realize that Spotsylvania was such a contentious place until the night they presented the contract. In the middle of the chaos, audience members were screaming and attacking each other and Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor kept a very level head, keeping everyone focused and on track. Mr. Robinson has a great deal of respect for Mr. Taylor.

Contrary to what some have said, Mr. Taylor's contract was approved by the School Board. While the approval cannot be heard on the official record, because of the audience noise, an audience member's camera caught the words. Mr. Robinson has drafted a memo regarding this.

When hiring Mr. Taylor may give someone a chance that others would not, but only one of his hires did not work out. His decisions in general are good as well. He was hired to bring change, that is what the Board wanted. He followed through and was effective.

During public comments Mr. Taylor was often criticized by those with opposing views. He took notes to check on matters they were complaining about, offered correct information, and he listened. When they became overly abusive, he turned his head a little, but never responded in a negative way.

When Mr. Taylor does not know something, he lets you know. He will investigate the matter and return with information. He also had a great perspective from his legal background. He knew

Reference Notes

Mark Taylor

when it was time to bring legal counsel into a situation. He was brilliant and his suggestions, based on his knowledge of the law, were very smart.

With his leadership team Mr. Taylor solved hundreds of problems. He had consistent meetings with them, and he trusted them. He utilized the staff the best he could. They, as a team, often mitigated potential issues before it needed to be escalated to an attorney.

Mr. Taylor answered his phone whether it was 8:00 p.m. at night or 6:00 a.m. in the morning. They spoke on the phone most often but also texted now and again. He was timelier than he needed to be in meeting deadlines. Board meetings often went until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. He is very calm and methodical and works through every issue. He is a little too trusting at first but figures it out quickly when there is an issue. He is collaborative but can be tough when needed.

Mr. Taylor never did anything malicious even when others attacked him. He heard their views and asked questions, but he never added to the contention. His hiring was controversial and as such, they were very diligent in their background checks. They found nothing of concern.

Mr. Robinson would hire Mr. Taylor in a heartbeat and cannot recommend him highly enough. Mr. Robinson works with city managers in Virginia; Mr. Taylor can easily lead a municipality. He will let citizens vent, be a problem solver, and delegate. Whoever hires him will benefit tremendously. He has a legal and managerial background, and he is a good-hearted person.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Taylor:

- Good hearted,
- Good listener,
- Brilliant, and
- Very calm.

Strengths: Steady and calm, took negative comments with a grain of salt.

Weaknesses: He may have too thick of a skin. Also, he can be naïve dealing with people because he likes to give others the benefit of the doubt.

Tara Mergener – Former Communications Director, Spotsylvania County Schools, VA

Ms. Mergener was the Communications Director for the school district and reported to Mr. Taylor. He did an amazing job, and he is very visionary.

Mr. Taylor made excellent decisions both in hiring and in general. He ensured that anyone hired was competent, a good fit for the company culture, and that they would execute the vision for the

Reference Notes

Mark Taylor

district. He helped employees be on the same page. He was also extremely accessible. Staff could ask for a minute, and he made time for them. He kept them well informed.

In attendance at every School Board meeting, Mr. Taylor was very visible. He also attended every meeting that was school related. He made every effort to reach out to people on both sides of an issue. You cannot win over everyone, but he talked to those who had different opinions. He was great with outreach.

The district had many issues and there was much division. Mr. Taylor resolved these issues and brought everyone together by being accessible and available to both parents and teachers. He was very open and approachable. He was very analytical and unflappable. He was open to collaboration and highly trusted his team leaders. He empowered employees.

Mr. Taylor was involved in many budget talks and negotiations, but Ms. Mergener was on the periphery and cannot speak to his expertise in these areas. He was very timely in providing information and responding to requests from the staff. He was the first one in the building and the last one to leave. He was very devoted and very smart.

School Board meetings can be very heated, and parents and public speakers are not always kind. Mr. Taylor remained unflappable. When the media attended the meetings to inquire about the issues, he remained very calm and answered their questions.

Spotsylvania Schools are always in the news for one reason or another. Mr. Taylor's hiring was controversial because his background was not in education. Educators can be a bit of a snooty club, and he was an outsider. Ms. Mergener was surprised at how political it became. Unhappy people can be very noisy.

Ms. Mergener is not aware of anything in Mr. Taylor's conduct or background that would concern a reasonable person. The only criticism he faced was that his background was not in education. Everyone on staff enjoyed working for him.

Ms. Mergener would hire Mr. Taylor and would work for him again in a heartbeat. She accepted the job because she could tell from the interview that he would be a great person to work for. He was born to lead and would do very well in city management. He is a wonderful person. You cannot go wrong in hiring him. He works harder than anyone else.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Taylor:

- Smart,
- Kind,
- Analytical,
- Diplomatic,
- Creative, and
- Good personality.

Reference Notes Mark Taylor

Strengths: Good person, big heart, extremely intelligent and analytical while still being creative, a real visionary.

Weaknesses: This position was his first job in education, and he had to come up to speed. There was some run time at the beginning while he was becoming acclimated. However, he did a spectacular job.

Ryan DeWeese – Chief Operating Officer, HCA Virginia, Spotsylvania County, VA

Mr. DeWeese has known Mr. Taylor since 2018. Mr. DeWeese was the Chief Operating Officer for the hospital. Mr. Taylor was part of the County leadership, but he was also on the Board. They worked together for two years and then Mr. DeWeese went to Florida for another opportunity. He returned in 2022 as the CEO for the hospital and Mr. Taylor was still on the Board. In fact, Mr. Taylor participated in the interview process. They did not work together on a daily basis, but were more colleagues in the community.

Mr. Taylor is a very engaging board member. He is very enthusiastic and very energetic. He is incredibly intelligent and cares about those he had the opportunity to lead. Their Board was very collegial and engaging, they ask questions about patient experience, quality of service. Also, Board members often attended community or physician events hosted by the hospital. Mr. Taylor was available and willing to provide support on specific projects where he had expertise.

Some of the actions taken by Mr. Taylor were controversial. Many parents in the community, however, were very supportive of him in trying to ensure that materials in school libraries were age appropriate. He was not really given the chance to lead.

Mr. DeWeese would hire Mr. Taylor. He cares so much about everything that is going on. He routinely checks in with Mr. DeWeese to see how things are going. Once he is involved in a community or organization, it never leaves him. He continues to care about how they are doing.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Taylor:

- Energetic,
- Enthusiastic,
- Passionate,
- Opinionated but in a positive way,
- Never stops working, and
- Very family oriented with his family and also his staff.

Reference Notes
Mark Taylor

Strengths: Engaging, enthusiastic, intelligent, cares about the staff.

Weaknesses: He has strong opinions which can be an asset at times but also can be a detriment at other times.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.fredericksburgfreepress.com/2025/06/03/judge-orders-spotsylvania-school-board-former-superintendent-to-negotiate-settlement/>

Jun 3, 2025

Judge orders Spotsylvania School Board, former superintendent to negotiate settlement
by Taft Coghill Jr.

Former Spotsylvania County Public Schools Superintendent **Mark Taylor** and the Spotsylvania School Board will come to the table to settle a dispute later this year. A judge with the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia ordered **Taylor** and the school board to attend a judicial settlement conference on Aug. 27 at 9:30 a.m. Magistrate Judge Summer L. Speight issued the order on May 29.

A settlement conference is a process in which parties meet with a neutral third party, such as a retired judge, to explore options for settling their dispute. The judge actively guides the parties to a mutually satisfactory resolution, but the decision to settle is left to the parties. A settlement conference differs from mediation in that it is typically court-ordered, not voluntary.

Taylor filed a lawsuit against school board members Nicole Cole, Lorita Daniels, Megan Jackson, Carol Medawar and Belen Rodas after they voted to fire him in March 2024. Board members April Gillespie and Lisa Phelps did not support **Taylor's** firing, and they are not named in the lawsuit. **Taylor** alleged that he was wrongfully terminated because he “organized and implemented” a book fair that promoted Christian literature on Dec. 2, 2023, at Riverbend High School. **Taylor** is seeking actual and general damages, compensatory damages, back pay, front pay, equitable relief, and punitive damages. He also requested incidental and consequential costs associated with the termination, including attorney fees and any other relief the court deems appropriate.

Taylor claims his First Amendment rights were violated because the book fair was an expression of those rights. The book fair's theme showcased conservative Christian authors and critics. **Taylor** partnered with former TV star and Christian conservative Kirk Cameron, who spoke at the event. He also partnered with SkyTree Book Fairs and Brave Books.

In the suit, **Taylor** claims he was acting as a private citizen. However, in a video on the social media platform ‘X,’ Cameron promoted the book fair by noting that the Spotsylvania superintendent is putting it on and was replacing Scholastic book fairs with SkyTree in the school division.

A Facebook invitation from Wilderness Tabernacle of Culpeper and then-SCPS Director of Communications and then-Chief of Staff Jon Russell promoted the event by stating “Spotsylvania School Superintendent **Mark Taylor** invites you to a Christmas book fair with Kirk Cameron.” A Facebook post from the church later thanked “Superintendent **Mark Taylor**” for hosting the event. During the three-hour settlement conference, each party must present several documents, including an objective overview of the basic allegations, defenses and

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

relevant facts; a realistic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each party's position; a summary of settlement discussions to date; and a statement of settlement expectations. If the matter is not settled, the court will inform the designated trial judge that the dispute was not resolved despite good-faith efforts and the case will advance to a trial or other court proceedings.

In another SCPS legal matter, Cole is suing Gillespie and Phelps, alleging malicious prosecution after Cole was accused of assaulting Phelps during a board meeting last May. The assault charge against Cole was dismissed last July. The Founding Freedom Law Center (FFLC), which represents Gillespie and Phelps, announced on its website that on Monday, in Spotsylvania Circuit Court, a judge ordered Cole's attorneys to pay its fees. A release from the law center stated that Cole's attorney was unresponsive for five months and missed court deadlines. According to the FFLC, the judge did not dismiss Cole's case, citing public interest.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

[CB&A Note: We spoke with the Attorney who prepared **Mr. Taylor's** contract with the Spotsylvania County Public School District and he assured us that the contract was approved by the sitting Board at the time of **Mr. Taylor's** hire.]

<https://www.fredericksburgfreepress.com/2025/02/25/judge-declines-to-dismiss-taylors-lawsuit-against-spotsylvania-school-board/>
Feb 25, 2025

Judge declines to dismiss Taylor's lawsuit against Spotsylvania School Board
by Taft Coghill Jr.

A U.S. District judge recently declined to dismiss a wrongful termination lawsuit filed by former Spotsylvania County Superintendent **Mark Taylor** against the county's school board. Attorneys for the school board requested the dismissal, but Judge Roderick Young denied their petition. A pretrial hearing with the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia is set for May 21 at 9:50 a.m. via Zoom, at which point a trial date will be determined. **Taylor** requested a jury trial.

Taylor was fired by the school board last March after a 5-0 vote to terminate his employment with unspecified cause. Board members April Gillespie of the Berkley District and Lisa Phelps of the Lee Hill District were not present at the meeting and are not named in the lawsuit. **Taylor** alleges that he was dismissed because he "organized and implemented a book fair" promoting Christian literature on Dec. 2, 2023, at Riverbend High School. He claims that he acted as a private citizen "at all times" and used personal funds to pay for the entirety of the event, a statement the school board's lawyers said is false in its answer to the allegations.

Taylor's lawsuit claims that his First Amendment rights were violated because the book fair was an expression of those rights. The fair's theme was to showcase conservative Christian authors and critics. **Taylor** partnered with former TV star and Christian conservative Kirk Cameron — who spoke at the event — as well as SkyTree Book Fairs and Brave Books. SkyTree Book Fairs is a nonprofit organization that describes itself as a "school-choice alternative to the sexually explicit content distributed in Scholastic's book fairs." Brave Books is described as a "Christian publishing company that makes books for kids that reinforce biblically based, foundational values."

Although **Taylor's** lawsuit claims he acted as a private citizen, in a video posted to the social media platform 'X', Cameron promoted the book fair by noting that the Spotsylvania superintendent is putting it on and was replacing Scholastic book fairs with SkyTree in the school division. A Facebook invitation from Wilderness Tabernacle of Culpeper and then-Spotsylvania County Public Schools Director of Communications Tara Merenger and then-Chief of Staff Jon Russell also promoted the event by stating "Spotsylvania School Superintendent **Mark Taylor** invites you to a Christmas book fair with Kirk Cameron." A Facebook post from the church later thanked "Superintendent **Mark Taylor**" for hosting the event. **Taylor** was placed on administrative leave less than two months after the book fair.

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Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The lawsuit names board members Lorita Daniels, Nicole Cole, Megan Jackson, Carol Medawar and Belen Rodas as defendants. Their request for dismissal stated that individual board members do not have the power to breach a contract. The board also stated in a Feb. 28, 2024, letter to **Taylor** that the contract he agreed to with former Chair Kirk Twigg was not valid because “there is no evidence that a vote was ever taken to approve **Mr. Taylor’s** superintendent contract” and that “we don’t believe **Mr. Taylor** was ever appointed by the board.”

“**Taylor** failed to state a claim for breach of contract against the individual defendants,” the school board’s answer states. “The individual defendants were not parties to the contract and are incapable of individually breaching the contract as a matter of law. Moreover, the complaint is devoid of facts to support the elements of a breach of contract claim against the individual defendants.”

The board members denied **Taylor’s** allegations that they violated his First Amendment rights and retaliated against him because of his constitutionally protected free speech and right of association by hosting the book fair. They also denied acting with “reckless and/or callous indifference” to **Taylor’s** legal rights.

Taylor requested actual damages, general damages, compensatory damages, back pay, front pay, equitable relief and punitive damages, along with interest from the date of his termination. He also asked for incidental and consequential costs associated with the lawsuit, including attorney fees.

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Mark Brian Taylor*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
October 11, 2024

Ex-superintendent sues School Board members - Former superintendent sues School Board members

Author/Byline: SCOTT SHENK

Former Spotsylvania County schools Superintendent **Mark Taylor** has filed a lawsuit in federal court against the Spotsylvania School Board, contending that five members "breached" his contract agreement and violated his constitutional rights. The lawsuit, filed on Oct. 4 in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, states that **Taylor's** firing was retaliation in part for his support of Christian-based books and raises questions of state and federal law. The suit names the School Board as well as individual members Chairwoman Lorita Daniels, Nicole Cole, Belen Rodas, Carol Medawar and Megan Jackson.

Taylor was hired in 2022 by a board with a different composition. Cole and Daniels were on the board at the time. Neither approved of the former superintendent and often clashed with the majority that did support him. In November's election, three board members who supported **Taylor** were ousted and replaced with Rodas, Medawar and Jackson, who along with Daniels and Cole eventually served **Taylor** his walking papers. The newly formed board's named defendants suspended **Taylor** in January and eventually fired him in March. The former school system superintendent caused a firestorm over a range of issues during his tenure, including the removal of more than 30 book titles from the county's school libraries after they were deemed inappropriate.

The lawsuit says that at "all times pertinent to this matter, Mr. **Taylor** met or exceeded the legitimate expectations of the Board and performed all professional responsibilities as outlined within his contract with the Board." Also, according to the lawsuit, the board never disciplined **Taylor** while he was employed and never "promptly" notified him of concerns about his performance.

A Christian-themed book fair at Riverbend High School hosted and paid for by **Taylor** is a focus of the lawsuit, with the former superintendent saying his message and association with Christian-based publishers and personalities "angered the Board." The book fair was held in December and included talks and readings by former television star Kirk Cameron, now a producer and author who is outspoken about his Christian faith and criticism of school books he says have explicit and deviant sex themes. The fair offered Christian-themed books, along with other traditional education books. Christian-themed music also played during the book fair, and there were volunteers from Lifepoint Church on hand as well as children passing out pamphlets from Christian Light Publications and little books detailing the life of Jesus. **Taylor's** lawsuit notes that the fair's aim "was to showcase literature that had been endorsed by conservative Christian authors and critics" as alternatives to what he and others "considered obscene pursuant to their religious beliefs." In his promotion of the fair and in the lawsuit, **Taylor** said he organized the event as a "private citizen" and it was his First Amendment right to do so. The suit states that less

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

than two months after the fair, the board retaliated, and "without warning" put **Taylor** on leave. The suit quotes a Feb. 13 letter from Daniels saying that while **Taylor** was on leave the board was considering his "continued employment with Spotsylvania County Public Schools." The letter also said the board "believes it has sufficient cause to terminate your employment ... with cause." No reason was provided in the letter, in which **Taylor** was asked "to sign a separation agreement to resolve the matter." Another letter sent to **Taylor's** attorney from the board's attorney on Feb. 20 contains an allegation that "there is no evidence" the School Board ever approved the contract, according to the suit. "Former Board member Kirk Twigg did sign a contract with Mr. **Taylor**," according to a quote from the letter in the lawsuit. "But, again, that contract was never approved by the Board."

The suit also highlights the letter's other reasons for **Taylor's** termination: Issues with **Taylor's** qualification to be superintendent.

- The belief that **Taylor** "violated state law and school division policy as it relates to employment actions to include the hiring of several unlicensed and unqualified employees ..." along with failing to "provide supervision and evaluations as required by state law and school division policy.
- "**Taylor** "potentially violated both school division policy and Virginia law relating to the disposal and inventory of school property on several occasions.
- "The former superintendent "may have repeatedly violated" the Freedom of Information Act and schools policy, his requirement to communicate with the board and in filing required reports and evaluations.
- "Offensive and inappropriate social media posts ... that the Board believes may bring into question his ability to serve as a School Superintendent in any school system in the Commonwealth of Virginia."

That letter also asked **Taylor** to sign a settlement agreement.

In the suit, **Taylor** says the letter's issues "were false and fabricated." The third letter **Taylor** received, from Daniels on March 19, announced his termination, effective that day, the former superintendent's lawsuit alleges. **Taylor's** suit says he was given no severance and that his firing was "purportedly made 'for cause' despite having no such cause." The lawsuit claims that **Taylor's** firing has resulted in pecuniary losses as well as "compensatory damages, emotional distress, and other significant financial and personal harm, due to the retaliation committed by the Board." He is seeking compensation for damages caused by the firing, as well as "back pay, front pay, equitable relief, and punitive damages," along with attorneys' fees and "other relief" as deemed by the court. **Taylor** asks for a jury trial.

The school system declined to comment, citing the pending litigation, according to spokeswoman Rene Daniels. School Board members named in the lawsuit have not yet responded to a request for comment.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

EDTNewsFOX 5 DC
October 8, 2024

Ex-superintendent claims he was fired for holding Christian book fair: lawsuit

By Jillian Smith

Former Spotsylvania County Public Schools superintendent **Mark Brian Taylor** has filed a lawsuit against the county's school board alleging that they violated the terms of his employment contract and his First Amendment rights. **Taylor** was hired as the Spotsylvania County superintendent in November 2022. He was put on administrative leave on Jan. 22, 2024 and was later terminated on March 19, 2024. **Taylor** was fired less than two months after holding a "conservative, Christian" book fair at Riverbend High School in December 2023.

A former Spotsylvania County superintendent is suing the school board and several of its members after he was fired for alleged hiring violations and after holding an unsanctioned "conservative Christian" book fair. Former superintendent **Mark Brian Taylor** filed the suit against The School Board of Spotsylvania County and members Dr. Lorita Daniels, Nicole Cole, Belen Rodas, Dr. Carol Medawar and Megan Jackson. The lawsuit alleges that the Board and its members breached **Taylor's** work contract and violated his First Amendment rights. **Taylor** was hired as the Spotsylvania County superintendent in November 2022. He was put on administrative leave on Jan. 22, 2024 and was later terminated on March 19, 2024.

In the lawsuit, **Taylor** claims that the Board violated the terms of his contract by not bringing their alleged issues with his work performance to his attention "promptly" and fired back against allegations that he was not qualified for the position. "The Board never elected to provide any discipline to Mr. **Taylor** during his employment with the Board," the lawsuit reads. "Despite its duties under the contract, the Board never 'promptly' brought to the attention of the Superintendent all issues of concern related to the performance of the Superintendent."

The suit also reads that "the contract contemplated the qualifications of the Superintendent: 'The Superintendent will furnish to the Board during the term of the contract evidence that the Superintendent is legally qualified to serve as Superintendent in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the regulations of the State Board of Education.'"

Taylor also alleges that the part of what led to his firing was a conservative Christian book fair hosted at Riverbend High School in December 2023. Attorney Tommy Strelka argues that **Taylor** acted as a private citizen "at all times" and that he used personal funds to pay for the event, which was a collaboration with SkyTree Book Fairs, Brave Books and evangelical Christian author Kirk Cameron. The lawsuit states that **Taylor** "took all necessary steps to organize and implement the book fair on school property just as a member of the public and followed the Board's procedures and rules." **Taylor** argues that the book fair was an expression of his First Amendment rights and that the school board's "retaliation" was a violation of those rights. "Spotsylvania Public Schools terminated **Mark Taylor** in violation of clearly established constitutional law. The school board took a position that violates **Mr. Taylor's** First Amendment

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Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

rights. My law firm has extensive experience litigating and winning First Amendment retaliation cases and Mr. **Taylor** is the most recent victim of politics over common sense in America," attorney Strelka said in a statement to FOX 5.

But documents included by **Taylor**'s attorney in the lawsuit detail the reasons the school board gave for terminating **Taylor**'s employment. The book fair is not mentioned as a cause.

- "Mr. **Taylor** is believed to have violated state law and school division policy as it relates to employment actions to include the hiring of several unlicensed and unqualified employees in violation of state law and school division policy. Other violations include the failure to provide supervision and evaluations as required by state law and school division policy," a memo from Malik Drake, the attorney for the school board, read.
- "Mr. **Taylor** potentially violated both school division policy and Virginia law relating to the disposal and inventory of school property on several occasions.
- "Mr. **Taylor** may have repeatedly violated the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and school division policy relating to FOIA; the requirement to communicate with the School Board; and the filing of required reports and evaluations as required by state law and school division policy.
- "Mr. **Taylor** has made numerous documented offensive and inappropriate social media posts on various social media platforms that the Board believes may bring into question his ability to serve as a School Superintendent in any school system in the Commonwealth of Virginia."

Taylor and his attorney have requested a jury trial in the matter.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
May 15, 2024

Spotsy meeting comes to a halt - Spotsylvania School Board in-fighting continues

Author/Byline: SCOTT SHENK

The Spotsylvania County School Board held another meeting rattled by arguments and accusations Monday night as the chair adjourned the meeting before all of the agenda had been addressed. The abrupt end to the meeting came as two School Board members continued to talk about the board's sanction of one member, Lisa Phelps, on ethics violations. After asking several times for the members, Phelps and April Gillespie, to allow the meeting to proceed, board Chair Lorita Daniels adjourned the meeting. The board was scheduled to meet Tuesday night at 6 p.m. to complete the meeting and address various remaining agenda items.

During board member and committee update times Monday, Phelps and Gillespie questioned and criticized fellow board members for reprimanding Phelps in April. They also noted the other members decided to hold a review of the board ethics policy during a scheduled May 20 special meeting during which the public won't be able to speak on the issue. Both claimed they have been targeted by other members in an effort to silence dissent against the board majority. Phelps said that she was given no "due process" on the ethics violation. She and Gillespie also said the board hasn't presented any specifics about what violations Phelps committed. They added that the board has failed to present specific reasons why the majority chose to fire former schools Superintendent **Mark Taylor**. At one point Gillespie became upset with Daniels when the chairwoman wouldn't allow her to make a motion. The meeting continued for a short time after that, but when Phelps and Gillespie continued to talk against Daniels' warnings, the chairwoman adjourned the meeting.

The specific reasons for Phelps' sanction weren't addressed during Monday's meeting. But Phelps and fellow board member Nicole Cole talked about the issue last month following the board action. Cole detailed specific violations in an email, ranging from Phelps wearing county schools shirts at early voting sites in October and November. In January, Cole said in the email, Phelps "lodged a racial and sexual slur at a former school board member in public at the end of a School Board meeting. This was not the first time. Complaints were filed." Other violations, according to Cole, included Phelps sharing information from conversations held in closed session. Cole also said Phelps shared board member emails "with illegitimate social media pages or members of the public (who then shared with illegitimate social media pages) within hours of the email being sent." Phelps told The Free Lance-Star in an email at the time that the other members committed "deceitful and unjustified tactics while trying to shutdown anyone's ability to speak their minds."

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Mark Brian Taylor

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News & Advance, The (Lynchburg, VA)
March 17, 2024

Spotsylvania fires schools superintendent

Author/Byline: Staff Writer

The Spotsylvania County School Board fired Superintendent **Mark Taylor** during a special meeting Tuesday night by a 5-0 vote.

Taylor, who had been hired by a previous board, began serving in the position in September 2022. But he created a firestorm after removing more than 30 book titles from the county's school libraries last year. This past November, voters ousted three members who supported **Taylor**, which changed the majority of the board.

Kelly Guempel, deputy superintendent and chief academic officer, was chosen as acting superintendent and has been present at school board meetings in that capacity.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
January 26, 2024

Spotsy schools faces funding challenges - Spotsylvania working to fill schools funding gap

Author/Byline: SCOTT SHENK

Spotsylvania County has started the school system budget process for fiscal 2025, and it looks like it will be a challenge to get a fully funded budget. Spotsylvania schools Superintendent **Mark Taylor** presented the proposed budget at the School Board's meeting Monday night. The School Board then met Tuesday with the Board of Supervisors in a work session to help get the process moving on the budget. The proposed fiscal 2025 schools operating budget totals \$417,711,061. It includes a 5% teacher raise along with a 6% cost of living increase. The approved fiscal 2024 schools budget totaled \$373.4 million. **Taylor** told the School Board on Monday that the FY 2025 budget has the division "in a perfect storm of funding challenges," leaving the proposed overall \$479.68 million schools budget, including capital projects, short by \$46.21 million. The school system will be looking for local funding to fill the gap.

Taylor - who was placed on administrative leave by the School Board during Monday's meeting - said those challenges include the loss of federal pandemic-related funding, which paid for some positions that will be eliminated if new money isn't found. Also, he said, state-proposed funding is down compared to recent years. State-mandated policies and inflation also are considered drivers in the increased costs of education. The budget report notes that the school system also continues to deal with a growing population of special needs students, students with disabilities, those learning via English as a Second Language, and others who are economically disadvantaged. These challenges require more staff and resources and in turn are more costly.

The School Board did not go deep on budget details Monday, but during the Tuesday work session, the School Board and the Board of Supervisors focused on ways to address the shortfall in the school system funding. County Administrator Ed Petrovitch suggested the two boards form a committee that will develop a "strategic plan" to get the school system fully funded, a process he said will take years. Both boards liked the idea and established the committee.

Kelly Guempel, the acting schools superintendent, told the supervisors he knows filling the \$46 million gap is "a big ask," even though they "already whittled it down." "But, man, we have some deficits and we have some challenges," he said. "And that's where the ask comes from. And we know we're going to have to make some tough decisions."

The budget process is just getting started, and there will be more meetings and a public hearing before the School Board approves it. The board has a budget work session set for Monday at 5:30 p.m.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News4

January 23, 2024

Spotsylvania County Public Schools Superintendent Mark Taylor placed on administrative leave

Taylor was named superintendent in the fall of 2022 in spite of strong community opposition. He had worked in county government but had no education background.

By Julie Carey

The Spotsylvania County School Board voted Tuesday to put Superintendent **Mark Taylor** on administrative leave, according to an email sent to staff.

After a closed session at Monday night's board meeting, Chair Lorita C. Daniels sent the message to staff informing them of the decision. No further explanation was provided. "Mr. Kelly Guempel, Deputy Superintendent, and Chief Academic Officer will act in the Superintendent's absence as the Superintendent's designee until further notice," the email reads.

Taylor was named superintendent in the fall of 2022 in spite of strong community opposition. He had worked in county government but had no education background. Once in his role, he came under fire for removing some books with sexual content from school libraries and pushing for more to be banned. In November, the election led to a change in the school board's composition, with conservative members losing control.

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Mark Brian Taylor*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

FXBG Advance
January 22, 2024

GUEST OPINION: Striving for Excellence Despite Challenges**by Mark B. Taylor, J.D.****SUPERINTENDENT OF SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Mark Taylor outlines the challenges and opportunities before Spotsylvania Public Schools and reminds us that 'in-person connections support and nurture the accomplishments of our students.'

As Superintendent of Spotsylvania County Public Schools, I am honored to share a few words about our school division.

SCPS is having a very successful 2023-2024 school year. The student experience in our schools continues to improve, thanks to the hard work of our tireless principals, instructional teams and support staff. Our 4-E's Instructional Pathways initiative is getting students focused on their future. Our innovative "Your Growth, Your Way" professional development program is enabling our teachers to grow professionally while they are pouring their talents and energy into teaching our students. Our school buildings are looking and operating better than they have in years thanks to our reorganized Maintenance Department. SCPS' Department of Safety is making communications and technology upgrades in our schools to maximize both the safety of our buildings and the efficiency of any necessary response to a safety challenge.

Despite the tiny size of our Central Office staff (ranked 127th of 131 VA school divisions in central staffing last year), our Central Office continues to lead effectively. Our Central Office Instructional Leadership supports excellence in each of our schools. SCPS Human Resources continues to score "wins" at recruiting teachers and school leaders. Our Finance team works tirelessly to ensure that all of our staff and our bills get paid, track revenues and expenditures, and budget for next year.

SCPS Operations and Transportation leadership are working to get the "Here Comes the Bus" App fixed and make it available to all student households, including those with special needs. While other divisions dropped "Here Comes the Bus" because of these issues, SCPS kept driving for a solution to provide this popular App for all.

SCPS appreciates the notable increase in local funding we received last year - it was more new local funding than our school division had received in many years. Nevertheless, Spotsylvania County's funding still fell short of meeting our real needs. This month, SCPS had to shift more than \$3 million away from instruction to pay for heating, bus fuel and building maintenance.

Meanwhile, we face more challenges as our learning community changes: our special education population continues to grow steadily, adding 88 students (a 2.4% increase) this year; our English language learners (ELL) increased this year by 455 students (a 14% increase); more than half of our current students (52%) are from homes identified as economically disadvantaged; and

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the proportion of SCPS students from economically disadvantaged households has gradually trended upward for the past decade. Each of these needs — special education, English language learners, and economic needs — must be addressed with additional resources.

Public education is a people business. In-person connections support and nurture the accomplishments of our students. The effectiveness of our efforts depends upon the quality and quantity of positive interactions between staff and students. Extraordinary student needs - whether grounded in language, economics, or special needs - are most effectively met with extra in-person attention. This is a big part of what drives SCPS to seek funding for additional staff.

Both state and local education funding need improvement. Virginia’s state public education funding has been below the national average for many years. The state also calculates annually the local funding needed to support public education (“Minimum Local Effort”). In just the past 4 years, Spotsylvania County’s investment in SCPS has fallen far off pace with that state minimum. We need to do better.

SCPS’ physical space needs also require attention. Spotsylvania County's growth is catching up with our schools, as illustrated by changes in SCPS elementary school class sizes between 2015 and 2023. In 2015, of the six grade levels (K-5) taught in our 17 elementary schools (102 data points total), only one grade level at one school (less than 1%) had class sizes exceeding state standards. The current school year paints a very different picture. 47 elementary school grade levels exceed state class size standards (46.1% of all elementary school grade levels).

SCPS instructional space is being squeezed from both ends by the county and state. County population growth sends more students to our schools while changes in Virginia Department of Education standards require us to have fewer students per class — with some classes limited to as few as eight students. SCPS is approaching or exceeding the full program (functional) capacity of a number of our schools. Our need for additional school capacity at all three levels (elementary, middle, and high) is growing. We need to begin having conversations about building schools for Spotsylvania’s future.

Despite all challenges, SCPS continues to strive for excellence.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
December 23, 2023

Two on leave after 'heated' meeting at Riverbend - Coach, principal on leave after 'heated' meeting about Riverbend High School swim team

Author/Byline: SCOTT SHENK

A dispute involving the Riverbend High School swim team has resulted in the principal and a coach being put on administrative leave and another coach's resignation. Schools Superintendent **Mark Taylor** sent an email to staff and the School Board on Thursday about the swim team issues, saying there is an ongoing school system investigation "relating to the Riverbend High School swim team coach and assistant coach, and the handling of such matters by the Riverbend principal." The issue involved the coaches' handling of the team and one swimmer who was kicked off the team. In his email, **Taylor** said he expects the student to be reinstated to the team "upon a determination that their removal was unfounded." The situation grew more heated on Wednesday during a meeting - which included coaches, parents and the Principal Xavier Downs - resulted in a call for Spotsylvania Sheriff's deputies to respond to the school. According to the sheriff's office, the responding deputy determined that a "heated conversation" was taking place. No arrests were made. **Taylor** said in the Thursday email that Downs and the head swim team coach "have been put on administrative leave pending completion of an investigation by Human Resources." The assistant swim team coach, Theodore Marcus, resigned from that position.

Details of the problem are unclear, but the issue involves the former team member and her parent and the coaches. In an email chain provided to The Free Lance-Star, coach Rachael Adriani told school administrators and parents that "the team foundation has been attacked and the coaches have been bullied. To resolve this an open discussion is required so set the time and we will be there." The student-athlete's parent said in the email chain that boundaries had been crossed and that the family "just wanted our daughter to be protected and for the matter to be handled discreetly to avoid any backlash that would cause further harm to her." The parent added that the "exchange about coaching styles, models, groups, pods, etc. are a distraction."

Downs, in his first year as principal at the school, attempted to calm the situation in the email chain. He asked for everyone to avoid divisive talk and tried to quell the conversation by saying the issue would be dealt with at the Wednesday meeting. In the email chain, Downs wrote that the meeting "is intended to resolve any issues that may have arisen throughout the season. I kindly request that all participants refrain from making comments that could be perceived as divisive or not solution-based to create a stronger program for our student-athletes." Downs came to the county from Texas, where his teaching certificate was suspended for five years based on allegations that he submitted falsified information to the Virginia Department of Education in 2013, according to the Texas Education Agency.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Culpeper Star-Exponent (VA)
December 5, 2023

Superintendent sponsors new type of book fair

Author/Byline: SCOTT SHENK

Parents and children showed up at Spotsylvania County's Riverbend High School Saturday for a new type of book fair that included a reading by child television star Kirk Cameron. The fair included a variety of books for young to middle-grade readers and was sponsored by Spotsylvania school system Superintendent **Mark Taylor**, who removed more than 30 book titles this year from county high school libraries after deeming them inappropriate. Saturday's event, held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., also was the first time SkyTree Book Fairs, a nonprofit that bills itself as an alternative to long-time children's book publisher Scholastic, held such a book fair in a public school.

The high school's entryway was lined with tables covered with the typical children's picture books portraying animals, princesses, athletes and superheroes as central characters. There also were classics such as "Aesop's Fables," "The Chronicles of Narnia" and "The Odyssey," along with newer fictional titles. There also was a section of Christian-themed books, along with similar music playing during the book fair. There were volunteers from LifePoint Church on hand and children passing out pamphlets from Christian Light Publications and little books detailing the life of Jesus.

Near the end of the book fair, SkyTree President Riley Lee, between checking out customers, said the turnout "was incredible." Tara Mergener, Spotsylvania schools director of communications and community engagement, said the estimated attendance was approximately 800. Spotsylvania resident Sherri Patsos brought her two young children to get books and for the first reading by Cameron. She was happy with the book choices. "I just wanted to find some good books for the kids to read and maybe that didn't have such an agenda behind it, I guess," she said while waiting in line for the first reading by Cameron. She added that many of the fair's books are in bookstores and that she didn't notice much difference between the titles offered by SkyTree and Scholastic.

Another visitor, Mary Rupert from Stafford County, attended the fair to buy books for her grandchildren. Rupert said she is "a warrior for Christ" and was "thrilled" with the faith-based aspect of the book fair. She admitted Cameron was a draw, too. "I am thrilled that he has pushed forward" with SkyTree and the book options.

Spotsylvania School Board member Lisa Phelps attended the event. "I think this is a positive step for our kids," she said in an interview following Cameron's first book reading. "I think it's a positive family event." She acknowledged that she has heard from constituents unhappy about the religious-themed book fair. But Phelps added that it's common practice for churches to rent out space in area public schools and also pointed out that more people have contacted her to say they were thankful for the book fair option.

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Taylor declined to be interviewed, but he addressed the crowd before Cameron came on stage in the school's auditorium. "How many of you are label readers?" he asked the crowd, highlighting the movie rating system. "By the way, the movie rating guide is voluntary," he said. "Which is maybe why it doesn't exist for instructional materials, including library books in our schools. And that voluntary system, I think, would be a beautiful thing to work on, but I digress."

Taylor talked about meeting Cameron last summer during a book reading at a Loudoun County library and then introduced the well-known veteran actor best-known for his role in the television series "Growing Pains." Cameron gave two presentations and book readings in the school's auditorium, which was about a quarter full during the morning reading. During the first reading, Cameron gathered the children to sit around him in front of the stage as he read from one of SkyTree's books—a story about an acorn growing into a tree that supports a community of animals, and the animals in turn rebuild the tree after it is burned in an attack. Cameron, also a producer and author who is outspoken about his Christian faith, was engaging, thoughtful and funny during his presentation and the readings. He also managed to get serious, warning the crowd that there are issues in the country and schools "that are endangering our children and our future and our freedoms. And we want to be a part of the solution."

During his talk, the California resident focused on Plymouth Rock as one way to explain the key Christian-based tenants of the nation's founding fathers and what he and SkyTree want young readers to learn: faith, morality, law, education, wisdom, liberty. "How many of you believe we should get back to these values in America?" Cameron asked to applause. He then said the problems in the country and its schools won't be solved by politics, but rather can be handled by parents and family passing along wisdom to their children. "It doesn't start in the White House," he said. "It starts in your house." Cameron told the crowd that Fredericksburg-area residents are "on the front lines, in the trenches. You're the foot-soldiers that are leading the charge for your children and your grandchildren and others within the community. And so it is my honor to be here with you from California and lock arms and go to battle with you for what is good and what is beautiful and what is true. And to teach these things to our children."

Well before the Spotsylvania book fair, Cameron made his stance clear on certain books that have been in school libraries and Scholastic book publisher specifically. Scholastic was replaced as Spotsylvania's book fair publisher. In a video on his X page, Cameron says "you can replace these harmful Scholastic book fairs with helpful, wholesome book fairs, with 500 books that have all been vetted and screened to take out all of the nasty pornography and the critical race theory and the race stuff."

Taylor sounded a similar theme in an October email to the community, in which he said removing the books was not a ban and that he was concerned parents were "not aware of the themes and intensity of the materials that include descriptions of violent deviant sex, such as rape and bestiality." He added that it "is disappointing that our community conversation about instructional materials shifted from promoting solid academics to debating the most degrading, vile material we will put in front of our children. Don't we all want the best for them?"

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

SkyTree also has attacked Scholastic, saying on its website that library shelves that once held "classics like Clifford the Big Red Dog and The Giving Tree now display sexually explicit content aimed at young kids. You may be thinking that these books just slip through the cracks, but absent-minded oversight is not the case for Scholastic." Scholastic did not respond directly to the allegations by Cameron and SkyTree, but emailed a statement to The Free LanceStar. Scholastic said its book fairs "will continue to inspire kids to read, help them build home libraries, and empower school fundraising. All of us at Scholastic take seriously the trust built and the joyful memories made through these school events over the past forty years. We are proud of our unique ability to deliver books kids will love, while deeply respecting the high standards of educators and the important role of families in helping to choose the best books for their kids."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Roanoke Times, The (VA)
October 30, 2023

Stafford superintendent says removal of books from schools is not a ban - Spotsylvania superintendent: school division is not banning books

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

Spotsylvania school division superintendent **Mark Taylor** on Thursday evening sent out an email to the school community stating that it is "inaccurate" to call his decision to remove more than 30 titles from high school libraries "a ban." "Our actions, following school board policy and state law, empower parents to decide their children's access to such material. For those who wish to access sexually explicit materials, they remain conveniently located in public libraries, so it is inaccurate to label their removal from school libraries as a 'ban,'" **Taylor** wrote in the email. "Descriptions like this may attract attention in the media or on social platforms, but they are false."

PEN America, a nonprofit that protects free expression, defines a school book ban as "any action taken against a book based on its content and as a result of parent or community challenges, administrative decisions, or in response to direct or threatened action by lawmakers or other governmental officials, that leads to a previously accessible book being either completely removed from availability to students, or where access to a book is restricted or diminished."

In his email, **Taylor** said there has been "a lot of discussion" in recent months about sexually explicit material in high school libraries and that he fears parents don't understand what that means. "As an advocate for you and your child, I am concerned that some participating in these discussions are not aware of the themes and intensity of the materials that include descriptions of violent deviant sex, such as rape and bestiality," **Taylor** wrote. "It is disappointing that our community conversation about instructional materials shifted from promoting solid academics to debating the most degrading, vile material we will put in front of our children. Don't we all want the best for them?"

Taylor has frequently cited Virginia state law, found in state Code section 22.1-16.8, that requires school divisions to develop policies that ensure parental notification of instructional material that includes sexually explicit content. The law does not direct school divisions to take similar action regarding library materials, and according to the Spotsylvania School Board's policy IIA - which concerns the selection and review of instructional materials - library materials are not considered instructional materials unless they are "used (i) for completion of an assignment, or (ii) as part of an academic or extracurricular educational program." In a March memo announcing his decision to remove 14 titles from school libraries, **Taylor** wrote that since the titles had been challenged using the existing process for challenging instructional materials, he would continue to consider them instructional materials. Last month, **Taylor** announced his decision to remove 23 more titles from school libraries. Senate Bill 656, which required school divisions to enact policies ensuring parental notification of instructional materials with sexually explicit content, contains language stating that, "the provisions of this act shall not be construed

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as requiring or providing for the censoring of books in public elementary and secondary schools." **Taylor's** email on Thursday went on to state that while some of the titles he has removed from school libraries have won awards, "it is clear that those award selection committees do not reflect the values of our community, nor do they have a stake in the best interests of Spotsylvania children." According to information provided by the school division in March, all of the books **Taylor** has removed were reviewed by ad hoc committees of parents and community members, which determined that they should remain in high school libraries.

On Friday, some parents expressed anger at the tone and content of **Taylor's** email. Kaelan Moses, the parent of elementary school students in the division, said she found the email "frustrating" and "disgusting." "The superintendent is yet again trying to deny access to these books to families that opted to allow them, speaking down to parents and insinuating we don't understand what the content truly is, and also implying that by removing access to this literature, the school system is somehow providing a better education than if they were allowed," Moses said. "These books are in our libraries, they are NOT instructional materials. Parents who wish not to have the children access these books have already been given the tools to remove access. It's very clear he is only sending it to quiet down parents that have been speaking out in the media."

Ben Phelps, the parent of an elementary and middle school student, said **Taylor's** email seems to be "scolding folks for using the word 'ban.'" "When in fact, if you make it so you can't have something in some place, that is banning it," Phelps said. "He's using this term to make it look as if the population is being unfair to him." Phelps said he knows that not every parent has the time or means to take their children to the public library. "If kids' parents are not going to take them to the public library, they should be able to access books at the place where they are required to be five days a week," he said. Phelps said the fact that a book is available in a school or public library doesn't preclude "me as a parent from saying, 'No, you can't read that.'" "I'm involved. I check my kids' phone. I check what they're doing online," he said. "I'm active in parenting. If they're doing something I don't agree with, I know about it." Beth Waugh, the parent of a middle schooler, said she will continue to view **Taylor's** actions as bans. "It is a ban if they're not allowed in the school system or in their libraries," she said. "They're banning (these books) from the schools." Waugh said **Taylor's** email is an attempt to scare parents into believing school libraries keep pornographic magazines on the shelves. She said the majority of young people aren't likely to seek out a book with challenging content if it doesn't interest them. Those that do seek out these books are looking for help understanding their own experiences or those of their peers. "Bad things happen in life - they do," Waugh said. "Taking away from teenagers the chance to read and learn from books is going to numb them to life."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
October 16, 2023

Document on SROs is divisive in Spotsy - Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office and school division again in disagreement

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

The Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office did not have input into a draft memorandum of understanding about school resource officers that was made available to School Board members last month. According to emails received by the Free Lance-Star through a Freedom of Information Act request and correspondence with the Sheriff's Office, the school division's new coordinator of school safety and security, Marshall Keene, made changes to the draft memorandum last month, after both parties worked together on revisions in March of this year.

Virginia Code requires that school divisions and local law enforcement agencies that employ school resource officers, or SROs, agree to a memorandum of understanding that lays out the responsibilities of both entities. "Each such school board and local law enforcement agency shall review and amend or affirm such memorandum at least once every two years or at any time upon the request of either party," Virginia Code section 22.1-280.2:3 states. The memorandum must be posted to the school division's website and the division must provide an opportunity for public comment whenever it is being reviewed, according to the code.

In the past, the School Board has voted to approve the memorandum after the public has had time to comment. Keene, who was hired by division superintendent **Mark Taylor** in July, made changes to the memorandum in September, according to a Sept. 13 email from school division communications to School Board members.

"Marshall Keene, a new security team member, has suggested improvements to our MOU, which are reflected in the latest version attached," the email states. "Marshall has joined SCPS with 24 years of law enforcement experience, including an SRO supervisory position. He is also a former school board chairman." Keene was chair of the Culpeper County School Board and employed by the Culpeper Sheriff's Office. While on the school board, his actions and statements were the subject of several closed sessions after concerns were brought to the board by some members of the community, according to the Culpeper Star-Exponent.

Spotsylvania School Board member Dawn Shelley sent the Sept. 13 email and Keene's revised memorandum of understanding to Maj. Troy Skebo, a spokesperson with Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office, asking for his thoughts on the revisions. In response, Skebo told Shelley that the Sheriff and school division administration met on March 1 to go over the memorandum "in depth, with both sides agreeing to certain things." "The proposed MOU was then posted on SCPS website and (I thought) was going to go before the school board," Skebo wrote. "The latest version seems to have things completely deleted and added that are different to what we agreed upon. I will review the latest with my SRO leadership, but can tell you that we are not in agreement with some of the changes."

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In an Oct. 13 email to the Free Lance-Star, Skebo said it would be "inappropriate at this time to comment on particular difference(s) until we can work through this with school admin." The "biggest frustration," he said, "is that both admins worked collectively on 3/1/23 to revise the current MOU. We all left the meeting with an understanding that the revised MOU would be presented to the School Board. That revised MOU has never made it to the School Board even after it was published on (the division's) website for several months. The new revised MOU ... was published on SCPS website, emailed to all parents and forwarded to us without any input or discussion from Sheriff's Office admin." Skebo said the Sheriff's Office and school division do have a meeting scheduled to again go over the memorandum.

The March review of the memorandum was triggered by a disagreement earlier this year between the school division and Sheriff's Office. That disagreement stemmed from a decision by the Sheriff's Office to increase the number of SROs on duty at four county high schools after a Jan. 17 fight at Riverbend High School, a Jan. 23 fight at Courtland High and an incident of trespassing on Jan. 24 at Massaponax High. The additional SROs were reassigned to the high schools from four county elementary schools. The elementary SROs were replaced by sworn personnel from other divisions within the Sheriff's Office.

On Jan. 27, **Taylor**, the division superintendent, requested that Sheriff Roger Harris return the four additional SROs to their positions at the elementary schools, but the Sheriff's Office refused to decrease law enforcement presence at the high schools. "Much of the community has expressed gratitude for the additional safety precautions that have been implemented. We will continue to place the safety of the children and school staff at the highest level," wrote Liz Scott, a Sheriff's Office spokeswoman, in an email to the school division.

Taylor later told the school community that he wanted the additional SROs pulled from the high schools because he thought they should stay at the elementary schools.

The school division did not respond on Friday to questions about the revised memorandum.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Roanoke Times, The (VA)
October 1, 2023

Spotsylvania school division staff warned about policy - Spotsylvania school division staff warned against communicating with board members

Author/Byline: Adele Uphaus

Employees of Spotsylvania County Public Schools are being asked to channel all communication with School Board members through division superintendent **Mark Taylor** and School Board Chair Lisa Phelps. Jon Russell, the division's chief of staff, informed staff of this expectation in an email sent Wednesday morning. "If a board member contacts you, please refer them to Mrs. Phelps, the School Board Chair, and notify Superintendent **Taylor** about the communication," Russell wrote. "This policy is in place to ensure that our communication remains organized and that decisions are made collectively with proper oversight. "There are no exceptions provided in this policy. The Chair and the Superintendent expect to be made aware of every communication between any board member and any member of SCPS staff."

Russell wrote in his email that this request is in accordance with "Policy BG-R." BG-R is a regulation adopted by the School Board in March 2019. The associated policy, BG, was adopted in 2014. Policy BG reads in its entirety: "The Spotsylvania County School Board supports and encourages two-way communication between the Board and employees. The Superintendent is the official representative of the School Board in its relations and communications with its employees. Employees are encouraged to communicate their ideas and concerns in an orderly and constructive manner to the School Board and/or the superintendent or superintendent's designee. The School Board desires to develop and maintain the best possible working relationship with the employees of the school division. The School Board welcomes the viewpoints of employees, and allows time at its meetings for employees to be heard."

The purpose of regulation BG-R, according to language included in the regulation, is to "clarify procedures and protocols for communications between the Board, individual Board members, and the Superintendent and staff, in order to ensure efficiencies for all parties." Regarding staff communication with the board, the regulation states, "All communications or reports to the School Board or any of its subcommittees from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent." It goes on to say that, "This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Board from administrative decisions on personnel or complaint matters, provided that the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Board's policy on grievances or complaints."

Regarding communications between individual staff members and individual members of the board, the regulation states, "Except where expressly authorized by Board action or by the Superintendent, or necessitated by the legal duties related to positions held by Board officers, individual employees other than the Superintendent are not expected to engage in work-related tasks directly with, or at the direction of, individual Board members." It goes on to state, "For

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this reason, if an individual Board member contacts an employee in connection with the employee's assigned duties and responsibilities, the employee is expected to involve his/her immediate supervisor and the Superintendent in establishing an appropriate response to the Board member's inquiry." The regulation does not contain language directing staff to inform the superintendent and School Board Chair of every communication, without exception.

According to the approved minutes for the Feb. 25, 2019, workshop meeting at which regulation BG-R was proposed, then-School Board Chair Baron Braswell asked that the regulation be drafted in order to clearly define how School Board members should conduct themselves when carrying out their duties. "Mr. Braswell stated that the superintendent does not act on behalf of individual board members, he acts on behalf of the full Board, and noted his desire to ensure that it is clearly defined and that Board members govern themselves accordingly," the minutes read.

At the March 11, 2019, meeting, James Meyer, then the Courtland District representative, stated in response to concerns raised by Kirk Twigg and Lisa Phelps that the regulation "in no way restricts a Board member from being able to speak with his or her constituents or have discussions with a constituent or staff person." According to the approved minutes of that meeting, then-School Board member Erin Grampp said she was hearing from school division staff about "being cornered by School Board members and asked questions when on their own time such as at the gym, athletic events, and the grocery store."

Twigg and Phelps voted against approving regulation BG-R, stating that they felt it would prevent them from being able to represent their constituents, according to the minutes.

In a statement issued Wednesday afternoon, Melissa Brace, president of the Spotsylvania Education Association, said Russell's email is "disingenuous" and represents "an inaccurate interpretation" of the regulation and policy. "(This) is another blatant attempt to stifle communication between education professionals and our elected school board members while silencing us through intimidation. SCPS employees will not be intimidated and we will not be silenced," Brace said.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
September 13, 2023

Closed session pushes Spotsy School meeting past midnight - Disputed closed session pushes Spotsylvania School Board meeting past 1 a.m.

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

Monday's regular meeting of the Spotsylvania School Board extended into the early hours of the following morning, despite there being no new or unfinished business on the agenda. It's been months since there were new or unfinished business items on the agenda, despite frequent requests that they be added, board member Nicole Cole said. Much of the meeting was taken up by a closed session that lasted for more than three hours. According to the agenda posted prior to the meeting, the purpose of the closed session was to discuss "personnel matters" as permitted by Virginia Code section 2.2-3711(a)(1). Before the board voted on entering the closed session, division superintendent **Mark Taylor** and attorney Whit Robinson recommended adding a second reason - "consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to actual or probable litigation where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigation posture of the public body pursuant," as allowed by section 2.2-3711(a)(7). "This is a second reason under the Code of Virginia that validates bringing this matter in the closed session," **Taylor** said. "The potential litigation is personnel-related."

Board member Dawn Shelley voted against entering the closed session because the discussion of potential litigation had not been included on the agenda. Shelley, along with board members Lorita Daniels and Nicole Cole, also voted against certifying the closed meeting, because they said issues were discussed in the closed session that were not disclosed in open session. Shelley said these items included school finances, teacher shortages, staffing, athletic fields, and other pending litigation that was not the litigation that had been disclosed before entering the closed meeting.

The board also spent time discussing the stage lighting and sound system at the Spotsylvania High School auditorium. During public comments Monday and in an email to the Free Lance-Star, Caden Dodson, a senior at the high school, said the stage lights have been nonfunctional and the sound system has been "below par" since at least 2021. Dodson said the theater department has been unable to mount a full production since "before 2020." He said he has been trying to draw attention to this matter since late last year. He said only Shelley and Cole responded to an email he sent to the entire board and the superintendent in November, and that only Shelley responded to a second email he sent in August.

A petition Dodson created last month to garner community support for restoring the auditorium had 642 signatures as of Tuesday morning. "There is an inequity among the high schools," Dodson said at Monday's meeting. "How can this board let a problem of this magnitude go unnoticed? Four years without technical theater experience or proper facilities is unacceptable. It's not fair that students should have to wait this long for a facility to be fixed. Arts programs

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and facilities are vital for proper education and socialization of students." According to the school division's five-year capital improvement plan for fiscal years 2022 to 2026, the stage lighting at Spotsylvania High was supposed to be "upgraded" in fiscal year 2022 for \$150,000 and the sound system was supposed to be replaced or upgraded in fiscal year 2023 for \$200,000. The sound system was still included in the next five-year CIP, for fiscal years 2023 to 2027, but the stage lighting was removed.

Neither project appears in the current five-year CIP for years 2024 to 2028, which was adopted in April. **Taylor**, who became division superintendent in November, said the projects were removed from the CIP due to "other budgetary priorities and constraints." He went on to suggest that the current lack of a sound system is due to an arrangement between the division and "a local theater group," that "fell apart." "They took the things they had installed and removed them," he said.

Board member Kirk Twigg, who represents the Livingston district in which Spotsylvania High School is located and who Dodson said did not respond to his emails, also said the school had been using a sound system installed by the local theater group. "They planted the system in there and just pulled it out," he said. "That's why the in-house equipment was not repaired." Philip Trayer, the school's chief financial officer, said Monday that the stage lighting project is in the budget as carryover from last fiscal year. He said it will cost between \$300,000 and \$600,000. There is no available cost estimate for the sound system.

School Board Chair Lisa Phelps, who participated in Monday's meeting virtually, made a motion to fix the lighting and sound system "ASAP." Shelley, Daniels and Cole said they would like to first have a better understanding of the cost involved, where the funding would come from and how the repairs would affect the division's ability to complete other needed projects. A motion by Shelley to request that a cost estimate for the project be presented at an Oct. 23 CIP session eventually passed by a 5-to-1 vote, with Twigg voting against it. Board member Rabih Abuismail was present at the beginning of the meeting but was absent for that vote.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
July 27, 2023

Spotsy teachers involuntarily transferred - Spotsylvania teachers being involuntarily transferred

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

At least three Spotsylvania teachers report being involuntarily transferred to a new job site less than a month before the start of the new school year and in a way that does not follow division policy concerning involuntary transfers. Two of the three teachers hold office in the Spotsylvania Education Association, the local branch of the Virginia Education Association, which according to its website is "a union dedicated to advancing quality instruction and curriculum, adequate funding, and excellent working conditions for Virginia public employees." Though the VEA is a union, members of local chapters do not have collective bargaining rights unless the locality has adopted a resolution granting those rights, which Spotsylvania has not done.

The same two teachers - SEA president Melissa Brace and vice-president Heather Drane - have also spoken critically of current School Board leadership at meetings over the past two years. Drane, a 15-year history teacher at Battlefield Middle School, is being transferred to Chancellor Middle School to be a reading specialist. Brace has taught seventh grade civics at Chancellor Middle School for 15 years and is being transferred to Freedom Middle School to teach eighth grade English. A third teacher, Sue Cosgrove, who has taught biology at Riverbend High School for eight years, is being transferred to Massaponax High School.

According to school division policy GCI-R, Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers, there are occasions when involuntary transfers may be necessary. The policy states that volunteers for transfer "may be considered" first and that when involuntary transfers are necessary, "a teacher's area of endorsement(s) and/or competence, major and/or minor field of study, quality of teaching performance and length of service at the school site and in the school division will be considered when determining which teacher is to be transferred." "Any involuntary transfer will be made only after a meeting between the teacher involved and the teacher's principal/supervisor, at which time the teacher will be notified of the reasons for the transfer," the policy states. However, the three affected teachers each said that they were not notified of specific reasons for being transferred, other than being told that the decision was made by **superintendent Mark Taylor** and the school division's central office "to meet the needs of our county's students," as Brace said.

The three teachers said they were notified of the transfers by phone and that there were no in-person meetings. Cosgrove said she got a phone call from new Riverbend principal Xavier Downs on July 17. "I had never met the new principal because it was his first day at the school," she said. "He didn't give me any reasons for the transfer but told me I could contact HR if I had questions." Cosgrove said the administrators at Massaponax were not aware of the transfer when she reached out to them. "They told me their only science need was for Environmental Science," Cosgrove said. "While my Biology credential makes me qualified to teach Environmental

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Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Science, I have never done so. My departure from Riverbend leaves six biology classes uncovered." She said she got a call from the school division's human resources department on July 19. "I was quoted from the employee manual (which states that the superintendent can reassign employees to any school or facility within the division 'provided no change or reassignment during a school year shall affect the salary of such employee')," Cosgrove said. "When I asked for the reason for the transfer, I was told that there was a need for teachers at Massaponax and that I was an excellent teacher." Cosgrove said she knows that Massaponax is "a great school with strong administrators," but that the transfer has "left her reeling." "I am so very sad to be leaving my school family that has supported me for the past eight years," she said. "I am still confused as to the reasons for this transfer."

Brace said she had a phone call with Chancellor Middle School principal Deborah Frazier last week during which she learned that she was being transferred, and a second phone call with Freedom Middle School principal Eric Wright later that day. She said both administrators were kind and professional but that the transfer is causing her stress. "The \$1,000 stipend being given in September to those being involuntarily transferred is a direct result of the work of Spotsylvania Education Association, the Educators' Union," Brace said. "The Union's consistent advocacy for educators has caused the administrative team to tangibly acknowledge the additional stress and express their appreciation for our continued service and flexibility in a monetary way." She said "most, if not all" of the stipend will go toward purchasing new materials for the new subjects the teachers will be teaching. "Some should go to the therapy bills caused by the anxiety and stress of this change, as this is a taxing time for all those affected, including myself," Brace said.

Tara Mergener, a spokeswoman for Spotsylvania schools, said Tuesday that a total of 12 teachers were involuntarily transferred this year. "This is the second year we have had a need to do involuntary transfers for staffing needs," Mergener wrote in an email to the Free Lance-Star.

During public comments at Monday evening's School Board meeting, Terri Steidl, a former special education teacher in the county, said the transfers are "devastating and unfair" to the teachers and "a great injustice to the students." She also suggested that the transfers are "retribution for the fact that (the teachers) speak out." "The amount of power being abused should be frightening to every stakeholder," Steidl said. "This is nothing less than a dictatorship."

Parent Melissa Floyd also spoke during public comments about the involuntary transfers. "In an era of teachers leaving the workforce in record numbers, an effective school division would be bending over backwards to show teachers they respect them and their contributions," Floyd said. "These actions show SCPS is the opposite."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
July 26, 2023

School Board addresses safety plans - Spotsy School Board addresses safety, teaching positions and facility use

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

Spotsylvania school division superintendent **Mark Taylor** on Monday evening said that a weapons detection system failed to prevent a loaded gun from entering a Henrico County middle school this spring. However, the school - John Rolfe Middle - did not have a weapons scanner installed at the time, Henrico County schools spokeswoman Eileen Cox said Tuesday. "Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) is committed to providing a safe, welcoming learning environment for all students, staff, and guests. In support of that commitment, HCPS field tested weapon scanners and detectors at multiple schools last spring; however, John Rolfe Middle School did not participate in the field test," Cox wrote in an email to The Free Lance-Star. Cox said weapons scanners and metal detectors will be implemented in Henrico schools this coming school year, where they will be "one layer of a strategic approach to safety."

Taylor made his remarks at Monday's School Board meeting in response to questions from board member Dawn Shelley about the division's safety plans. "We had a firearm enter Chancellor Middle School (this spring) and within about a week of that occurrence, there was also a firearm that entered a building in Henrico," **Taylor** said. "The interesting difference between the two is Henrico had been studying weapons detection systems for I think two years, had come to a decision and installed the technology in the building, where the weapon got past the technology and into the building."

Earlier this month, **Taylor** sent out an email to division families asking them to "please consider" sending their children to school with clear backpacks. On Monday, he explained that suggestion by saying it grew out of the Henrico incident. "Weapons detectors are not going to save us. Look at the Henrico exercise," **Taylor** said. "By the way, we have no budget. That technology can cost a bunch of money and we saw the results that can be produced. You install the technology that says, 'We bought safety,' and to the mind of some youngsters ... that's just a challenge. Out of that rose the suggestion of a clear parcel so everybody can see. That's sending a signal that says, 'I am transparent. I'm in it for safety.' I think that's important."

In his message earlier this month, **Taylor** said the school division is developing "a program to put some parent volunteers in schools to boost vigilance." On Monday, he elaborated on that program by saying that potential volunteer parents would be reviewed and background checked. "We're not picking them up at the southern border and flying them up to do this," he said. Also on Monday, as part of the consent agenda, the School Board approved the temporary reclassification of an additional 30 full-time teaching positions to interim teachers. Interim teachers must have a minimum of an associate's degree or at least 60 college credits, be actively enrolled in an educator preparation program and have "the equivalent of one year of successful experience working with students," according to the agenda. There are now 60 full-time teaching

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positions that can be filled with interim teachers. The board approved one of two action items on its agenda for Monday's meeting - changes to regulations concerning community use of school facilities. One of those changes removes the Spotsylvania Education Foundation from the category of organizations that can use school facilities free of charge. The Spotsylvania Education Foundation is a registered nonprofit organization that provides innovation grants and funds professional development activities for division teachers. Last year, the foundation provided a grant of \$1,996 to Salem Elementary for a "diversity book project" and grant of \$1,497 to Thornburg Middle for a "social emotional learning project," according to the agenda for the Dec. 12, 2022 meeting. The School Board pulled these grants from the list of donations approved at the December meeting without explanation and did not approve them until February of this year.

The board voted on Monday to table its second action item, approval of changes to regulations governing student attendance. One of the proposed changes states that the division will accept up to 10 excused absences with a note from the student's parent or guardian, but any excused absence after that will require third-party documentation. "All absences not properly documented will be considered unexcused, and the unexcused absences policy and regulations will be implemented," the draft regulation states.

Several people who spoke during public comments at Monday's meeting said the proposed changes fail to accommodate special needs students and are discriminatory against low-income and immigrant families who might not have access to a doctor or might not be able to take time off work to get a doctor's note.

The board approved a motion by Courtland representative Rabih Abuismail to table consideration of the proposed changes in order to gather more input from staff and the community. The board adjourned the meeting without taking up any new or unfinished business.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
June 27, 2023

Policy shifts in Spotsy schools - Spotsylvania School Board's employment policy changes

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

The Spotsylvania School Board this year approved changes to a number of employment-related policies and regulations and introduced two new resolutions that set it apart from other area school divisions. All the changes have been made since Superintendent **Mark Taylor** took over leadership of the school division in November. The two resolutions, which were approved by a 4-3 vote at a special meeting March 9, grant School Board Chair Lisa Phelps the authority to hire contracted employees - teachers, principals, assistant principals and some supervisors - without full board approval, and grant **Taylor** the authority to do the same for noncontracted employees. According to the language of the resolutions, their purpose is to speed up the employment process in light of the "extremely competitive" labor market. A School Board is considered a "body corporate" by Virginia Code, meaning that it has legal rights and responsibilities only as a whole and that individual members have none of these rights and responsibilities unless they are granted by the board as a whole.

Because of this language, school boards usually review and vote as a whole to approve all new hires at regular monthly meetings. This is the practice followed by other area school boards and by the Spotsylvania School Board until the new resolutions were adopted. The vote is usually to approve, rather than deny, the monthly personnel packets, which can contain resignations, retirements, appointments, transfer requests and other personnel matters and have gone through the established human resources process. According to the minutes of previous Spotsylvania School Board meetings, Phelps, sometimes joined by board members Kirk Twigg and Rabihi Abuismail, voted against the personnel packet without giving any reason on six occasions between 2019 and 2021. Last year, board members Dawn Shelley, Nicole Cole and Lorita Daniels voted against personnel packets on at least two occasions, but stated they were only opposed to one or two positions because they had not been discussed before. The three board members made clear they were not opposed to the entire packet.

At the March 9 meeting at which the two resolutions were approved, Daniels said she could not support relinquishing the board's authority to review personnel appointments. "I appreciate the tenacity in terms of getting personnel here, so we can expedite the hiring process because of the competition," she said. "But I don't want to negate our ability as a board to do our job in terms of helping you get personnel here. While I'm on a board, my goal is to have oversight as a governing body." **Taylor** said the new resolutions are about meeting "the absolute urgent need of the division right now ... to increase our agility and speed at getting contracts executed with licensed staff and to get offer letters or engagements set with non-licensed staff." As of June 12, 10% of all the division's teaching positions were vacant. Salem, Spotsylvania, Parkside and Harrison Road elementary schools had between 16% and 23% of teaching positions vacant and one-third of the Head Start program's teaching positions were vacant. Of all the division's pupil

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support service positions - counselors, social workers and psychologists - 17% were vacant, and 13% of all support staff positions, such as paraeducators, were vacant.

Also at the March 9 meeting, the School Board narrowly approved changes to policy GDB, which concerns "support staff and administrative/supervisory personnel employment procedures." Before the changes, policy GDB stated that the board would issue "annual contracts to certain support personnel who are eligible for coverage under the Virginia Retirement System, although such personnel are not required to have a license issued by the Board of Education." The new policy states that all support staff and administrative and supervisory personnel, except for those holding the title of "Director, Executive Director, Chief and the Deputy Superintendent," will receive letters of agreement, rather than contracts. Contracts are legally enforceable in court, but agreements are not, unless they contain the essential elements that make a contract legally enforceable. The new policy GDB also has added language stating that employees fall under the "at-will" employment doctrine, and "support staff may ... be subject to immediate dismissal for any or no stated reason." Prior to the change, the policy stated that employees were subject to immediate dismissal for "just cause." Virginia follows the legal doctrine of "at-will employment," which means that employees can be terminated at any time for any reason or for no cause, unless they have contracts that state otherwise. However, both Fredericksburg and Stafford school divisions have policies stating reasonable causes for dismissal, suspension or demotion of support personnel. Fredericksburg's policy concerning dismissal of support staff lists 15 reasons and Stafford's policy states such reasons as, "unsatisfactory performance ..., violation of the policies and regulations of the board, the rules of the employee's department/school, or the directives of his/her supervisor; and for other good and just cause."

At the March 9 meeting at which the employment policy changes and resolutions were approved, **Taylor** introduced attorney Daniel Masakayan, an associate in the labor and employment group at the law firm McGuire Woods, and thanked him for his help. From December through the first week of June, the Spotsylvania school division has paid more than \$54,000 to McGuire Woods for analysis, advice and strategies regarding "employment issues," according to invoices and weekly bill lists posted to the division's website. The payments are in addition to money paid to the law firms Robinson Stover for general legal counsel and Sands Anderson for special education matters.

At its most recent meeting on June 12, the School Board approved changes to two more human resources policies: one that states requests to withdraw or change the date of retirement "may or may not" be approved and another stating that employees not under contract do not need to submit advance notice of their wish to terminate their employment. The Free Lance-Star reached out to the school division with questions about the purpose of these policy changes but did not receive a response.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
May 10, 2023

Spotsy revises book challenge policy - Spotsylvania School Board approves revisions to regulations governing book challenges

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

The Spotsylvania School Board on Monday approved - by a 4-3 vote - adding the definition of "sexually explicit content" to regulations that govern the selection and review of instructional material. The definitions are drawn from Virginia Code sections 2.2-2827 and 18.2-390. The latter code section describes material that is prohibited from sale or loan to juveniles. Chief of Staff Jon Russell, who authored the proposed revisions to regulation IIA-R, told the board that "state law" is driving the revisions, referring to Virginia Code section 22.1-16.8, which requires parental notification of instructional material with sexually explicit content. Division Superintendent **Mark Taylor** in late March referenced this code section in support of his decision to ban 14 books from school libraries. But the enacting legislation, Senate Bill 656, contains a sentence stating that "the provisions of this act shall not be construed as requiring or providing for the censoring of books in public elementary and secondary schools."

In a letter sent to the School Board last month and again in a statement issued Monday night, the ACLU of Virginia said this decision is based on a "misinterpretation of Virginia Code." "No school board - and especially not a single superintendent - should be able to ban books on the basis of whether they personally find them to be 'sexually explicit,'" the ACLU of Virginia's policy director, Ashna Khanna, said in the statement. "Unfortunately, the way Virginia code is written is so open-ended as to allow this kind of dangerous mission creep. Until this poorly written code is repealed, other overzealous school boards may try to ban books that simply make them uncomfortable."

Board members Dawn Shelley, Lorita Daniels and Nicole Cole voted against approval of the proposed revisions, describing them as incomplete and misleading. Russell agreed that the regulations "will need further refinement." The revisions draw from code section 18.2-390 for the definitions of sexually explicit content but fail to include language from the same code section stating that it is not unlawful for books with sexually explicit content to be an accredited library. "There should be a disclaimer or asterisk in here to make it clear that school systems and libraries are exempt from what you are trying to force-feed into this policy," Cole said. She also asked Russell whose input he sought while crafting the proposed revisions. Russell said input was "invited and received from many individuals," including the superintendent, deputy superintendent, "some" board members, the School Board's attorney and "a few parents."

But during public comments, division library liaison Kim Allen said she wanted to know why Russell "didn't seek input from library professionals, administrators, instructional leadership or from our diverse community members." Allen said policy IIA and the associated regulations are in need of modernization and that simply adding the definition of sexually explicit content "does not come close to addressing all the issues." She pointed out that the policy refers to instructional

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Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

materials and not library materials and questioned why there were no revisions proposed to the challenge process itself, which permits the superintendent to overturn the decisions of multiple ad hoc review committees. "Why are there no (proposed) revisions (to the process)?" Allen asked. "Is it so one mom can continue to exhaust school personnel and potential committee members and lead her assault on our libraries and librarians?"

None of the board members who voted to approve Russell's revisions explained their support, except for Rabih Abuismail, who said he agrees that the policy is outdated and asked that the policy and regulations be brought back again after librarians and "stakeholders" are consulted. He also asked that the word "heterosexuality" be added to the definition of "sexual conduct," along with the word "homosexuality." "It's not about whether the books are homosexual or heterosexual, it's that they're sexually explicit," Abuismail said. The majority agreed to approve the revisions with the addition.

A large number of people attended Monday's meeting to speak in support of **Taylor's** decision to remove books with sexually explicit content from school libraries. Many of them read passages from the 14 books that **Taylor** removed in March and from other books that they said should not be in school libraries - though it is not clear whether the books quoted are currently in Spotsylvania libraries. Many of the speakers described the books as "pornographic" and Bobby Eberth, the president and co-founder of Virginians for Children First, said he hopes to see Virginia establish "a new criminal process that would stop these sexually explicit materials from landing on the shelf." Other members of the public held a "read-in" protest prior to the School Board meeting to protest the removal of the books.

Late in the meeting, Cole made a motion to overturn **Taylor's** decision to remove the 14 books and return them to school library shelves. School Board Chair Lisa Phelps summarized Cole's motion by saying, "It is my belief, my opinion, that (if you vote for this), you are supporting sexually explicit materials in our schools, and if you don't, it means we are moving forward and we're gonna watch out for student safety and protect the students." The motion failed 2-4, with Lorita Daniels not voting. Daniels was out of the room prior to the vote and asked for discussion when she returned, but Phelps told her she had already called for the vote.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
May 4, 2023

School Board votes on budget - Spotsylvania School Board adopts provisional budget

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

Last week, the Spotsylvania School Board approved, by a 4-3 vote, a "provisional" operating budget of \$373.4 million for fiscal year 2024, which begins July 1. The approved budget cuts five elementary school paraeducator positions, academic and athletic stipends, four new school support positions (psychologists and social workers) and three new custodial positions. It also freezes 16 positions that are vacant, meaning there will be no attempt to fill those positions next year. The budget also cuts out the purchase of updates to AP textbooks, new literacy materials and new middle school science and English curricula; and it eliminates an increase in student-based allocations to individual schools. Contracted staff will still receive a 5% salary increase and teachers hired before 2014 will receive a step increase. The budget is termed "provisional" because the final amount of revenue from the state won't be known until the General Assembly approves its budget, which is not likely to occur until the middle of June, division Superintendent **Mark Taylor** said.

The school division will receive \$8.5 million in new funding from Spotsylvania County, according to the budget approved by the Board of Supervisors earlier this month. While the increase in local funding is "the largest contribution in more than two decades," Chief Business Officer Prashant Shrestha said, it is not enough to fill the \$21.8 million gap between the budgets proposed by the school system and the county.

School administrators initially proposed cutting 23 elementary paraeducator positions, but School Board members looked for ways to add those positions back. Board members Dawn Shelley and Nicole Cole suggested keeping all 23 elementary paraeducator positions and instead cutting an \$8,400 increase to the School Board's budget and three new payroll positions that would support transitioning from monthly to bimonthly payment, saving \$276,000. Switching to bimonthly pay was a move **Taylor** suggested in January as part of his recommended budget. He described it as a way to recruit and retain younger employees. Board member Rabih Abuismail initially said he would support cutting the new payroll positions in favor of keeping all 23 elementary paraeducators, but eventually agreed to support April Gillespie's motion, which kept 18 elementary paras, the new payroll support staff and the School Board budget increase.

Taylor in March presented a list of options for closing a potential budget gap that included eliminating school libraries and the International Baccalaureate and Commonwealth Governor's School programs, among others. **Taylor** did not recommend those options last week.

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Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
April 30, 2023

Greene's budget ills may have local ties - Greene County revenue shortfall may hinge on administrator's budget miscalculations

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

Greene County supervisors approved a 7-cent real estate tax increase for the fiscal year 2024 budget to make up for a revenue shortfall that is partially due to a projection by former County Administrator **Mark Taylor** that did not materialize. **Taylor**, now superintendent of Spotsylvania County schools, last year projected that Greene would receive \$996,500 in revenue from court fines, forfeitures and parking fines for fiscal year 2023, which ends June 30 - a 720% increase over the \$121,500 budgeted for fiscal year 2022. But according to the March 7 budget presentation by interim Greene County Administrator Brenda Garton, the county is going into the new fiscal year with a \$945,000 shortfall in revenue from fines and forfeitures. Garton presented that information on a slide titled "problems with revenues for fiscal year 2023-24." She proposed a 10-cent increase to Greene County's real estate tax rate and a reduction to other budget requests - including the elimination of all new positions - in order to balance the budget. In an April 27 email to the Free Lance-Star, Garton said the missing revenue is "certainly" one of the issues involved in setting the tax rates for the upcoming fiscal year. "I cannot comment on whether or not Mr. **Taylor** made a mistake in the revenue projections in the FY 22-23 budget, as I was not in Greene County at the time, of course, and have no way of knowing what his thought process may have been," Garton wrote. "As the presentation includes, we do need a revenue source to make up the \$945,000 in projected revenue in order to balance the budget for the upcoming fiscal year." According to the approved minutes of the March 1, 2022, Greene Board of Supervisors meeting at which **Taylor** presented his budget for fiscal year 2023, supervisors questioned his assessment that an increase to the real estate tax rate would not be needed. "Mr. Herring said that this is the first time he has seen a budget like this since he has been on the board," the minutes state. "He said that the recommendations presented tonight are all included in the proposed budget and we can do all this with the tax rate remaining the same. Mr. **Taylor** said yes."

Members of the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors were angered last month when **Taylor** presented a series of options for balancing the school division's budget that included eliminating the school libraries, programs for academically gifted students and more than 80 teacher and paraeducator positions. **Taylor** framed the cuts as potentially necessary due to a projected \$5 million decrease in state revenue for the school division combined with the division's needs, which require \$19 million in new revenue from the county. But the state budget situation is still in flux, and other area school divisions continue to anticipate an increase in state revenue for next fiscal year.

Greene residents last year also accused **Taylor** of misleading supervisors and the public about a potential 15.6% increase in the cost of health insurance for county employees. At the March 22, 2022, Greene Board of Supervisors meeting, **Taylor** told supervisors that they needed to

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immediately vote on how to fund that increase - either by paying 8% of the increase or providing employees with a one-time bonus - because the insurance company required a cost-share breakdown of the increase amount by March 25. "Our health insurance provider, Local Choice, is looking for a decision from this board this week," **Taylor** told supervisors, according to the video of the meeting. "They are adamant that they need an answer by this Friday." He also told supervisors that each time he asked Local Choice why there was a cost increase, "They came back increasing our increase with each question we had."

After **Taylor** made these remarks, several Greene residents requested to see communication between Local Choice and county administration under the Freedom of Information Act. At later meetings, they told the board that they could find no evidence that Local Choice requested information about the cost-share breakdown or that the company continued to up the amount of the increase, as **Taylor** claimed. "Mr. **Taylor**'s remarks were refuted by the director of health benefits, who wrote on May 17 that the county is not required to provide a breakdown of the cost share increase allocation," Greene resident Doug Roberts told supervisors, according to a video of the September 13, 2022, meeting.

At the Aug. 23, 2022, meeting, Paige Roberts told supervisors that she learned Local Choice communicated information about the 15.6% rate increase about a month before **Taylor** told the board they were facing a deadline and that "the rate did not change." "Why make that exaggerated claim when clearly the rate never increased over and over again?" Roberts asked. She said supervisors should be concerned that **Taylor** asked them to hold an unscheduled vote under misleading circumstances. At the September meeting, Keith Bourne, another Greene taxpayer, told the board that **Taylor**'s statements had "created a major trust issue with county administration."

In an October 4, 2022, interview with The Free Lance-Star, Bourne said he didn't think **Taylor** was honest with the Greene supervisors and the public during his time as County Administrator. "Honestly, what I think he is, is lazy," Bourne said. "I don't think he's purposely dishonest, but he strikes me as a lazy individual. When it catches up to him, we've seen it over and over, one of his staff goes under the bus. But the buck sort of stops with him, in my opinion."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
April 6, 2023

Spotsy eyes new plan for school funds - Spotsylvania supervisors discuss categorical funding of school division

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

Spotsylvania County supervisors are prepared to vote Thursday to initiate categorical funding of the school division. It would mean that instead of allocating a lump sum to the school division's operating budget, supervisors would appropriate funds to the school budget in five categories established by the state: Instruction; Administration/Attendance/Health; Pupil Transportation; Operations and Maintenance; Facilities; and Technology. Caroline County funds the school division categorically. According to the Caroline School Board's policy on fiscal management, "If funds are appropriated to the School Board by major classifications, no funds are expended by the School Board except in accordance with such classifications without the consent of the appropriating body."

Spotsylvania supervisors expressed support for switching to categorical funding during a budget work session on Tuesday. They described it as a way to ensure a measure of control over the school division's budget after superintendent **Mark Taylor**'s proposal last week to eliminate school libraries and cut programs for academically gifted students angered many in the community. **Taylor** presented those options among others that he said might be necessary if state revenue for the division is reduced and if the division doesn't get all \$19 million from an advertised 10-cent increase to the real estate tax rate. But supervisors last week described his proposal as "garbage" and said it seemed to come out of nowhere, since requests to meet with the School Board to discuss the budget have gone unanswered.

Supervisor Lori Hayes motioned on Tuesday to approve categorical appropriation of school funding. "I do believe this lends itself to transparency," she said. Supervisor Kevin Marshall said categorical appropriation is "the only legal option this board has to have some control over the cuts proposed." "When you're talking about eliminating libraries ... nobody suffers but kids and teachers and that's who we need to be looking out for at this point," Marshall said. "[International Baccalaureate] and Governor's School - those are the programs we want." Chris Yakabouski said it's time for supervisors to "be the adults in the room." "This isn't a game," he said, stressing that supervisors need to be able to ensure that school funding gets directly to the students and to the educators. County Administrator Ed Petrovitch said the School Board had been invited to participate in Thursday evening's budget work session but had not indicated by Tuesday night that they would be present. Supervisor Deborah Frazier was not present at Tuesday's work session, so supervisors decided to postpone the vote on categorical funding until Thursday.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The (Fredericksburg, VA)
April 5, 2023

770-home proposal hits snag in Spotsy - Spotsylvania officials delay decision on 770-unit development

Author/Byline: SCOTT SHENK

A proposed mixed-use development with up to 770 houses, town houses and condominiums was recently put on hold by the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors. After hearing a presentation from county staff and listening to seven residents speak at its March 28 meeting, the board voted, 6-1, to send the proposal back to the county Planning Commission so it can gather more details on the development's expected impacts to county services. Supervisor Jacob Lane cast the lone dissenting vote. The developers, Denali Capital Group LLC and Tricord, want to build the Village at Crossroads on property along U.S. 17 and Thornton Rolling Road, near the Virginia Railway Express station.

During a county staff presentation, Spotsylvania Planning Director Kimberly Pomatto said the proposed neighborhood's proximity to the VRE station sets it up to be a "transit oriented development" with "walkability" and a range of uses both residential and commercial. The county Planning Commission recommended denial of the proposal this summer, but noted that if the applicant revised proffers the proposal would have a better chance of approval. The suggested proffer changes included added commercial space and adjusting the percentage and location of apartments as well as adjusting the timing of road improvements, all of which the developer agreed to do. The development would include a maximum 250 detached homes, 250 attached homes and 270 condominiums. Four acres are slated for commercial use, with the developer agreeing to add a minimum of 20,000 square feet of commercial space on the site. The applicants also agreed to a one-time \$25,000 payment for a Fredericksburg Regional Transit bus stop. If that stop is established, the county would have to assume responsibility for the costs beyond the initial payment. The developers also agreed to more than \$2 million in proffers for impacts to parks and recreation, public safety and schools. Another proffer includes offering 10% of the units at an affordable price, defined as 75% of the median family household income.

While the project would create a connection from Crossroad Parkway to Thornton Rolling Road, there are transportation issues in that area, even without the development. County staff projects the development would add 4,665 daily trips on nearby roads. U.S. 17 already handles 19,000 vehicle trips in that area. Staff also pointed out that the Thornton Rolling Road and Jim Morris Road intersection is a "high vehicle crash location." The county, Virginia Department of Transportation and the applicant agreed improvements needed to increase the "level of service" grade of D on the road network in that area were "too great for this project to bear" so the goal is to mitigate the project's impacts. The level of service for that road network is expected to fall to F later this decade, with or without the development. The applicant has offered several improvements, including turn lane additions and extensions at Thornton Rolling and Jim Morris roads and at the Crossroads Parkway entrance on U.S. 17, the entrance that leads to the VRE station. The applicant also has agreed to improvements at a pair of intersections on U.S. 17 near

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the development, at Cosner Drive as well as Massaponax Church Road and Lee Hill School Drive.

Mike Jones, with Tricord, told the board the homes would likely sell for about \$500,000, the townhouses in the \$350,000 range and the condominiums would sell for about \$300,000. He emphasized that condominiums would be sold, not rented as is typical in apartment complexes. Jones said the development density is in line with the typical neighborhood in the county, but added that if the property isn't rezoned now it eventually will be, but probably with more density. He also added that they have agreed to \$8 million in road improvements in that area, asking the supervisors to consider how poor traffic would become in that area without the improvements. The development also would add 10,000 feet of trail to tie into the East Coast Greenway biking and hiking path. The proposal is the kind of development the county should want in that area, Jones said.

Supervisor Tim McLaughlin said the \$2 million proffers for parks, public safety and schools doesn't seem like much for a 770-unit development. He also wondered what would stop condominium owners from renting the spaces out. County attorney Karl Holsten said the owners could rent out the condominiums, depending on how the proffer agreement is written, something he said could be adjusted. "Our intent is to sell to homeowners," Jones said.

Board members asked for better statistics on school impacts after Pomatto told them the data used to establish those impacts, which are provided by the school system, date to 2013. Seven residents spoke about the proposal, with two in favor and the others asking the board to deny the project. One of those speakers was county schools Superintendent **Mark Taylor**, who asked the board to consider the increased cost to operate the school system, and implored the supervisors to not approve the proposal. "If we can't fully fund the division's needs, can we please slow down entitling more growth in this community?" said **Taylor**, who recently suggested closing school libraries as a way to ease a potential funding gap in the school system's fiscal year 2024 budget.

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fredericksburgfreepress
April 5, 2023

Spotsylvania School Superintendent Mark Taylor sends letter to parents highly critical of previous superintendent and decisions
by Ted Schubel

Dear SCPS community members,

As the local school division, we are presenting our cause to the county citizens and taxpayers concerning our urgent need for \$19 million in new local money for FY '24. This needed money will fund the first year of a three-year plan to improve our compliance and compensation problems and address other urgent needs. We cannot succeed without this money. Our success or failure is in the hands of the Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors.

Our School Division leadership has changed in the past year. There is a new majority on the school board and a new superintendent. We inherited a mess. We inherited lost or hidden positions. We inherited staff working without job descriptions. We inherited staff in one department being paid out of the budget of another. We inherited habitual budgeting for basic needs (like electricity and healthcare) millions of dollars below their actual cost. We inherited poor performance in special education compliance. We inherited years of efforts to maintain appearances at all costs. This is reality.

In 2019, we spent \$1.2 million on a beautiful blue football field and scored in the low 40s on special education compliance. The mantra of the past was "Keep the surface beautiful; don't look too deeply into the substance." If this seems harsh, consider that when the prior superintendent was ousted, several key staff leaders quit and left no records behind. They hid their actions. They covered their tracks. That was our inheritance.

The new school board and the new superintendent are determined to face the facts and fix the problems. We are making changes. The maintenance department's reorganization is getting rave reviews. Sexually explicit materials that cannot be access-controlled are being removed. Procurement practices are being reconsidered and improved. We are moving forward.

The big lie is that we don't know what we are doing. The big truth is that some fight the changes because life was easier when we kept up appearances and avoided hard truths. We must improve special education and other compliance issues, but we cannot do this without additional funding. We must keep the lights on, but we cannot do this without additional funding. We must increase pay and maintain benefits in order to maintain and recruit needed staff, but we cannot do this without additional funding. We must fix the internal problems we inherited and improve for the future, but we cannot do this without additional funding.

We know that funding our \$19 million will be hard. However, this is the sad truth. Our school division needs are real. Our need is cut to the bone. Our need is not inflated. We asked

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respectfully for \$21.84 million. We told the Board of Supervisors that we could move forward with new local funding of \$19 million.

County leaders arranged the county's proposed budget to blame any tax increase on the school division. The county's projected revenue increases were used to meet other needs first, leaving the schools for last. This has been Spotsylvania County's destructive habit. The county budgeted all of the new county revenue increase for itself and left the schools for last. It is not for the school division to say where the money must come from. That is a decision for the Board of Supervisors. The county could cut other spending. The county could raise taxes to generate additional revenue.

Spotsylvania County Public Schools needs \$19 million in new local money for FY 2024. If you want this need to be met, your county supervisor needs to know. Now is the time to reach out. The Board of Supervisors meets tomorrow at 6 p.m. and may make decisions on these issues at the meeting. Message them all at: BOS@Spotsylvania.va.us

Thank you.

Mark B. Taylor

SCPS Superintendent

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
March 28, 2023

Spotsy superintendent case tossed by judge - Judge dismisses case filed by parents requesting judicial review of Spotsy superintendent's hiring

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

A Spotsylvania Circuit Court judge on Monday dismissed a case filed by two county parents requesting judicial review of the School Board's hiring of superintendent **Mark Taylor**. Judge Ricardo Rigual sustained a motion to dismiss the case on the grounds that the plaintiffs - Jeffrey Glazer and Christina Ramos - were not able to show that the board's decision to hire **Taylor** caused specific injury to their children within the time frame dictated by Virginia Code. Section 2.2-1 of the code states, "Any parent, custodian, or legal guardian of a pupil attending the public schools in a school division who is aggrieved by an action of the school board may, within thirty days after such action, petition the circuit court having jurisdiction in the school division to review the action of the school board." **Taylor's** superintendent contract went into effect Nov. 1, 2022. Glazer and Ramos filed their petition on Oct. 4 and there was a first hearing on Oct. 27, at which Rigual permitted them to file an amended petition to show that they have legal standing to bring the case.

Jeremy Capps, representing the School Board, argued Monday morning that the plaintiffs have not shown evidence of sustaining injury as a result of **Taylor's** hiring. He said decisions in prior cases have established that "general distress" over a policy isn't enough to move the case forward. "There have to be present facts about an injury," Capps said. "There is no allegation of specific harm suffered. If taken to the extreme, that would mean any student or parent would be able to challenge any hiring decision."

Joseph Kirchgessner, representing Glazer and Ramos, argued that the 30-day window does not provide enough time for a specific injury to occur. "We all want justice for children and the system," he said. "But the system requires you to have facts within too short of a time frame." Kirchgessner said that he would be able to provide evidence showing that **Taylor's** hiring has caused injury to Glazer and Ramos and their children should the case be allowed to go to trial. He said **Taylor** has "flaunted his disregard" for minority populations, such as those that are biracial, have special needs or identify as LGBTQ+, through posts made to a Facebook page that appeared to belong to him, and that Glazer and Ramos's children belong to those populations.

Rigual agreed with Kirchgessner's assessment of the case as "tough," but agreed to grant Capps's motion to dismiss it. "This is a difficult case," he said. "But it doesn't meet the legal standard. The facts do not rise to the level of being 'aggrieved.'"

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
March 10, 2023

Spotsy schools paying more for security - Spotsylvania school division paying more for private security

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

Spotsylvania County school administration's decision to station a private armed guard in the School Board office every weekday has resulted in security costs tripling compared to last year. The school division paid \$23,434 to Sonny, Inc. - a private firm contracted in October 2022 to provide security at School Board meetings and in the School Board office - between December 2022 and February 2023, according to the weekly bill list posted on the division's website. Of that, \$10,654 was for "private security for School Board" and \$12,780 was for "private security - SBO reception."

The division paid the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office \$5,995 to provide security over the same three months the prior year, according to the bill list. Sheriff Roger Harris notified the school division that his office would stop providing security at School Board meetings in October 2022, citing discomfort with deputies being asked by then-School Board Chair Kirk Twigg to remove county residents from public meetings.

The school division issued a request for proposals for armed security services on Sept. 22, 2022, citing "an immediate need for armed services, specifically during regular, special and emergency School Board meetings."

Superintendent **Mark Taylor** signed a contract with Sonny, Inc., to provide armed security at meetings on Nov. 7, 2022. The hourly cost per guard, according to the contract, is \$45 for "regular time" and \$67.50 for overtime. **Taylor** also signed a modification to the contract, which stated that Sonny, Inc., would provide one armed guard in the School Board office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays. Hourly pricing remains the same as in the initial contract. The Sheriff's Office was charging \$55 per hour until 10 p.m. and \$110 per hour thereafter. The School Board did not employ armed security in its office prior to November 2022.

The total amount paid for private security over three months is more than one-third of what division staff have estimated the annual cost to be, according to budget information for fiscal year 2024, which begins July 1.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
February 5, 2023

**Spotsy school officer policy 'under review' - Spotsylvania school resource officer program
"under review" after disagreement between schools, Sheriff's Office**

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

Spotsylvania County's school resource officer program is under review after a disagreement between the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office and the school division over extra school resource officers at county high schools. "In light of recent coverage issues within our schools, the Memorandum of Understanding for the SRO program is under current review and it is our intention to ensure each and every school has the support of the Sheriff's Office," division superintendent **Mark Taylor** wrote in an email to the school community Friday afternoon.

The disagreement stemmed from a decision by the Sheriff's Office last month to increase the number of SROs on duty at four county high schools after a Jan. 17 fight at Riverbend High School, a Jan. 23 fight at Courtland High and an incident of trespassing on Jan. 24 at Massaponax High. The four SROs were reassigned to the high schools from four county elementary schools to provide extra security, Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Liz Scott said Friday. SROs are sworn deputies who are qualified to work in a school setting through completion of a specialized training course conducted by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety at the Department of Criminal Justice Services. According to the existing memorandum of understanding, which was most recently reapproved by the School Board in March, SROs report directly to the sheriff, and the Sheriff's Office is responsible for their employment, hiring and evaluation. The SROs who were reassigned to Riverbend, Courtland, Massaponax and Chancellor high schools were replaced at the elementary schools by "sworn personnel from other divisions within the office," Scott said.

Taylor on Jan. 27 requested that the sheriff remove the SROs from the high schools and return to the regular assignment of one SRO per high school on Jan. 30. **Taylor's** request was passed along to the Sheriff's Office in an email from Jeremy Siefker, director of safety for the school division. The email was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request. Scott responded to Siefker's email the same day. "While we appreciate you relaying Mr. **Taylor's** request, on behalf of Sheriff Harris we will not decrease law enforcement presence," Scott wrote. "Much of the community has expressed gratitude for the additional safety precautions that have been implemented. We will continue to place the safety of the children and school staff at the highest level."

Taylor's request to remove the extra SROs from the high schools came before a Jan. 30 email he sent to the school community. This was the first communication from **Taylor** to the community about the recent incidents. "SCPS continues to work with local law enforcement through our office of School Safety and in conjunction with school and division administration to ensure that our children can attend school in a safe environment," **Taylor** wrote. Division spokesman Jon Russell said Friday that "the decision to pull 4 SROs from other schools was made without

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Mark Brian Taylor

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

consultation with the Superintendent." In his email to the school community, **Taylor** wrote, "we firmly believe the presence of a trained SRO in every school, every day is a reasonable expectation of our community."

The SRO unit consists of 27 deputies assigned to cover 31 school buildings, Delbert Myrick, a spokesman for the Sheriff's Office, said Friday. "We currently have the funding for the SRO vacancies and are actively trying to fill these positions, which were created through attrition," Myrick said.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
February 1, 2023

Spotsy School Board looks at budget - Spotsylvania School Board members balk at time limits during budget session

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS

The Spotsylvania County School Board again adjourned a meeting Monday without completing the approved agenda. The meeting was a work session to discuss the budget for fiscal year 2024, which begins July 1. Superintendent **Mark Taylor** presented his \$390.4 million budget request - which calls for \$21.6 million in new funding from the county - at a special meeting last week.

The board went into recess at least four times during the three-and-a-half-hour meeting on Monday. Vice Chair April Gillespie called for the recesses each time a member who usually votes in the minority attempted to speak for longer than the five minutes that Chair Lisa Phelps allotted for questions about the budget. Phelps announced at the beginning of the meeting that she was imposing a time limit for questions "in order to be efficient and mindful." Board members in total submitted 40 questions about the budget after last week's presentation. Staff distributed answers to the questions - which have been posted on the School Board's website - at the start of Monday's work session. Phelps said each board member could pick three questions - either from the submitted list or a new question - to bring up with **Taylor** and Chief Business Officer Prashant Shrestha during a question-and-answer session. School Board members Nicole Cole and Dawn Shelley expressed frustration with limits imposed on the number of questions they could ask and the time given to ask them. Cole also expressed confusion about a presentation given by Sintrel Dass and Cynthia Lott of the human resources consulting group Dass Advisors, which is conducting a study of the school division's pay scale and compensation structure.

Taylor's proposed budget includes \$3.2 million to implement the first of three phases of recommended salary adjustments from the Dass study. Dass and Lott on Monday described their methodology and comparison data, which they pulled from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, salary.com and neighboring school divisions. They did not provide specifics about what adjustments they plan to recommend for Spotsylvania school division employees. Cole said the \$3.2 million proposed by **Taylor** to implement the Dass recommendations amount to little more than a retention initiative proposed by the state, which is a one-time bonus of \$500 per contracted employee and \$250 per noncontracted employee. "This is a drop in the bucket," she said of the \$3.2 million. "Even phasing this in over three years, I can't see how this addresses competitive pay."

Taylor said his recommendation is based on county supervisors' desire to make salary investments over multiple years, rather than all at once. "As a matter of practicality and budget impact, we decided to divide it into thirds," he said. **Taylor** said the number he proposed was based on a "preliminary estimate" from Dass. He also mentioned that there is a \$19 million total investment in workforce in the proposed budget, which includes the first year of the Dass study

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Mark Brian Taylor

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

recommendations and the state's retention initiative and 5% raise. Other board members asked few questions and praised the Dass study and **Taylor** and staff for the budget.

Board member Rabih Abuismail said he wants to improve compensation for the division's paraeducators, and Phelps said she knows there are issues with pay compression in the existing salary structure. Phelps declared the meeting adjourned after the board returned from a fourth recess. She called for the microphones to be cut off while board member Lorita Daniels was stating that the board still had work to do. There is another budget work session and public hearing scheduled for Feb. 6.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Abc7 News on your side
November 1, 2022

Mark Taylor begins Spotsylvania Co. superintendent job Tuesday ahead of court hearing

Tuesday is the first day on the job for the incoming superintendent of Spotsylvania County Public Schools, **Mark Taylor**. **Taylor** kicked off his first day on the job with a visit to Berkeley Elementary School and was joined by school board member April Gillespie. His visit will be the first of many for the month of November, the school system said on Twitter.

But, 7News learned there will be another court hearing Wednesday over his controversial hiring. Spotsylvania County school board member Nicole Cole has asked for a temporary injunction to prevent **Taylor** from taking over as superintendent. Cole is also appealing the State Board of Education's decision to grant **Taylor** a superintendent's license. Cole's attorney filed that appeal in the Circuit Court for the City of Richmond, where the Virginia Board of Education is based. "There are 24,000 students in our school system, and they all deserve a quality superintendent," said Cole. "I am concerned and fearful for the damage that will be done to our school division based on [**Taylor's**] lack of experience, and based on his character." **Taylor** has no experience working in education. He most recently worked as the Greene County administrator. Before that, he served as a county administrator and county attorney in Spotsylvania County. **Taylor** has also been accused of posting content on social media that is racially insensitive and anti-public education, and has faced criticism about potential conflicts of interest related to his personal connection to Spotsylvania County school board chairman Kirk Twigg. "I'm fighting for the kids," Cole said. "I'm seeking an injunction against his starting the job, because we feel his license should be voided."

Besides school leaders, Spotsylvania County parents have also asked for a temporary and permanent injunction against **Taylor's** hiring. Christina Ramos and Jeffrey Glazer, who are parents and legal guardians of kids in Spotsylvania County Public Schools, had filed a petition in Spotsylvania County Circuit Court that asked for both a "temporary and permanent injunction against the hiring of **Mark Taylor**." But Ramos and Glazer say they were dealt a setback in the form of procedural issues in court. The parents' legal petition, which they initially filed without an attorney, was challenged by lawyers representing the school board who said it lacked legal standing and asked the court to "dismiss the petition". Ramos and Glazer have since hired their own attorney, who on Thursday acknowledged there were some issues in the initial filing's legal argument. Ramos and Glazer's attorney then asked the judge for permission to amend and refile their complaint. The judge granted that request and said the amended complaint should be filed within 14 days. **Taylor's** nearly four-year superintendent contract includes a \$245,000 annual salary.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
September 22, 2022

Mark Taylor signs contract with Spotsylvania School Board

Author/Byline: Adele Uphaus-Conner

Mark Taylor signed a contract with the Spotsylvania County School Board to serve as the new division superintendent beginning Nov. 1. The board on Friday approved by a vote of 4–3 a motion by Rabi Abuismail to "submit the contract and negotiations forward as discussed in closed session." The contract, as described on Friday, guarantees **Taylor** more than three years of full pay if he is fired without cause. **Taylor** will also receive the full advertised base salary of \$245,000 per year—\$30,000 more per year than previous superintendent Scott Baker was making. Baker was hired in 2011. In 2018, the board increased his base salary from \$195,000 to \$205,000 per year. According to his most recent contract, effective July 2020, his annual salary was \$215,000 when he was fired without cause in January. **Taylor** has no experience in the field of public education and is employed as administrator for Greene County. According to an article in the Charlottesville Daily Progress, he was hired to that position in 2019 at a salary of \$135,000 per year.

The board discussed the contract in a closed session Friday with Whit Robinson, an attorney based in Warrenton with a specialty in "land use cases, criminal matters, construction law, federal and state election law and government contracts," according to his website. Twigg said Friday that Robinson was hired on Sept. 15 through the school division's procurement process for a short time period, not to exceed one month, to "help us with needs that are imminent." The board's previous attorney, Brad King of the Richmond firm Sands Anderson, ended his representation Sept. 12.

Board members Nicole Cole and Dawn Shelley said they had concerns about employing an attorney without a specialty in education law to represent the board during its negotiations with **Taylor**. "Education law needs to be known to understand how a contract for a superintendent for a school division should be properly written," Cole said. "This is not a general contract. There are specific contract provisions that we need to know that we can be counseled on for our protection as a board, since the superintendent is someone that we hire." Board member Lorita Daniels attempted to appeal Twigg's decision to hire Robinson without a full vote from the board, but her appeal was overturned by a 4–3 vote.

Robinson told the board prior to going into closed session that the contract with **Taylor** was "primarily based on the previous one." "We are not reinventing the wheel," he said. But after the closed session, Cole and Daniels described some of the provisions as being "out of the norm." Cole described a provision stating that **Taylor** will receive three years and eight months of full pay if he is fired without cause as "a real egregious overreach." "In our standard contract, historically, if the superintendent is terminated without cause, he gets paid through one year," she said. "For this contract, they want to make sure this individual gets paid through the end of three years and eight months, regardless of how long he works." Baker's contract from July 2020 states

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

that he will receive all compensation, salary and benefits for one year from the effective date of his termination without cause, or until June 30, 2024, whichever time period is shorter.

Shelley said the contract with **Taylor** also waives School Board policy that states that employees must work for a minimum of 15 years before retirement to receive health insurance retiree benefits. "No matter how long he works, he will receive health insurance, which could cost the division hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of dollars," she said. The contract also provides **Taylor** with an amount to cover moving expenses, though not the full \$10,000 originally requested, Daniels said Friday. According to Spotsylvania County's real estate database, **Taylor** and his wife, Francesca—under their company The Spotsy Spot—own a house in the Spotsylvania Courthouse area. They also own a house in Standardsville, about 60 miles away, according to Greene County data.

Shelley also cited concern with a provision in the contract that states the board cannot discuss **Taylor** or his performance without him being present. "We are not allowed to talk about him unless he's in the room," she said. Daniels commented that the contract is written "as if the person accepting this contract is our boss." "I think it's important that when we hire someone, we set the tone and parameters," she said. "I understand there are negotiations, but we also need to be clear that we are the boss." None of the other board members commented on the contract Friday. "I don't feel comfortable speaking about something that is not finalized," Vice Chair April Gillespie said. "We are still in negotiations."

Cole said Monday afternoon that she is disputing whether the contract can legally go into effect, since Friday's vote was to move negotiations forward, not to authorize the chair to accept or sign a contract. "This is all under further deliberation," Twigg said Friday. Cole said at Friday's meeting that she is filing a lawsuit in circuit court to appeal the Virginia Board of Education's decision to license **Taylor**.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
September 16, 2022

State board OKs superintendent license for Taylor - Virginia Board of Education approves licensing Mark Taylor as superintendent

Author/Byline: ADELE UPHAUS-CONNER

The Virginia Board of Education on Thursday approved granting a superintendent's license to former Spotsylvania County Administrator **Mark Taylor**, thereby clearing the way for the School Board to officially give him the job of division superintendent and work out a contract. Board of Education members mainly cited their belief in the role of locally elected school boards to make the best decisions for their local school systems.

"We are not confirming anybody," said BOE member Andy Rotherham, an appointee of Gov. Glenn Youngkin. "We're saying, do they meet a baseline standard under the law to be on this list (of candidates eligible to obtain a superintendent's license)?" The board determined that **Taylor** qualifies for a superintendent's license based on Option IV of the Virginia Code's licensure regulations, which lays out the requirements for obtaining a superintendent's license without a background in education. Candidates must have a master's degree or equivalent, three years of successful senior leadership experience and a recommendation from a Virginia School Board interested in hiring them.

Two BOE members, Anne Holton and Tammy Mann—who were appointed by former Gov. Ralph Northam—voted against granting **Taylor** a license. Virginia Administrative Code section 8VAC20-23-750 cites a number of reasons for denying a license, ending with "Other good and just cause in the best interest of the public schools of the Commonwealth of Virginia." Holton cited this reason as supporting her belief that the Board of Education could vote against granting **Taylor** a license. She referred to posts that appear to have been made to **Taylor's** personal Facebook page, and described them as racially and socially insensitive. "It does not reflect well on the public schools of Virginia—it does not serve the school children of Virginia—to have somebody who posts not one, not two, but numerous racially bigoted and offensive memes," Holton said. "Among other things, if these posts are accurate and true, they just reflect a significant lack of judgement about communications and what a public official's role in the world would be."

Several of the board members who voted to grant **Taylor** the license agreed that the posts would have disqualified him from a leadership decision if they had been doing the hiring. "On a local board, I would consider these a disqualification," said member Alan Siebert, a Youngkin appointee. Rotherham said that, "assuming that those posts are legitimate, if I were on a local board, I would not vote to hire, either. "But that's not our role," he continued. "We're not on a local board. That's for the people of Spotsylvania, speaking through a local school board. They have to make these decisions. That's fundamentally the civics lesson of this entire episode." **Taylor** suggested during an interview Wednesday with ABC-7 that the social media posts were the result of his profile being hacked. Those posts were discussed by many of the two dozen

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Spotsylvania parents and teachers-including School Board members Nicole Cole and Lorita Daniels, speaking as parents of schoolchildren-who addressed the BOE during public comments, asking them not to grant the license. They asked board members to consider **Taylor's** lack of public school teaching or administration experience, his personal friendship with School Board Chair Kirk Twigg and the fact that his application for licensure last month was sent to the Virginia Department of Education without the School Board having held a public vote to recommend him.

Parent Rich Lieberman argued that **Taylor** does not meet the qualifications for school division superintendents as enumerated in Virginia Administrative Code section 8VAC20-390-10, which states, "The applicant shall have had at least five years of satisfactory and full-time experience in administration or supervision, or both, in public schools."

About a dozen community members-including School Board members April Gillespie, Lisa Phelps and Rabih Abuismail-attended the meeting to speak in support of **Taylor**. They described those who spoke against him as being part of an activist group with ties to a teachers' union, described **Taylor** as an ethical leader with extensive experience managing budgets, and asked the BOE to respect the local board's decision to go with an "out-of-the-box" candidate for superintendent. "Let Spotsylvania County move on to take care of Spotsylvania County," Phelps said.

The Free Lance-Star has reached out to **Taylor** to ask about his goals for Spotsylvania County Public Schools should he become superintendent and to ask if he would comment on the social media posts.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
February 3, 2022

Greene asks for ruling in ongoing RSA lawsuit

Author/Byline: Kathleen Borrelli

In a hearing Jan. 24—which was moved online due to illness of a member of the legal team—Greene County's motion for partial summary judgment in the ongoing lawsuit against the Rapidan Service Authority (RSA) was heard by Hon. Judge Claude V. Worrell in Greene County Circuit Court. "It's a motion for partial summary judgment, as you know, simply on the question of the improper termination of the facility fee," said Greg Habeeb, attorney for the Greene County Board of Supervisors (BOS). "We're not asking the court to determine damages—that would be left for a later date. This is simply the liability question of breach of contract."

In July of 2020, the RSA Board of Members voted 4-2 (with Greene representatives voting against) to end the facility fee billing that was used to pay for bonds related to water and sewer and the water treatment and impoundment project in Greene County. In September 2020, the Greene County BOS filed a lawsuit against RSA for breach of contract over the matter and the RSA board voted to prohibit the two Greene County representatives from speaking or voting on anything while the lawsuit was ongoing. In April 2021, boards of supervisors of both Orange and Madison counties gave unanimous consent for Greene to leave RSA; however, the RSA board denied the request. To date, Judge Worrell has sided with Greene County on seven separate occasions, including overturning RSA attorney Terry Lynn's Plea in Bar calling the fee an "impermissible tax" and another claiming RSA had sovereign immunity. In July 2021 Judge Worrell declared that the RSA facility fee was not illegal. Lynn also attempted to appeal Judge Worrell's decision on the Plea in Bar to the Supreme Court of Virginia, which denied the appeal on Jan. 3, 2022. "This is very, very simple," Habeeb continued. "Your Honor has already found on multiple occasions that there is, in fact, a contract. On June 28, 2021, you found that the facility fee was not a tax. ... There's no question that [RSA] unilaterally terminated the facility fee. And so, the only question, your Honor, on the summary judgment is did they have a defense to do that? Is there breach (of contract)—which is already determined, based on your Honor's findings?"

In RSA's written response to the motion for summary judgment, three examples are cited for why RSA was not responsible for its breach of contract: that Greene County failed to complete its reservoir project by 2008; that a 2014 agreement involving the Water Enterprise Fund had an indemnification provision; and that the facility fee was terminable at will (which has since been ruled false). "Their assertion is that by not completing the water reservoir by 2008, Greene County materially breached the agreement first," Habeeb said. "I will point out that there is no obligation in any of the agreements—or the amendments to the agreements—to complete a water reservoir by 2008. ... The facility fee didn't even exist in 2008—at the time they alleged we breached the reservoir obligation ... and so what they're trying to say is that an obligation that came into existence after the supposed first material breach could, years later, amount to first

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material breach. Judge, frankly, that's legally nonsense, and can certainly be rejected by this court on summary judgment."

After providing descriptions of each of RSA's counterarguments to the judge, Habeeb again asked for partial summary judgment to determine liability, noting that assessment of damages resulting from said liability would have to then proceed to trial. In a rebuttal, Lynn asserted that the availability fee was no longer a valid claim due to the fact that the RSA board did reinstate the availability fees in February 2021. She also claimed the exclusion of Greene County's board members from decision-making was no longer a valid issue since they were allowed to speak again beginning in February 2021 (disregarding the fact that the 2021 operating budget was discussed and voted on during the time that the Greene members were not allowed to participate). "At the November board meeting, RSA voted affirmatively to put the facility fee back on the bill," Lynn said. "So for Greene County to come and ask the court to order RSA to do something—the Water Act gives RSA the right to make decisions on that and they did make a decision to put it back on the bill." At the December RSA board of members meeting, the question of reinstating the facility fee was raised, to which then-Greene County board member Bill Martin stated that what Greene County really wanted was to stop wasting time and to be allowed to withdraw from RSA.

Lynn went on to describe the alleged breaches of contract from 2008 and 2019 in more detail. "Miss Lynn, let me ask you a question," Judge Worrell interrupted. "While we're talking about this, could you also talk about the timing of the breaches as they relate to the contracts that you're talking about and tell me why you're not time barred to complain about them?" Lynn's response was that Greene had been collecting money to build the water plant since 2004, amounting to \$22 million.

According to a letter from Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor**, the agreements between Greene and RSA included Greene County: paying \$7 million of RSA debt; constructing a new 600,000 gallon/day wastewater treatment facility; making upgrades to the Ruckersville Area Sewer Project (\$16 million); performing engineering and design work for the new water plant (\$2.5 million); acquisition of property for construction of the reservoir (\$3.8 million); and purchasing environmental stream credits to offset the environmental impacts of the project (\$8.2 million). "So, it's not that we're looking at a 2008 breach, because it's not until 2019 that we actually are told, we don't have any money left, there's no money in that fund and we can't do it," Lynn protested. "Tell me why you get to complain about Greene County's failures to do what they wanted to do," Judge Worrell responded. "Your participation in this sets out a certain set of expectations and signposts to meet—the reasons why you're collecting this fund—but Greene County has ... not made any headway on Phase Two for quite some time. And the board has known about that for quite some time. So what gives you the ability, at this late date, to now complain that Greene County has failed to do anything?" "Well, because they're collecting money from our customers," Lynn began. "Hold on a moment," Judge Worrell again interrupted. "RSA is collecting money on behalf of Greene County because you entered into an agreement. ... But why do you get to complain about what Greene County has done or hasn't done at this moment as it relates to your obligation to collect the facility fee? Why does one thing have

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anything to do with the other?" "You go along, go along and we're hoping it's going to be built; but we're at a point now where the growth that (Greene County is) anticipating—you can't grow if this is not accomplished," Lynn said. "That was a concern for RSA, which is why it became such an issue in 2019-2020."

In response to multiple continued protestations, Judge Worrell stated that RSA lost the ability to complain about an alleged breach of contract due to the statute of limitations and the many years that had passed where RSA was intimately aware of the county's financial situation. "I still don't see how their failure to complete Phase Two—even up to this date, and even through the other agreements—is necessarily a breach of the existing agreement from 2005 or 2014," Judge Worrell said. "My recollection of the 2014 agreement, it doesn't impose any timelines upon Greene County in which to complete anything. And so how could Greene County be in breach of something that doesn't exist in any of the agreements that were entered into ... between Greene County and RSA?"

"Your Honor, the breach occurred in 2019 and 2020 when Greene County came forth and said that, despite receiving \$25 million from RSA customers, they did not have the capability of building the water plant," Lynn said. "Whoa whoa whoa—that's not breach," Judge Worrell interjected. "Why is that 'breach' that they say they can't afford to build the plant? Why is that a breach of any agreement? They've still got an obligation to Greene to build the plant and if they can't presently afford it, why is that necessarily a breach of an agreement that doesn't include any timeline or any source of funding other than the EDUs?"

In response to Lynn's argument that Greene County was in the wrong for saying the project was going to cost much more than originally estimated, Judge Worrell said there was no proof that the agreements included a price cap in any way. "There's not a piece of paper that I've read or seen that says that there was a budget for this approved at \$23 million dollars," he said. "The other question is, what ability does RSA have to make Greene County perform and complete Phase Two?" "Well, what RSA did was decide to take over improving Greene County's infrastructure," Lynn responded. "And when they discontinued the facility fee, that was part of the board decision that RSA would then undertake the obligation to make the improvements to the Greene County system." "But isn't that also evidence of your breach of the agreement, where you took over a project that you agreed Greene County was going to manage?" Judge Worrell asked. "This is another reason why the RSA is in violation of their agreement with Greene County, because ... you didn't allow Greene County to do what they said they were going to do." "Well, your Honor, we've been asking where the money was since these conversations started," Lynn began. "Miss Lynn, that doesn't answer my question," Judge Worrell said. "It doesn't matter where the money is. ... The question is, when RSA undertook to act, did they breach the contract they had with Greene County or not?"

Judge Worrell finally said he had to take time to review all the documents but that his inclination was to say that Greene County was not in breach in the way claimed by RSA and that the goal moving forward was to get to an end result from this lengthy litigation. "I can tell you, your Honor, that I do not believe RSA will ever enter into another contract with Greene County to

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allow them to improve anything," Lynn said, exasperatedly. "These contracts were not good." "I can't comment about whether the contracts were good or bad," Judge Worrell responded. "All I can tell you is that they exist (and) that Greene has a certain obligation under them—still—as does RSA."

After more than an hour of back-and-forth between Lynn and Judge Worrell, Habeeb's only response was the following: "We disagree with every single fact you just heard and are very comfortable that once you've heard all that, the counterclaims will have no merit. But they have no relevance to the argument today, which is: the existence of a contract; it was breached; summary judgment is appropriate; let's try the case on damages. That's all, your Honor."

At the Greene County BOS meeting Jan. 25, **Taylor** attempted to convey to the board his frustration over RSA's insistence on a written statement regarding the reinstatement of the facility fee. "Our intent, goal and objective is to be gone from RSA, operating on our own—in which case we don't plan on having any facility fee at all," **Taylor** stated. "Our duty to the court, under the law, in the dispute as it sits today, is that we must do our part to limit our damages. So we must respectfully ask the facility fee be reinstated. Absolutely nothing requires RSA to act on this request in any timely manner at all, but having this board resolution in the record makes it clear that any further delay—and the cost of any further delay—will be on RSA and not on us."

"If we approve this resolution tonight, is RSA required to have another public hearing on this?" Dale Herring, Vice Chair, asked. "Yes, sir, my understanding is that RSA is required to have a public hearing to reinstate the facility fee," **Taylor** responded. "So we can request the public hearing be held in Greene County ... and we can advise the citizens that they can come to that public hearing to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the facility fee?" Herring asked. "Yes sir, we can," **Taylor** responded. "Honestly I must tell you that the public hearing by RSA will be held wherever the majority of the RSA board determines that it should be held—and we are only two out of the six votes on that RSA board. We will do all that we can to publicize the time, date and location of that public hearing—which RSA must hold in order to reinstate that fee." Herring stated that he would like to encourage residents of Greene to email the supervisors of Orange and Madison counties, as their two boards had each voted to let Greene withdraw from RSA but the county representatives on the RSA board continue to block Greene from doing so. The motion on the resolution to reinstate the facility fees was unanimous, and the next Greene County BOS meeting will be held Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 6:30 p.m. in the county administration building in Stanardsville. The RSA board elected to cancel its January meeting and Judge Worrell is scheduled to hear a Greene County Plea in Bar and RSA's Counterclaim in another virtual hearing Monday, March 21 at 3:30 p.m.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
November 19, 2021

Supervisors OK bonus

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

The Greene County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to approve bonuses for all employees at its November meeting. The General Assembly voted in August to instruct the Virginia Compensation Board to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funds for one-time \$3,000 bonuses to full-time and \$1,500 bonuses for part-time state-funded police and jail positions as part of premium pay due to COVID-19; these bonuses were to be given out in November. However, not all employees in Greene County are state-funded so the question before the supervisors was whether to fund bonuses across the board or only approve the funding for those state-funded positions. The pass-through funds for the state-funded positions totaled \$51,572. The cost for all the qualified employees is \$406,917.

"All of Gov. (Ralph) Northam's executive orders reinforced the points ... local government services are essential and local government workers are essential," said **Mark Taylor**, county administrator. "All of them provide services that contribute to the health, safety and welfare of the community." **Taylor** said some of the deputies in Greene are state-funded but others are not. And the General Assembly only funded certain state-funded positions within the sheriff's office—dispatch workers were not designated to receive the bonus. "There is a fundamental inequity of treatment among workers locally coming out of the state's action," **Taylor** said. "The question for the public hearing tonight is how we might handle that inequity. One recommendation before you is the consideration of ARPA-funded bonuses for local employees." He said the county is permitted to use funds for premium pay for those individuals who have direct contact with the public—which **Taylor** said all employees do.

There are 138 full-time county-funded workers and at least 27 have had COVID-19, he said. Recently, Rick Morris, the director of vehicle maintenance, passed away from the virus. The Emergency Medical Service has had an outbreak recently and the sheriff's office has had outbreaks throughout. An outbreak is defined as at least two COVID-19 cases in one setting. Additionally, **Taylor** noted that none of the county employees have been permitted (or able) to work from home. "For folks who have been able to work from home or who have otherwise qualified for supplemental benefits that the federal government and state government have made available ... I'm not sure those folks will ever really appreciate the stress that our workforce team has been subjected to simply by the continuity of service; to continue to perform in the face of the stress of the pandemic," **Taylor** said. "Yes, it's a sad thing to be out of work; it's also a safe thing to be out of work—or to work, to be home, to have things delivered by Walmart, to be able to go pick up a meal. Our workforce has had to continue in place, notwithstanding the risk." **Taylor** said he knows it's a lot of money, but he felt it was his duty to put before the board a recommendation to use ARPA funds for premium pay bonuses for all qualified employees so that those in locally funded positions would be on equal footing with their peers in state-funded positions.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Two people spoke against the bonuses. Mike Kilpatrick said he can't believe the county is discussing this with the state of the current economy. "I can't believe the state is doing this to us; I think it's completely irresponsible and the worst thing that we could do at this point is double down," Kilpatrick said. "I've read some of you are saying it would damage the morale between the state-funded employees and the local employees—and I totally get that—but if you step back and look at the broader picture, the real damage is between the public sector and the private sector with things like that." Kilpatrick said he wasn't aware of anyone in the public sector that lost their jobs throughout the pandemic. "To reward employees that have never really been in danger of losing their jobs is just an irresponsible use of taxpayer funds," he said. "Whether that money comes from the federal level or the state level or the local level, it's all the same."

Paige Roberts said the money could be better spent on the county's infrastructure needs, such as the water supply. "We have three years to make a decision (on using the funds)," Roberts said. "I frankly think that our time and energy and money is better spent ensuring that the county actually is safe at this point in time more than anything else and that's why I think you should oppose this resolution."

Chairman Bill Martin, Stanardsville, said to him it's a matter of equity. "Whether it's a sheriff's deputy or a Greene County employee, they both performed during the pandemic," he said.

Midway Supervisor Marie Durrer said the county employees stepped up to the plate during the pandemic so she supported the resolution. The decision to support the resolution didn't come easily to Monroe Supervisor Steve Bowman, he said. "I've struggled with this a great deal because it's a lot of money," he said. "And there are a lot of other things to do. But our team has worked long and hard over the last year and eight months, so I will support this."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
October 7, 2021

Greene, RSA at odds over hydrants

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

The state of fire hydrants in the county is a public safety hazard, according to two Greene County volunteer fire chiefs and other county officials. "If (Rapidan Service Authority) properly maintained the hydrants, I would go to, like, five of them and it takes four people to open them," Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Company Chief David Morris said during the September Emergency Services Board meeting. "That tells me (the hydrants) haven't been tested in at least a year. I can take you to three that are half-buried under the ground; if they were properly maintained, that wouldn't be the case. They'd go out and do their yearly maintenance and flow testing and they would know they need to dig the hydrant out and that alone tells me they're not properly maintained." The National Fire Protection Association's 2022 standards note that flow tests should be done on all public hydrants every five years and that the hydrants should be flushed annually by the "authority having jurisdiction." RSA General Manager Tim Clemons did not answer whether those standards had been followed or who he believes would be responsible for that in Greene County.

At the Aug. 24 Board of Supervisors meeting—and in the Aug. 26 edition of the newspaper, Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor** alleged that an estimated one-third of the 265 fire hydrants on the RSA water system in the county don't work, which could cost someone's life during a fire emergency. **Taylor** noted that RSA had been aware of the situation and had not communicated with the county regarding a plan. Clemons responded by saying, "public safety is of utmost concern to Rapidan Service Authority. We pride ourselves on our water quality meeting and/or exceeding state and federal guidelines. We also take seriously the safety of our firefighters and citizens." He said no one from the Board of Supervisors had reached out to RSA regarding inoperable hydrants. However, in an email obtained by the Record through an open records request, Mike Jones with Major Security Consulting—hired by Greene County—followed up a phone conversation with Clemons with an email dated March 3, asking for a meeting regarding the hydrants. "I have not heard from Mr. Clemons or anyone from RSA," Jones told **Taylor** via email, dated Sept. 3. "Based on information that I provided to the RSA verbally and in writing, I find it reprehensible that a government agency—when informed by a public safety professional about issues that were deemed to be a 'potentially life-threatening' set of concerns with the lack of fire suppression water, along with the reports by the fire chiefs about the malfunctioning fire hydrants—utterly failed to follow up with myself, Greene County Emergency Management, Greene County sheriff, Greene County administration and/or the fire chiefs of Greene County."

Jones went on to say that in his professional opinion there is "no ability to suppress a fire if there is no water to do it with. ... This is an RSA problem that has become a (Greene County Volunteer Fire Departments) problem; a problem that could cost a Greene County citizen their life and property should a fire occur." Clemons did not respond to questions by the Record

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regarding fire hydrants. In his published Op-Ed, Clemons said RSA would begin checking all of RSA's hydrants in Greene County beginning the week of Aug. 30. The Record requested the documentation of that work as of Sept. 23, 2021, under Virginia's Freedom of Information Act, and was provided maintenance sheets for 14 hydrants that had been checked along Moore Road in Ruckersville—all on Sept. 21. The maintenance sheets do not show that the hydrants' water lines were flushed and do not show whether the water pressure was tested during the inspections. Two of the sheets noted that on two hydrants, "main line valves" could not be located, but do not note whether corrective action needs to be taken and what that would be. "The hydrants either don't work or you actually have a compromised pressure," said Steve Catalano, the citizen member on the Emergency Services Board, when told about the main line valve issue. "If you're loading up tankers with water and taking them to a fire scene it means they will be slower filling. But if you're using that fire hydrant to pump out of it to fight a fire, it is a disaster." "It says to me that they're out of service," said Catalano, who has also served as a firefighter.

Jones said it's critical to know the functional status for each fire hydrant at all times. "Fire departments plan their response based on suppression water available," he said. "It is especially critical in a rural county because if a hydrant is not working, a water tanker has to be dispatched to provide suppression water. The nightmare situation we can have here is for a structure fire to be called in, fire dispatched, arrives at a hydrant to find it dysfunctional; (now) fire suppression efforts will require a delayed tanker response and/or a trip to find a functional fire hydrant nearby. This is an unacceptable situation." Jones said to test a hydrant properly it must be turned on and off on a scheduled basis. "There is no room for error in the maintenance of critical fire suppression hydrants," Jones said. "Fire hydrant valves need to be 'exercised' (physically opened and tested and then closed) to ensure adequate water flow. This is basic maintenance 101. Loss of life and property is at stake here." Catalano agreed, saying firefighters are trained to open up the hydrant and not hook up a hose until the water clears up, no matter how recently it had been flushed. "This is very dangerous," he said.

In Clemons's letter, dated Aug. 31, he said RSA's staff engineer has run calls with the fire departments for at least 30 years, serving as a liaison between the authority and the volunteer fire departments. However, according to the Stanardsville and Ruckersville fire chiefs and the director of emergency services for the county, no one knew there was a liaison. "Who is the liaison? That's my question," Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Company Chief David Morris said at the September Emergency Services Board Meeting. Melissa Meador, director of emergency services, said she believed it was Lynn Clements, who both chiefs did acknowledge has ridden on calls with them, but Meador added she wasn't aware Clements was ever given that title. "And that's who I'm supposed to go to with an issue?" Morris asked. "Now, if they're not getting the information there's a problem with a hydrant, OK, maybe that's on us. I didn't know who to call," Morris continued. "I've told people about issues that never got addressed and that's when I just stopped telling." Clemons did not answer whether RSA had a memorandum of understanding regarding a liaison between the authority and the fire departments or if there was correspondence that would show that information had been given to someone in the county. Jones reported in his email that since he was hired last year to help Greene County implement the recommendations in the Fire and EMS (emergency medical services) study performed by the Virginia Fire Services

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Board, he has heard from the fire chiefs that they have been unable to locate hydrants due to heavy vegetation, hydrants with stuck valves which cannot be opened and hydrants that just have no water for unknown reasons. "This is why I reached out to RSA multiple times," Jones said. "As a public safety professional, RSA should have immediately reached out to Greene County emergency management, county administration and the fire chiefs and should have asked about this critical response issue. Instead, RSA was silent and allowed a potentially life-threatening condition to remain unchecked until six months later."

Other service authorities—both similar-sized authorities and larger ones—throughout the state have their written testing procedures on their websites and responded to the Record that they do perform annual hydrant maintenance programs for their localities—sometimes in concert with the fire departments. Private hydrants—those located on private property—are left to the owners of the property for testing and maintenance; including apartment complexes and shopping centers such as Lowe's.

When asked whether RSA had an easement to access the hydrants for testing, Clemons did not answer. Greene County Director of Planning and Zoning Administrator Jim Frydl said the water meters for the Lowe's/Walmart shopping center are set at the roads but the internal piping is private and up to them to maintain. As of Sunday, several hydrants in the Stoneridge Shopping Center in Ruckersville had been repainted, though others remain hidden behind heavy vegetation. It was unclear if RSA or the county had documentation of the hidden hydrants.

Catalano said during the September Emergency Services Board meeting that he would like to see that board draft a letter to RSA regarding the situation. "What we're talking about does not reflect any bias on the pending litigation that's going on between the county and RSA," Catalano said. "We'd like to have our hydrant locations. We'd like to have a written demonstrated policy and procedure that RSA expects out of the fire chiefs to deal with a broken hydrant. I think our job is response. I just find it horrifying in this day and age, with all the documentation, that something as simple as locations—let alone a maintenance procedure or reporting procedure—is not already there with RSA." Meador added the letter should include a requirement that RSA notify E-911 when a hydrant is out of service.

Jones has recommended that Greene County geo-locate all fire hydrants within the county and develop a system where RSA has "real time" knowledge of the functionality of each fire hydrant that is integrated into the county 911 system so when a fire call is dispatched, the nearest hydrant(s) are displayed as well as whether it's working.

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Mark Brian Taylor*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
August 19, 2021

Greene, RSA can be successful apart

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

Greene County could leave the Rapidan Service Authority (RSA) and both it and the new authority—made up of Orange and Madison counties—could survive, according to a consultant's presentation at the last Greene supervisors meeting. David Hyder, of Stantec, told the Greene County Board of Supervisors Aug. 10 that the utility revenue sufficiency analysis performed utilized numbers from RSA's comprehensive annual financial reports for the past eight years and the RSA operating budgets from 2015-2021. "One of the things I want to draw your attention to right off the bat ... is that RSA is operating a self-supporting utility," Hyder said. "In fact, they projected that they're actually going to have reserve contributions totaling \$1.2 million in 2021." Hyder noted that current water and sewer rates for the county could support the operation of the utility itself, but cannot support that plus the debt service that Greene holds for previous infrastructure improvements and the beginning of the reservoir project.

Hyder said while forecasting the operating costs across the next four years, Stantec assumed costs would grow about 3% per year and a 2% increase in revenues outside of water and sewer rates. Additionally, they assumed property tax dollars to the county would increase by 2% since Greene budgets 7.5 cents per \$100 of assessed real estate tax dollars to go toward water and sewer debt the county holds, which has an annual payment of about \$2.5 million. Without the debt payments for the sewer plant and that water debt the county assumed in 2005 from RSA, the county could operate a water and sewer utility without using the advertised 2022 rates and have a roughly \$450,000 surplus. "Greene County provides property tax revenues to help fund the debt service," Hyder said. "Even with the property taxes, when we bring in the existing debt services, revenues would not be sufficient to cover the cost of the system—with a shortfall of about \$370,000." Hyder said if the county increased rates by 19% for both sewer and water in 2022 that it would have a roughly \$500,000 surplus for the utility's reserves. That would bring the rate for minimum water user (up to 2,000 gallons) to \$18.25 and then an additional \$7.34 for each 2,000 gallons over. The minimum sewer (up to 2,000 gallons) user's rate would be \$33.58 and \$12 for each 2,000 gallons over. Stantec estimated a need to increase those rates by 8% in 2023 and 2024 and then by 2.5% in 2025 and 2026. This is significantly less than the \$30 facility fee that was being assessed prior to the July 2020 meeting when the RSA Board of Members voted 4-2 to immediately end billing the facility fee.

Stantec also did an analysis of what RSA would look like without Greene County's more than 3,000 customers. "So this is taking the budget for 2021 and just stripping out the water and sewer revenues that Greene generates, as well as other revenues that are allocated to Greene, stripping out the operating costs associated with Greene and then stripping out a little bit of debt," Hyder said. Stantec found that without Greene County, the new authority would still generate a significant surplus of about \$800,000. "The current budget assumes a \$1.2 million contribution to reserves," Hyder said. "So, if RSA wanted to return to that point ... they have to do about a

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Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

7.5% rate increase for its customers (in Madison and Orange) and that would allow them a one-time increase to get back to generating that \$1.2 million. It's important to note here, though, that with the removal of Greene County, they're still fine in terms of financially viable. In 2026 there is a small shortfall, but this does assume there are no future rate increases."

Ruckersville Supervisor Davis Lamb asked if connection fees—those charged when a new customer hooks up to the water and sewer connection—were included as revenues in the analysis. "That is a great question," said Courtney Rogers with Davenport and Company LLC. "It's actually a point I was going to make. For this analysis we've chosen to just assume the worst case—that there are no new connections." Board of Supervisors Chair Bill Martin (Stanardsville) said the county will share the information with VRA as part of the justification to leave RSA. "Based on what I'm seeing here, it seems that Greene County would be better off not being in RSA," said At-Large Supervisor Dale Herring. "We've been saying that all along, you know, this gives us a definite answer that we're better off being on our own than being part of this organization."

The next step of analysis is looking at the reservoir project and what it will take to get that back underway. "It's important ... to divide our thinking or synchronize our world into the short-term horizon and the long-term horizon," said Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor**. "In Stanardsville there are issues that have been very long-standing ... (hydrant) flow and environmentally impactful sewer problems. Mercifully, we've been having conversations with the USDA about grant funding, so there will be some near-term projects that will be low cost for Greene County and extremely high value for the Town of Stanardsville and our community altogether."

Taylor presented capital improvement projects and costs to the board later in the same meeting. "This is entirely separate from the issue of our water supply project, which is a multiyear project that would take five years in order to complete, so that in my mind falls out as a long-term goal," **Taylor** said. "As I comprehend what VRA means when they say they want to see our financing, our rate analysis and our impression of short-term capital needs that is on a very short horizon of no more than three years." **Taylor** said several of the RSA "current priorities" for Greene County have not been funded yet, including a 12-inch water main from Quinque to Stanardsville; a storage tank in Stanardsville; repainting elevated storage tanks; and retrofitting or replacing the water treatment plant. **Taylor** said pump station electrical upgrades; pump station upgrades with new variable speed pumps and upgraded water meters are being funded by the RSA Greene County rates. "Our expectation is these projects blended in the water main replacement on Reservoir Drive, which RSA is doing as an emergency repair and should have complete before the transfer of Greene County operations to us," **Taylor** said. "These have been current projects for RSA for quite some time. They've been collecting Greene County ratepayer funds to fund these projects for a number of years. I have no information to suggest that it's not realistic for us to suggest or demand in the withdrawal agreement that these projects be completed before the transfer is completed, or the funding to these projects be transferred to us as part of the withdrawal."

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Monroe Supervisor Steve Bowman asked whether there was documented paperwork from RSA on the projects but **Taylor** said he had not seen it. "I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this, but I'd like to get it on record ... we made a request to see the documents?" Bowman asked. "They should be among the documents that we've requested of them," **Taylor** said. He also noted that sewage was leaking into Mitchell Creek in the town and would need a sewer line replacement. He said he forwarded the information to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. "I forwarded it in part because I want the record clear with them—who will be our future regulators—that this is an RSA issue that needs to be resolved before the baton is passed from RSA to Greene County," **Taylor** said.

So, the three short-term projects for the new Greene utility would be: a water tank replacement in Stanardsville for \$4 million; a pump station and force main for \$3 million; and the Stanardsville sewer pipe replacement for \$10 million. "These projects have been badly needed for years," **Taylor** said. "USDA is confident that the Town of Stanardsville could easily qualify for a good deal of federal help with these particular needs. If we can get the timing right on the transfer from RSA to get in the queue with USDA grants, we should have a very good opportunity to bring some badly needed improvement for the town."

VRA notified **Taylor** in a letter dated Aug. 9, 2021, that the following items were outstanding before VRA would begin its analysis: a copy of the contract between Greene and the selected independent firm that will operate the county's water and sewer assets; a copy of the finalized rate plan completed by the county's rate consultant; detail regarding capital needs for the county's water and sewer system and a plan for financing it; and a draft of the RSA-Greene withdrawal agreement. With the information presented at the Aug. 10 meeting, the only item that is still needed is the contract with the independent firm, which has not been released publicly if one has been signed. The letter notes that VRA hopes to complete the analysis by the end of October.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
July 16, 2021

RSA Board cites lawsuit in denial of Greene's documentation request

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

The Rapidan Service Authority Board of Members voted against a Greene County resolution on July 15 that would require the distribution of certain documents that could aid the county in its withdrawal from RSA. Both Madison and Orange counties' boards of supervisors have unanimously approved Greene's withdrawal, but those counties' RSA board members voted against the resolution that would require RSA staff to share specific documents and produce certain documents if they did not already exist. Board Chairman Lee Frame of Orange, who said at the June meeting that "these are the kinds of information that I think RSA board members need to understand," said July 15 that while he believes the documentation will need to be created at some point for the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA), he voted against the resolution. At the meeting he said he was "not going to create new documents under a lawsuit."

Greene County filed a lawsuit in September 2020 citing an alleged breach of contract by RSA for the ending of facility fee billing, as well as voting for a resolution at a meeting that month to prohibit the two Greene County representatives from speaking or voting on anything while the lawsuit was ongoing. Greene was again given its voice on the board in February 2021. Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor** then presented information about splitting assets and debt between the county and RSA and also terms of withdrawal for Greene. In the financial plan, **Taylor** notes that since Greene County Circuit Court Judge Claude Worrell II ruled the facility fee was not an impermissible tax, that RSA owes Greene County the nearly \$1.8 million it's lost since the board of members voted 4-2 July 2020 to end facility fee billing upon the advice of the attorney Terry Lynn, who told the board she had concerns about the legality of the fee. "The primary beneficiary of those losses to Greene County were the Greene County ratepayers; they're the ones that haven't paid that," said Frame, Orange County representative. Since cessation of the facility fee billing, Greene County has had to fund the debt payments for water and sewer that it holds from the general fund, which is funded by real estate tax dollars from all Greene County taxpayers and not just those who are serviced by RSA. Only about 1/4 of the Greene County households are serviced by RSA for water and/or sewer. "We found ourselves in a holding pattern waiting for a ruling from Judge Worrell for the facility fee issue," **Taylor** said. "And it was frequently heard by members of various local bodies—including this one—that everyone was waiting for the judge's decision. The fees charged ... were not an impermissible tax ... so now we're at the point of wanting to work our way forward."

Taylor said the county has put out a request for proposals for operation and maintenance of water and wastewater facilities, effective July 9. VRA, the agency that holds all the bonds for RSA, must approve the withdrawal before Greene County can separate from the authority. In a letter from March, VRA outlined what information it needs from Greene County to make a decision—including the ability to staff a water and sewer authority; pricing feasibility study; five-year capital improvement projects; and whether Madison and Orange counties are able to

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survive as an authority without Greene County. In the terms for withdrawal document given to the members July 15, **Taylor** lists several capital improvement projects that align with items RSA has listed for Greene County in previous meetings. He told the board that Stantec and Davenport and Company are working on what fees and pricing users will be charged under the new Greene County authority. He said they are scheduled to present that information at the Greene County Board of Supervisors' Aug. 10 meeting. "We have engaged to validate for us ... that we can provide the same ongoing water and sewer service to customers in Greene County at the same rate currently charged customers in Greene County," **Taylor** said. "A preliminary analysis of that question with Davenport and Company ... we should be able to continue providing service ... at the same rates that RSA currently charges. Stantec is completing a more formal analysis to that point." Madison County Member Carty Yowell asked **Taylor** how far along he thought Greene was in answering all of the VRA questions and **Taylor** said he thinks the county is about ¾ of the way there.

According to Madison County Member Troy Copping, "The other thing that really strikes me here is the discussion of the legality of the facility fee. I don't have the exact wording but the motion to (end facility fee billing) had nothing to do with the legality, I don't believe." However, in the June 2020 meeting when Greene County requested the increase in the facility fee, it was Copping who said, "Until we know this fee is permissible I just can't see how we can even considering raising something that may not be permissible to start with." Frame agreed at that time, adding any change in the fee would have to be "something agreed to by both RSA and Greene County." The two Greene County representatives voted against the ending of the facility fee in July 2020. Frame also asked Lynn in June 2020 if RSA "put(s) ourselves in any additional jeopardy as an RSA board by agreeing to any increases in the facility fee." Lynn's response was, "I guess the question is does RSA want to participate in billing its customers a fee that may be considered illegal?" Later she added, "I have concerns with regard to the fee." In the February 2021 board of members meeting, Greene County representative Bill Martin asked the RSA board to consider "rescinding the actions that were taken last July 16 to terminate Greene County's facility fees." Copping in February told the board that RSA should "look for a solution that's both fair and legal that would allow Greene to collect the fee and leave RSA out of it." Frame asked Lynn if providing Greene County with a customer list would be a "viable option" to which she replied, "no." In the March 2021 meeting, Copping told the Board of Members that they needed "to get an answer on the legality of this facility fee before we can really make a decision on a lot of it. I mean, I think a lot of things hinge on that. It seems we need to press for an answer for that." The judge's ruling came on June 28. Lynn did not discuss the decision at the recent meeting. All five Greene County supervisors agreed at their July 13 meeting that they support the actions of withdrawal and Monroe Supervisor Steve Bowman asked Martin and **Taylor** to carry the message to the RSA board that they "want to see action now." The Greene County Board of Supervisors' Aug. 10 meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the county administration building, 40 Celt Road, Stanardsville.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
May 9, 2021

Tax rate stays at 82 cents, funds will rise

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

Only the superintendent of schools spoke during the public hearing for the Greene County fiscal year 2022 budget at the board of supervisors meeting April 27. The supervisors also voted unanimously to keep the tax rates the same year over year for calendar year 2021 for personal property, machinery and real estate. Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor** presented the proposed \$67.6 million budget to the supervisors, which includes additions to county and state funding, but holds level local funding for the school system for the second year in a row. "I hope the board and the community can understand that in this very bizarre year of COVID, some of these projects have been very, very challenging," **Taylor** said. "I want to assure everyone that Ms. (Tracy) Morris and I have been through every department submittal literally line by line. ... Out of the individual departmental budgets, we've worked to reduce reliance on fund balance." **Taylor** noted the county is still working to mitigate the decision by the Rapidan Service Authority's Board of Members to stop billing the facility fee in July 2020, which costs the county roughly \$3,500 per day that was allocated to pay bond payments regarding water debt in the county. Additional costs relating to the service authority that were not expected when creating the fiscal year 2021 budget include fees to lawyers. The supervisors filed a lawsuit in September against the authority and Madison and Orange, the partner counties, for the decision not to allow Greene out of the partnership.

The reassessed value of Greene's real estate properties will increase the revenue expected to the county by nearly 4.8% if the tax rate remains the same at 82 cents per \$100 of assessed value. "In the circumstance of a rising reassessment, there is the mandatory clarification of what would be the equalized tax rate or the amount of the tax rate necessary to generate the same amount of revenue this year as last year; that number would be 77 cents," **Taylor** said. To balance the budget for breathing apparatus, public safety radio system, a zoning system audit and capital improvements of the floor at the solid waste facility and the county courthouse, **Taylor** proposed utilizing \$2.2 million from the reserve fund balance, leaving \$319,666 back into the general fund. "These are all one-time expenditures, so it's not unhelpful or contrary to use our fund balance," **Taylor** said.

Also within the budget are the following new county positions: grant writer/public safety training coordinator; general IT support position; additional hours for Victim Witness services; a medic for the emergency medical services department; a social services family services specialist; a new sheriff's department deputy; and a county engineer/clerk of the works. It also includes a 2.7% pay increase for county employees. "We're aware that multiple positions that were requested for fiscal year 2022 were not recommended for funding," he said. "We hope to do better in the future. But we must address the obstacle set before us with the loss of the facility fee last summer. We must position ourselves to be able to make the Virginia Resources Authority

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debt service payment this fall. Our obligation is to the Virginia Resource Authority and that (\$1.6 million) payment comes due in November."

Superintendent of Greene County Public Schools Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh was the only public speaker during the hearing on the proposed budget and asked supervisors to reconsider the level funding of roughly \$17.5 million. "We are incredibly proud of our staff, students and families here in Greene County and while there were many unknowns going into this year—and many changes throughout—we've opened our doors five days a week for our elementary students and two days a week for our middle and high school students while also operating a virtual option for all since Sept. 8," Whitmarsh said. "There are many positives and things to celebrate and take forward. But we also face many challenges in the foreseeable future. We have students who have not been in a school building in 13 months at this point." Whitmarsh said the system expects to have students struggling mentally, emotionally, socially, developmentally and academically when they return in the fall and will need additional help. "We appreciate the amount that was included in the advertisement of the budget, but this amount still falls short of our very modest request to increase our operating budget," Whitmarsh said. "I'd like to make an additional plea for any increased funding you're able to provide to assist us in providing a raise for staff and long-term supports needed for our students."

Both Whitmarsh and **Taylor** acknowledged the expectation of millions from the Return to Work Plan recently passed by Congress, but guidelines for how the funds must be used is still unknown. The budget will be voted on at the May 11 supervisors meeting.

The supervisors unanimously approved holding the real estate and public services corp. tax rates at 82 cents per \$100 of assessed value, as well as \$5 per \$100 assessed value for personal property except for farm machinery and livestock. Industrial machine and tools tax also remains the same at \$2.50 per \$100 assessed value. No one spoke during the public hearing for the tax rates. Director of Finance and Deputy County Administrator Tracy Morris told the supervisors there is a 40.4% relief for personal property for calendar year 2021. All personal-use vehicles valued at \$1,000 or less will be eligible for 100% tax relief. Personal-use vehicles valued at \$1,001-20,000 are eligible for 40.4% tax relief. Personal-use vehicles valued at \$20,001 or more are eligible for 40.4% tax relief on the first \$20,000 of value only. Business vehicles, motor homes and foreign-use vehicles are not eligible for relief. "I don't think there was anything new there for us," said board Chairman Bill Martin, Stanardsville. "But it was a good review of where we're at with an emphasis on the budget gaps we are facing due to our ongoing issue with Rapidan Service Authority."

No one spoke during the public hearing on the county's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that evening and the supervisors agreed to wait to vote on it until the May 11 meeting when they vote on the budget due to the fact that in the future it will be incorporated within the budget. Director of Planning and Zoning Administrator Jim Frydl presented the CIP to the board, noting the priority item is the water treatment and reservoir project, which is estimated at \$60 million and expected in the fiscal year 2023 budget. "I would agree with Mr. **Taylor**'s recommendation that we vote on this at our next meeting," said At-Large Supervisor Dale Herring. "I think it's

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important to note that a lot of hard work went into this and I'm seeing a lot of progress being made as you continue to move forward. I just want to thank those that were involved in this process. We're getting to the point where we needed to be and it's been a long time coming."

Monroe Supervisor Steve Bowman agreed. "I like it and I applaud Mr. Frydl and the whole staff for putting this together," Bowman said. "I think one of the things this will do is continue to prompt us that as we grow, the infrastructure that supports county government and the citizens in this county has to grow with it and we need to think about that in a long-term way."

As of press time, the May 11 supervisor meeting was scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center at William Monroe High School for the first in-person meeting in more than a year. The meeting will also be livestreamed through the county website at greenecountyva.gov.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
March 4, 2021

Water supply project remains at top of CIP

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

Mark Taylor outlined priorities for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Greene County board of supervisors at its Feb. 23 meeting, prior to the development of the fiscal year 2022 budget. "The water supply project is the top priority on everyone's list," **Taylor** said. "The emergency services center and other facilities for public safety are also quite high." **Taylor** said he believes there is a path forward regarding the water supply project, which had been halted by the Rapidan Service Authority's Board of Members decision last year to end facility fee billing and the subsequent lawsuit by Greene County.

Items expected to have some funds included in fiscal year 2022 include three generators; an ambulance; upgraded county phone system; county administration paving/expansion; building safety improvements; courthouse complex repairs; and replacement of water/sewer infrastructure. The amount needed for all the projects in the CIP is roughly \$91 million in the next five years. However, it's up to the supervisors to approve a capital budget. "This was really consolidating the feedback we've gotten from the board with the interest to encourage further discussion, identify other items beyond the water supply project and public safety to come back for further consideration and discussion," **Taylor** said. "I appreciate everyone weighing in," said board Chairman Bill Martin, Stanardsville. "It's certainly a little bit daunting, but they're all needs."

Other capital items include an emergency communications system; a public safety building and/or public safety training center; new space for the health department; parking lot repairs at the two annex buildings—the sheriff's office and registrar; a community center; and land for a new elementary school. The county estimates the community center could cost upwards of \$15 million. The water supply project is estimated at \$60 million. The emergency communication system has a price tag of \$6 million. Replacement of water and sewer infrastructure is estimated at \$3.1 million. Repairs to the courthouse, which was built in 1838, are expected to cost roughly \$185,000. A new public safety building is estimated at \$3.4 million. "I want to comment that I think this is a good step," said Monroe Supervisor Steve Bowman. "It will allow us to look at resources that might come to us in terms of grants and other opportunities for investment to try to focus on these items. I think it's a good start for us." The county completed a facilities audit in 2018 with the contractor Cardno, which recommended roughly \$891,000 in urgent repairs to the 19 county-owned buildings.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
November 25, 2020

Despite COVID, wheels of government have continued to turn

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we do things, including the business of local government. Despite COVID-19, departments in Greene have had to adapt to be sure that county government keeps moving forward. The Greene County Planning and Zoning Department is one of the busiest offices in the county as it reviews applications for property development, new construction, signs, certifications and property divisions—among other things. "In the beginning we closed our doors and stopped letting the public come into direct contact with our staff," said Deputy Planning Director Stephanie Golon. "We moved the paperwork to the entrance and added a dropbox to put the applications in. We're still here to serve the citizens and they're able to submit online and pay online, as well."

The department also inspects and enforces the requirements and regulations throughout construction processes. Golon said the inspectors have still had to be in public, visiting construction sites to do inspections, while practicing safety precautions. "We're still reviewing our public applications and having public hearings at the Planning Commission," Golon said. "We've remained busy, all of our staff is doing their duties, just in a different way; we're approaching it in a different way. But I miss the public. Once you've been here as long as we have the public starts feeling like our friends and family."

Greene County Board of Supervisors Chairman and Stanardsville Supervisor Bill Martin agreed. "I regret that our Board of Supervisors and many other public meetings have needed to function virtually since March," Martin said. "This is not an optimal way to run local government. We miss the face-to-face contact with Greene County residents, but virtual meetings are important for everyone's safety and comfort and have permitted the wheels of government to continue to roll." Martin said he's enjoyed the fact that many residents do participate in the virtual meetings—either by computer or telephone—and the county does accept public comment via email that they read into the record during the public hearings.

Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor** said the county staff has done a good job of pulling together. "We have a fantastic team," **Taylor** said. "That is, in a lot of ways, victory over fear. It was realized early on that our services are essential to the function of the community and we stayed at it. We've been very, very blessed to maintain operability, maintain services and not have an invasion of the virus in our workplace."

Taylor said the online platform Zoom is the "right blessing at the right time" as it's made it possible for boards and departments to continue the work of the public. "Understanding early on the potential of the Continuity of Government Act which enabled the board to pass an ordinance to function virtually," **Taylor** said. "It created a way forward for us to use technology and encourage continuing participation. We've tried hard to maintain community outreach and

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community awareness and continue our operations and to continue them with the highest level of transparency possible."

Greene has received two tranches of money from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law by President Donald Trump on March 27. In mid-April, the Greene County Board of Supervisors submitted a letter to Congress asking for more assistance for localities. "As far as I know, the Greene County Board of Supervisors was the first local government in Virginia to go on record by appeal to both the federal government and the commonwealth of Virginia for direct assistance to alleviate the negative effects of the COVID-19 emergency," Martin said. "I am grateful for the state and federal resources that came to county administration and Greene County Public Schools to help us mitigate the negative effects of this emergency."

Taylor said he's especially proud of the staff at the county's solid waste facility for their work throughout this pandemic. "During the stay-at-home order many were taking trash to the transfer station because they were cleaning up or it was a big trip out for people," **Taylor** said. "The solid waste transfer folks have exposure to a germier environment every day of the year, even before COVID. Once you add COVID to the mix, there's just that much more. They've done a terrific job."

Martin said he's impressed with how Greene County Public Schools have handled the pandemic. "I am in awe of them and find it all very inspiring," Martin said. "I'm proud of how well our Greene County team has performed and I know that they will remain vigilant as we continue to move through this difficult time."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
October 1, 2020

Greene BOS files second lawsuit against RSA

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

The Greene County Board of Supervisors on Sept. 28 filed its second lawsuit in two weeks against Rapidan Service Authority (RSA) and the RSA Board of Members, this time requesting the dissolution of the utility. The second lawsuit comes after the two Greene County representatives were prohibited at the RSA board's Sept. 17 meeting from speaking at all during the meeting and going forward. The supervisors filed the first lawsuit on Sept. 14; both were filed in Greene County Circuit Court.

RSA was created as a regional water and wastewater authority on June 17, 1969, by the counties of Greene, Orange and Madison. In the most recent lawsuit, the county alleged the "board members from Madison and Orange counties have worked in concert to undermine the purpose of RSA with respect to Greene County and have conspired to harm Greene County's water and wastewater programs."

After the first lawsuit was filed for alleged contract breaches, alleged violations of fiduciary duty and alleged non-compliance with its duties to Greene County, the RSA Board of Members voted Sept. 17, to prohibit the two Greene County RSA board members—Stanardsville Supervisor Bill Martin and Planning Commissioner Ron Williams—from speaking, voting or participating in the remainder of that meeting or future RSA meetings, including closed sessions. "In essence, the members from Orange and Madison 'kicked' the Greene County members off the RSA board and unilaterally rewrote Virginia Code 15.2-5113 which requires at least five members on the RSA board," the lawsuit states. "The reconstituted RSA board made decisions concerning the Greene County water supply even though Greene County had been eliminated from RSA."

The Sept. 28 lawsuit also noted that RSA Board Chairman Steve Hoffman, of Madison, "falsely asserted that he had contacted the attorney general of Virginia and received an opinion from the attorney general concerning the instant circumstances authorizing the action the Orange and Madison members of the board would subsequently take at said meeting." Hoffman told the board at the Sept. 17 meeting, "I had thought about the Greene County members' participation after we were once served, and I asked for and received a reply from the attorney general." The letter, obtained by the Greene County Record through an open records request, is dated June 15, 2018, and pertains to a case where a member of a board of supervisors was hired to be executive director of a public service authority and what conflict could arise if he remained a supervisor for the said locality. It is not a current opinion.

Hoffman went on to read several sentences from the letter into the record. "Because an individual in the position you describe would have a personal interest in both governmental agencies—the Greene County Board of Supervisors and Rapidan Service Authority—he would have to remain alert at all times of which might require formal disclosure qualification or other

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action under (Virginia Code) 2.2-3.112," Hoffman read. "For example, conflicts or this sort could arise from decision by the Board of Supervisors pertaining to or having a financial effect on the authority, which is us, or from transactions that are pertaining to the effect of the county. That's the part I wanted to read into the minutes."

The county is asking the judge to dissolve Greene's membership in RSA, requiring the county to form a new authority and for RSA to transfer all assets located in Greene County to the new authority and requiring the new authority to assume the appropriate debt applicable to Greene County. It also asks for a custodian to govern RSA as "the remaining RSA board has shown it will not behave in a legal manner or in the best interests of all three member counties." Finally, the latest lawsuit requests a writ of mandamus to invalidate the Sept. 17 vote to exclude the Greene County representatives from participating in the meetings.

The Sept. 28 lawsuit notes Hoffman's assertion in the Sept. 17 meeting that RSA has "cut ties with Greene County." Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor** replied, "Oh, no, sir. We asked you to cut ties with us, we asked you let us out and you wouldn't. So, you either will or you won't." On Tuesday, July 28, the Greene County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution requesting Madison and Orange boards of supervisors release Greene County from RSA. Both boards said no to the request. The Sept. 14 lawsuit requested more than \$33 million, including \$24 million in debt the county acquired in preparation for the Greene County Supply and Treatment Project that it said the RSA board quashed when it voted July 16 to restructure the facility fee billing, which was a major chunk in the county's financing for the project.

RSA attorney Terry Lynn said after the Sept. 17 board of members meeting that nobody would comment on the lawsuit. "It's in the court; that's where we'll try it," Lynn said.

There are six counts in that lawsuit.

The first is alleged breach of contract that stems from the RSA board's July 16 meeting vote to stop billing for and collecting of the facility fees which were an integral part of the county's plan to fund the water project and continue to pay the debt on the sewer project.

The second count is alleged breach of fiduciary duty. The county alleged in the lawsuit that Greene paid for a \$19,180 billing system to allow the facility fees to be added to the billing, as well as the fact that RSA kept 10% of facility fees collected monthly as part of the original agreement with the county. The county is asking for both the cost of the billing system, as well as the amounts collected from facility fees monthly by RSA and for RSA to produce the customer list to the county.

Count three is for alleged breach of contract causing the "unjust enrichment" of RSA because the county assumed the debt in the 2005 agreement. "RSA has been unjustly enriched by Greene County's payment of \$7,537,524.22 over 15 years," the lawsuit stated. The county still owes \$1,313,732.17 for future bond payments, according to the lawsuit. The county is asking for all that money back.

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The fourth count alleged breach of contract due to RSA's alleged failure to maintain the system. "RSA has not had a capital improvement project in 20 years," the lawsuit stated. "Items are fixed on an ad hoc basis, but there has been no capital improvement plan to upgrade the water or sewer system or infrastructure." The county requested a writ of mandamus that would require RSA to turn over the operations of the water and sewer systems to Greene.

The fifth count alleged breach of articles of incorporation as it relates to the infrastructure in Greene County.

The final count in the civil lawsuit alleged breach of contract for water hookup fees due to the fact that the July 16 board of members' vote "unilaterally determined that all water (hookup fees) would be paid directly to RSA. There was no consultation with the Greene Board of Supervisors about this change prior to the breach," the lawsuit stated.

At press time no hearing date had been scheduled for either lawsuit and no responses filed by RSA.

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Mark Brian Taylor*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
September 24, 2020

Schools left out of CARES Act funding

Author/Byline: Kathleen Borrelli

When the Greene County Board of Supervisors allocated its federal COVID-19 relief money at last week's budget meeting, Greene County Public Schools was left out of the equation. On March 27, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into United States law. The bill, which established the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund, has since made payments to state and local governments to help mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. In Greene County, these funds constituted \$1,729,131 in federal funding in June and an additional \$1.7 million in September. To date, not a single dollar of this funding has been given to Greene County Public Schools (GCPS) to assist in the modification of services due to the pandemic, despite repeated requests for assistance, according to Superintendent of schools Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh.

The bill requires that payments from the fund only be used to cover expenses that: 1) are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency; 2) were not accounted for in the previously approved annual budget; and 3) were incurred between March 1 and Dec. 30, 2020 (home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/state-and-local-governments). While the Greene County Board of Supervisors (BOS) has so far utilized these funds for the purchasing of personal protective equipment (PPE) and building modifications to comply with current health department standards, they have also allocated funds for the purchase of mobile office spaces (to mitigate space constraints) and, most recently, for the building of a new modular EMS station in the county due to the cessation of contracts with UVA for emergency medical service in the area earlier this year.

As of Aug. 24, Whitmarsh shared that they had so far spent \$288,000 in fiscal year 20 and \$129,000 in fiscal year 21 on COVID-related expenses, and requested \$162,000 from the board for help with technology needs such as mobile WiFi hotspots to distribute to remote learners and hardware for schools including microphones, headphones and cameras to assist with setting up for successful remote learning. "We changed everything—top to bottom, side to side, all of our operations, all of our instruction," said Whitmarsh of the past six months. "Our staff, our teachers, our leaders have done a phenomenal job—I cannot speak highly enough about everything that they've done to open our school buildings—but it comes at a cost. There's money that is needed." In letters to the BOS dated June 9 and Aug. 10, Whitmarsh detailed the specific needs of GCPS as she feels they fit within the funding guidelines. Greene County School Board Vice Chair Todd Sansom (Monroe) also presented at the Aug. 24 BOS meeting to plead on behalf of the board.

Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor** agreed on Monday that the county's plans do not include any allocation to the schools. "The requests from Whitmarsh that had been brought forward publicly didn't come down to specific dollar asks or plans," **Taylor** said. "There is no

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Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

scheduled further discussion presently. The plan has not included an allocation to the schools and that's kind of where it is."

As part of the CARES Act, a much smaller Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund distributed money to school systems "to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation" (doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/cares/index.shtml). Recommended priorities for this funding include support of remote learning through technology, mental health supports for students returning to school, provisions for meal distribution and continuity of services, all of which are mainstays of the GCPS "Return to Learn" plan for reopening schools this month. "We would love to have some of these costs covered; any way that the county can share with us the funds that they've received in order to mitigate COVID-19 would certainly be appreciated," Whitmarsh said. "We're having to do these things in order to open our school buildings—in order to provide the education that our kids deserve, we're having to put these things in place. They're not wants, they're needs." The ESSER funding for schools is distributed on a reimbursement basis and the \$357,664 allocated to GCPS is meant to last the next two years. A portion of this funding is also expected to be set aside for private school use, as indicated for all federal grants. "Everybody understands that there are significant expenses and there are also going to be expenses that go on for a long period of time, so that money is supposed to last," Whitmarsh said.

As of last week, Whitmarsh estimates that the schools' COVID expenditures total \$520,000 thus far. "Every day, there are more things to pay for from the signage to masks, gloves, air purifiers, goggles, barriers and dividers, things for nutrition just to serve meals—just the bags for putting the meals in—all of those things are additional costs that we had not planned for or anticipated," she said. Going into what is sure to be one of the hardest years for educators nationwide, losses in state budgeting which earlier this year necessitated the dropping of new positions for special education support and the 4% staff raises that had been approved in GCPS budgeting for fiscal year 2021 already came as a blow. "There's a lot of needs in these models for continued support mechanisms for the staff as well and continual professional development because it is a new world for them," said GCPS Business and Facilities Director Kristie Spencer. "Some of them are working all virtual, some of them are working blended and it's the efficacy of those tools and making sure those tools are in place even from a technology standpoint of software and things of that nature that we had to either augment or bring in to be able to allow some of the constructs that we have under this model." "

Whether our teachers are virtual teachers or they're hybrid or in-person teachers, they're having to learn all new strategies, whether it's new software or how to reach kids virtually or how we modify in-person learning based on the new parameters," Whitmarsh said. "Everybody's having to learn more about technology because all classes have been built into a technology platform in the event that we have to close so we can be prepared to shift pretty quickly and seamlessly. So yes, I mean there are a lot of expenses and it was difficult budget-wise because we know we're going to face a sales tax loss of about \$150,000, but we're doing everything that we can to mitigate those costs."

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Taylor presented to the BOS at its Aug. 25 meeting on the allocation of funds with regards to the needs of the public school system. "We have some needs in the school division that have already been identified and funds expended and they have needs that are reasonably foreseeable for technology and other COVID-related and obvious CARES Act-qualifying items," **Taylor** said to the board. "However, there is profound concern and uncertainty, as we all know, associated with the pandemic, so there is a large question mark there."

Taylor then suggested that GCPS should pay for its own COVID-related expenses out of its budgeted capital improvement fund rather than through the federal money given to the county. "One of the things that we've seen in the interaction with the school division is that they are now projecting approximately \$1.7 million fiscal year 2020 year-end fund balance," **Taylor** said Aug. 25. "It seemed to Ms. Morris and I advisable and reasonable that some portion of that year-end fund balance may be usable by the school division to meet COVID-related needs that they cannot at this point in time necessarily foresee and don't have current funding for."

Per a 2014 resolution by the BOS, GCPS year-end surplus funds are put into a capital line item, to be used with BOS permission to pay for capital improvements on school buildings and grounds. "Basically they go into a capital fund and then we would have to make a request to the BOS to use those funds, so we can't just spend that money," Whitmarsh explained. "Two years ago, the BOS decided through their budget process that they would allocate the debt payment from our new facilities project to come from that fund, which is about \$1.5 million. Even though our project is done, that money is being used each year for the debt payment."

In response to the suggestion that the capital fund might be used to cover the schools' COVID-related funding requests, Whitmarsh said they would not qualify under the supervisors' own policy. "I haven't necessarily had any discussions about it, but you know, PPE and meals and those kinds of things don't seem to qualify as capital expenses, in my estimation, so that would be a deviation from the policy," she said. "But to be fair, we have not had that conversation. And I'll be honest, we've been so focused on getting the schools open ... we've made our requests, we've participated, and we're hopeful that at some point they're going to share some funds with us."

In the previous Aug. 11 BOS meeting, **Taylor** had suggested that the schools' request for assistance might not qualify for CARES Act funding use because it dealt with the attempt to expand equitable internet access to students for remote learning. "For the schools' operation, in order to help their virtual outreach, it's important to note that there is a limitation with regard to any possible use of the CARES money to expand web access generally," he said in reply to the first request for assistance by GCPS. "We would love to do that for the community and our working group continues to look diligently for opportunities to expand internet access in Greene County, however the CARES Act is not such an opportunity." According to the memorandum regarding local allocation for federal CARES funds from the secretary of finance dated May 12, Appendix B, eligible expenditures include "payment for expenses to facilitate distance learning, including technological improvements, in connection with school closings, to enable compliance with COVID-19 precautions."

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Greene County BOS Chair Bill Martin (Stanardsville District) said at the Aug. 25 meeting, "I'm still in favor of somehow, some way, whether it's through these [CARES Act] funds or other funds, assisting the schools with their internet connectivity, and I hope we'll keep that in mind. Whether it's with some displaced funds or other funds, I'd like to see us help out that way." Monroe District Supervisor Steve Bowman agreed, saying, "If we can do anything for the schools, I think that should be one of our priorities as well. But going slow, I think will tell us a lot here in the next few months." Bowman urged the board to be cautious in its spending of the allocated funds to see how best it could be utilized to meet needs over the coming months.

At its Sept. 8 meeting, the BOS allocated the entirety of its CARES Act funding, the majority of which is now set aside for the construction of the new EMS station in the county. GCPS did not receive an allocation, according to **Taylor's** presentation. "We're not and never have been interested in shutting off conversation," **Taylor** said Monday. "At the same time, the community has pressing needs that have to be addressed as with the rescue squad, the registrar's office, the courts; so we're in a mode of dancing as fast as we can. Without having specific asks for other needs we don't know what they are or how they would be met."

Now, the 2020-2021 school year continues.

"We have no choice but to do these things that are COVID-related if we want our schools to open," Whitmarsh said. "We're keeping our schools open and as of right now they're incredibly successful. Everything is day by day; we're of course watching all the metrics and we're paying very close attention. But our schools are open and kids are happy and teachers are happy and staff members are thriving and everybody's giving their best and making it as positive as they possibly can even though 2020 is a whole different world."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
June 18, 2020

County BOS approves fiscal year 2021 budget

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

The Greene County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Tuesday, June 9 the fiscal year 2021 budget. The supervisors had postponed the approval for a month past the usual date in mid-May in hopes they'd have more information about revenue projections due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The \$64,222,368 fiscal year 2021 budget is based on the same real estate tax rate as fiscal year 2020—82 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

"Interestingly, we had a very strong third quarter, running up to the lockdown comparing year on year. In the second quarter, revenues were up, expenditures were just below target and the contingency fund was steady," said **Mark Taylor**, administrator of Greene County. "In the third quarter, revenues were up yet by another good measure, and expenditures were even further below target, so our position as of the end of the third quarter was very strong. And this to me was critical for us to focus on, and yes, I understand we are talking about next year's budget, but we have to survive the end of this fiscal year in order to get to next fiscal year." **Taylor** said the lockdown and the uncertainty began at the beginning of the fourth quarter. "Looking ahead, we are still projecting the real estate tax will be mostly stable, personal property may be down a bit, sales and use may be down a bit but that's a projection I think needs to be tempered with a local impression that retail, the local retail that is surviving this, has been very strong," **Taylor** said. The Transient Occupancy Tax, which is the 5% added to the bill for hotel and lodging, is projected down, but how much is not yet known. Waste revenue is expected up, **Taylor** said. "People that are at home throw away a lot of trash, so commercial trash revenues through solid waste have been strong," he said. "The other thing that people do when they stay at home is they shop local. And that is, I think, why our sales and use tax may be a happy surprise. There are still open questions about the rate of rebound for reopening businesses, jobs recovery and the sufficiency of the three rich quarters to cover the projected fourth quarter drops."

The top priority item for the county, **Taylor** said, is creating a Greene County Emergency Medical Service after the University of Virginia Health System requested to sever its contract in October. "Beyond that we need to complete the courthouse repairs to assure the integrity of the structure and the water supply project needs to advance," he said. The county faced a 15% increase in health insurance costs, so administration requested the raise for county workers of 2.3% remain in the fiscal year 2021 budget to cover the employee-only portion of health insurance costs for everyone as they will see the first employee-only increase in health care costs in a decade. The county held the level funding to the school system year over year at \$17,465,112.

At-Large Supervisor Dale Herring asked for a hiring freeze for new positions in the social services and commonwealth's attorney offices, as well as a part-time position for emergency services and a clerk of the works position for the water project. "I think we need to hold off on

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

hiring any extra positions until we see the final quarter for those coming in. With the reserve low and us being uncertain for the quarter, I think at least temporarily, we need to freeze these positions as we get the numbers in things to look positive," Herring said.

"While I understand Mr. Herring is concerned, we're also living with the imperative of needing to move forward with EMS, particularly with respect to the EMS supervisor position," **Taylor** said. "We have interviews for that position scheduled later this week. The DSS troops are overwhelmed. I could see a brief deferral on the clerk of the works. The other positions I feel we need." Herring said he wasn't referring to the EMS supervisor, as that is already in the budget from previous years as it was part of the contract with UVA.

Monroe Supervisor Steve Bowman motioned for approval of the fiscal year 2021 budget and Midway Supervisor Marie Durrer seconded.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Mark B. Taylor** is listed below.]

Greene County Record (Stanardsville, VA)
August 1, 2019

Volunteer fire departments struggle to stay staffed

Author/Byline: Terry Beigie

Editor's note: This is the second of four articles delving into the volunteerism decline for Greene County's fire and rescue departments.

Imagine smoke filling your house, after getting everyone out safely what do you do next? Most people will call 911 to have fire service dispatched to their homes. However, what happens if there isn't a local fire service to dispatch? Those who think that's far-fetched should know there is no state code that requires a locality to fund a fire service, noted Greene County Administrator **Mark Taylor**. "We're not mandated to provide fire service, but we're certainly aware of the service that's been provided, the community expectancy, which is reasonable, for such support and we would be uncaring if we didn't respond to the fire companies' needs," he said.

Greene County is served by three all-volunteer fire departments: Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Company; Stanardsville Volunteer Fire Department; and Dyke Volunteer Fire Department. In 2016 there were 801 calls for fire service and in 2018 there were 1,061, according to information from the Greene County Sheriff's Office who operates the E911 center. All three fire departments get equal monies from the county's budget, though growth is centered along U.S. Route 29 in Ruckersville, which can be frustrating to the departments. "Our call volume is huge and we're working with a budget that's exactly the same as Dyke," said Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Company President Frank Crocker. "I'm a realist when it comes to funding all three companies. Dyke's needs are completely different than our needs. The call volume is here. It's been a frustration of mine for awhile. It's a sensitive subject—money always is." To fully staff one paid fire department it would cost roughly the county \$1 million—and that's only benefits and salary, no equipment or apparatus.

During the fiscal year 2020 budget cycle it was noted that one penny added to the real estate tax rate adds about \$200,000 to the general fund. To fully staff three fire departments, Greene would need to add 15 cents onto the current 82 cents per \$100 of assessed real estate value. "One of the things special about Greene County is that we are served by three volunteer fire companies and have no paid firefighting staff. I'm not sure what the level of community awareness of that reality," **Taylor** said. "We have every practical reason to support the volunteers."

Emergency Services Manager Melissa Meador said that while the rescue squad needs paid staffing to meet the needs she's not sure the firefighting side is there yet. **Taylor** agreed. "Historically our community has been served and served well for many, many years by all-volunteer fire companies," **Taylor** said. "When the companies tell us they need or want or cannot continue without our ... whatever—whether it's money, people, help, oversight, support—we

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

have every reason to do our best." All three departments said that while they get some funding from the county, it's not enough to fund everything—from a \$1 million ladder truck for Ruckersville to a new tanker for Stanardsville to instruction for Dyke. It all adds up. "The volunteers' service to our community is really a blessing to us. It is a big savings to us. Their success is our success. We are very much in this together," **Taylor** said.

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Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Progress, The (Charlottesville, VA)
January 18, 2019

Greene names new county administrator

Author/Byline: TERRY BEIGIE

The Greene County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously recently to hire **Mark B. Taylor** as the county's newest chief executive at a base salary rate of \$135,000 annually. He is expected to begin on April 9, unless an earlier date is mutually agreed upon. **Taylor** is Spotsylvania's county administrator, a position he's held since 2015. In the early 2000s, **Taylor** also served as Spotsylvania's county attorney.

"I look forward to supporting Mr. **Taylor** as he provides experienced executive leadership for our county," Supervisor Bill Martin said.

Supervisor David Cox said he was impressed by the way **Taylor** described how he will work to "become part of the community," according to a press release from the county.

Supervisor Michelle Flynn agreed, saying, "I am confident Mr. **Taylor** will quickly become part of our community, and his communication style and direct approach will serve our citizens and staff well."

Taylor, who earned a bachelor's degree from American University and a law degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, has three decades of public service experience. "I am honored to be chosen by the Board of Supervisors to serve Greene County as your county administrator," **Taylor** said. "I deeply appreciate the Board of Supervisors' unanimous support and trust. I will serve the board and the community to the best of my ability."

Spotsylvania County is considerably larger than Greene, with a population of more than 120,000 in the 2010 Census versus Greene's 19,000. "While Greene County is certainly a charming and pretty place, I was particularly attracted by exceptional qualities of the Board of Supervisors," **Taylor** said. "The Greene County board is delightfully collaborative. The supervisors share a strong sense of purpose and strong desire to bless the whole Greene County community."

Taylor, who will begin working in Greene after his contractual obligations to Spotsylvania are met, said he's looking forward to meeting everyone. "Greene County also has a wonderful staff," **Taylor** said. "I regret that I've only been able to meet the folks in the administrative offices so far. I'm looking forward to working with the whole Greene County team."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
February 23, 2017

Proposed Spotsylvania budget adds public safety jobs without tax hike

Author/Byline: JEFF BRANSCOME

Spotsylvania County Administrator **Mark Taylor** outlined a budget proposal Feb. 14 that emphasizes public safety while keeping tax rates steady. But the spending blueprint does leave public schools wanting more. **Taylor's** recommended budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1 includes an additional 19 full-time employees-all but three of whom would be public-safety related-and two part-time desk deputies. The full-time positions include five court deputies, three patrol deputies, a detective, an assistant prosecutor and an emergency medical services training coordinator. The budget proposes a \$286,320 increase toward school capital projects, for a total of nearly \$121.7 million in local tax dollars to schools. The School Board says it needs nearly \$4.5 million more than that to balance its proposed budget, which includes a 2 percent pay increase for teachers and other schools employees. The School Board last year received its largest budget increase in years after a contentious budget cycle during which some anti-tax conservatives accused teachers of seeking pay raises on the backs of taxpayers. Teachers got a 2 percent pay raise last year and a 3 percent raise in 2015.

Taylor's \$451.7 million proposed operating budget is \$10.5 million more than the current spending plan, a 2.4 percent increase. He quickly noted in his presentation to the Board of Supervisors that the recommended budget maintains the current real estate tax rate of 85 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The car tax rate of \$6.55 per \$100 of assessed value would also go unchanged. Last year, supervisors approved a real estate tax rate 2 cents above the "equalized" rate that accounted for a rise in reassessments to homes. **Taylor** had recommended an effective 3-cent tax hike, with the assurance that he would not propose an increase the following year. "Here I am keeping my word to you and delivering on my promise-there's no tax increase recommended this year," **Taylor** told supervisors. He said he knows his proposed budget does not meet the School Board's request, calling the gap "a serious amount of money." But he said his recommendation is also \$2.8 million shy of what other county departments requested. "In these times, level funding or continuing funding for K-12 education is an accomplishment and not an embarrassment," **Taylor** said.

Other highlights in his budget proposal include \$1.4 million toward pay increases for county workers, excluding schools employees. That amount-which **Taylor** referred to as a "placeholder"-is equal to the cost of a 2.5 percent raise for county employees, though exactly how it will be used is up for debate. The county would have the full-time equivalent of about 1,053 employees if the additional positions in **Taylor's** budget are approved. Other proposed new employees include a mechanic/service writer for the Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services; an adult protective services supervisor for the Social Services Department; a public safety information technology project manager; a public safety network support specialist; a public safety information technology division director; an information technology security

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

officer; a safety and training coordinator for the Utilities Department; and a well operator at the Motts Run Water Treatment Plant.

In addition, the budget would convert four part-time positions to full time: a child protective services case aide, a social services eligibility worker, a clerk for a Spotsylvania Circuit Court judge, and a Sheriff's Office fleet program assistant. It would also add a part-time account clerk in the Treasurer's Office to address audit findings. The proposed budget also earmarks \$528,571 for an Other Post-Employment Benefits fund for health insurance for future retirees.

Taylor said he often hears from the Sheriff's Office and other public safety officials who say their departments are "understaffed to adequately provide critical levels of service." "I believe this budget proposal makes significant progress toward meeting their staffing needs," he wrote in a report, but acknowledged he could not meet every request.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
November 24, 2016

Spotsy approves \$125K in library funding

Author/Byline: JEFF BRANSCOME

The threat of reduced operating hours at Spotsylvania County's public libraries is over. The Board of Supervisors voted 5-2 Nov. 10 to provide \$124,581 to the Central Rappahannock Regional Library-closing the difference between the library's \$4.19 million budget request this fiscal year and the county's initial contribution. Supervisors called it a "one time" payment that will not automatically roll over into next year's budget. Library Director Martha Hutzel formally requested the money in September, saying the library's board of trustees had directed her to cut hours at the Salem Church and Snow libraries if supervisors did not pony up. Hutzel confirmed that she will not reduce operating hours in light of the county's action. "This tells me that Spotsylvania County and the Board of Supervisors value the public library as a wonderful community resource that helps all citizens all the time," she said in a brief telephone interview. Supervisors Chris Yakabouski and Greg Cebula cast the dissenting votes. Both said they supported the library's request, but voted no because the money is coming out of an economic development fund. Yakabouski noted that \$500,000 was available in a reserve account. "To say that it's economic development, I wholeheartedly disagree," he said. The additional money for the library will go toward new technology, books and a plan to offer high-speed internet access to rural parts of the county, Hutzel said. The library system has its headquarters in the city of Fredericksburg and branches in Spotsylvania, Stafford and Westmoreland counties. Library officials say Spotsylvania has not paid its fair share over the years, prompting other localities to follow suit.

But County Administrator **Mark Taylor** noted that the library received more funding this year than all but one regional agency-the Rappahannock Regional Jail. He expressed irritation at library officials during a PowerPoint presentation Thursday that opened with a slide reading: "ALL OF US LOVE THE LIBRARY!" The slide pictured the shape of a heart. **Taylor** said the library system's "adversarial tone" during the discussions was "unhelpful," and said library officials had falsely accused the county of violating its agreement with the system. The county is not "in arrears" as library officials claimed, he said. "Public assertions that we are in violation of the agreement are simply in error, inflammatory and unfair," he said. He also pointed out that Fredericksburg and Stafford had not met the library's budget requests from 2012-15, though the two localities did fully fund the system this year. Stafford earmarked nearly \$5.2 million for the library this year while Fredericksburg contributed about \$1.3 million-increases of \$111,820 and \$52,000, respectively. "It seems unkind if not imprudent for our neighbors to take up stones to throw at us so soon after they moved out of their own glass houses," **Taylor** said. Supervisor Gary Skinner took a conciliatory tone, saying the library had the right to make the request. "I don't want this to go out that either side is a bad side," he said.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
April 12, 2016

Raises on line for Spotsylvania County public employees BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IS SCHEDULED TO VOTE ON FY17 BUDGET AND 2016 TAX RATES TODAY -**BUDGET: School employees received a 3 percent raise in the FY16 budget**

Author/Byline: JEFF BRANSCOME

Pay raises for Spotsylvania teachers are a hot topic this year-but other county employees have a financial stake in the budget too. Deputies, firefighters and other local government workers who have been on the county payroll for at least four consecutive years could receive a 3 percent pay hike under a new proposal. County Administrator **Mark Taylor** included that "longevity incentive" in a summary of budget options emailed to the Board of Supervisors Friday night. The School Board hopes to give its employees a 1 percent raise and a step increase on the salary scale.

The supervisors will vote today on a 2016 tax rate and a budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. Some of them want to cut the current real estate tax rate of 86 cents per \$100 of assessed value to help offset a rise in property values during this year's reassessment. The 3 percent raise to reward county employees' longevity is based on a real estate tax rate of at least 85 cents, according to options from county finance staff. The pay hike for county employees would drop to 1.25 percent under the 83-cent rate favored by at least three of the seven supervisors. **Taylor** wrote in his email to board members that the county can decrease turnover by "sending a clear message ... that we value the continuing service of employees who stay with us." The proposed pay hikes don't end there. **Taylor** is also recommending an average 2 percent merit-based raise for all employees.

Meanwhile, the School Board wants an additional \$11.8 million in local tax dollars to help pay for 47 new positions and an average 3.16 percent raise for its employees. School Board member Amanda Blalock said the division is facing some tough cuts if the supervisors don't meet the request. "None of the scenarios are good," she said. If supervisors approve an 85-cent rate-likely the highest they will go-the School Board will receive an additional \$4.1 million in local tax dollars, according to the budget options from county staff. Schools would receive about \$2.7 million more under an 83-cent rate. Supervisor Greg Benton, the swing vote on the tax rate, said last week that he would not support an 86-cent rate. But he also wouldn't commit to the 3-cent reduction backed by Supervisors Timothy McLaughlin, David Ross and Paul Trampe. Trampe said he unsuccessfully proposed a \$6.3 million increase for schools under an 83-cent tax rate. He had suggested increasing school funding by cutting hours at trash drop-off centers and putting less money in reserves. He said in an email that he does not support any of the options put forward by county finance staff.

This year's budget discussions have been contentious. Some anti-tax conservatives distributed anonymous fliers stating that teachers are seeking raises on the backs of taxpayers-drawing the ire of the Spotsylvania Education Association. School employees received a 3 percent raise in

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the fiscal 2016 budget while other county employees such as deputies and firefighters received a 2 percent pay hike and a 1 percent bonus. The average annual salary of the school system's more than 3,000 employees is \$44,524. The average for all other county employees is \$52,468.

In other budget news, all of the proposals include \$3.5 million for renovations and a 6,800-square-foot addition to the animal shelter off U.S. 1. Last month, **Taylor** proposed eliminating the shelter addition. He put the project back in the budget in response to feedback from supervisors and improving revenue projections.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
July 12, 2015

PROFILE FORMER COUNTY ATTORNEY NOW ADMINISTRATOR Taylor comes back 'home' to help lead Spotsylvania - TAYLOR: Former county attorney making easy transition into new leadership position

BY JEFF BRANSCOME

Mark Taylor was never much of a hugger. But that's changing now that he's back in Spotsylvania County after a lengthy absence. **Taylor**, 56, who became county administrator in June, says colleagues have greeted him with hugs in hallways and parking lots. He's a familiar face, having been Spotsylvania's county attorney from 2000 until 2006 after a four-year stint as deputy county attorney. "I've become more of a hugger . . . because I've had people just happy to see me back," he said.

To ensure a smooth transition, **Taylor** returned to Spotsylvania on April 15 as a consultant to outgoing County Administrator Doug Barnes, who retired at the end of May. He lives within walking distance of his second-floor office in the Holbert Building near Spotsylvania Courthouse. "It has been a multi-decade dream to walk to work and to serve the community-just to be close," he said. His career in local government has spanned 26 years, but this is the first time he's been a top administrator who oversees the day-to-day operations of a county. He resigned from Spotsylvania's county attorney job in March 2006, but declined to say why. **Taylor's** last position was in Accomack County, where he was county attorney from 2007-15.

He also has experience in the private sector. For about three years, his family owned a café at Spotsylvania Courthouse called the Spotsy Spot. The restaurant and ice cream shop was in a 19th-century farmhouse that required extensive renovations, a job **Taylor** took on with his wife, Francesca, and three children. The family also teamed up to create the menu, which featured a "healthy lunch special"-deep-dish apple pie with a couple scoops of caramel crunch ice cream topped with hot caramel sauce and whipped cream. "I wanted to promote that so that the working man could go home and defend himself, saying he had the healthy lunch special," **Taylor** said. He said his wife ran the restaurant, and his children-all of whom were home-schooled-worked there after it opened in 2005. "One of the great suspicions about home-schooling is, how will your children ever be socialized?" he said. "Well, my children were staff leaders."

He mentioned his kids numerous times during a recent interview. He said his son, Josh, 22, now a student at Hampden-Sydney College, made the best lattes for the Spotsy Spot-concocting drinks that verged on art. His oldest child, Sara, 26, who lives in England, authored a novel titled "The Shore," which was nominated for the 2015 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction. And his youngest child, Deborah, 18, was recently the assistant stage manager for a Shakespeare play in Richmond. **Taylor** has reminders of his family at his office, including three of the 30 large whelk shells he and his daughter, Sara, found one morning on Assateague Island. He also has a sign that reads: "It is what it is"-a gift from the former county administrator. He says he uses that phrase at

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Mark Brian Taylor**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the point in a conversation when nothing more can be done to solve a problem. On the back of the sign, his wife wrote, "What is God telling you to do so He can change what it is?"

Taylor says his prior experience in the county has been an advantage. As county attorney, he led Spotsylvania during a legal battle over a plan to cut the number of homes that could be built without the supervisors' approval. He described that issue-which took him all the way to the Virginia Supreme Court-as his passion, according to an article in The Free Lance-Star. He also worked to regulate sewage sludge, which is used as fertilizer for farmland and timberland. Once, he brought a container of the treated human waste to a General Assembly hearing in Richmond.

In 2007, while working in Accomack, **Taylor** had a run-in with the Spotsylvania School Board. He wrote a letter alleging that a School Board member told him the board repeatedly violated the law by not disclosing topics discussed behind closed doors. School Board members denied the allegation, which some of them said was politically motivated. "It is about principles," he told The Free Lance-Star in 2007. "It is about telling the truth and conducting government according to the law." Commonwealth's Attorney Bill Neely later backed up **Taylor's** claim, saying that the same School Board member also told him the board illegally met in closed session. **Taylor** said recently that Neely's confirmation gave him closure, but noted that the incident happened "a lifetime ago." "The past is the past," he said. Jerry Hill was the schools superintendent at the time, a position that has since been filled by Scott Baker. **Taylor** said he has met twice with Superintendent Baker-who became schools chief in 2012-and said he appreciates his vision for the division. Supervisor Gary Skinner, who was a School Board member when **Taylor** made the accusation, said all of that is in the past. What's important is that **Taylor** knows the county and has the respect of employees, he said. "I truly felt that he wanted to come back here," Skinner said. "I got the impression that it wasn't just a job. He loves Spotsylvania, and he wanted to be part of it."

Taylor didn't have the support of every supervisor, at least initially. Supervisors Timothy McLaughlin and David Ross voted against his two-year contract, which pays \$159,000 annually. The supervisors would say only that they thought Spotsylvania should have sought out more candidates. **Taylor** said he talked with the dissenting supervisors about their votes, calling the two "very gracious to clarify for me their concerns, their hesitation." Ross said in an email that he thought the new county administrator was doing an outstanding job. **Taylor** said his goals include attracting more jobs to Spotsylvania, enhancing collaboration and cooperation with the school system, and providing good services to county residents at a low cost. He said he hopes to retire in Spotsylvania, though not anytime soon. A Washington native, **Taylor** commuted to Spotsylvania from Fairfax County when he became deputy county attorney in 1996. His favorite part of the drive was seeing a county water tower in the historic courthouse area. "Maybe it was just the end of a long drive, I don't know," **Taylor** said. "It felt like home arriving in Spotsylvania, and it still does."

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
October 26, 2007

Neely backs ex-attorney on FOIA claim ABOUT THE LAW - NEELY: School Board members deny allegations about closed meetings

By DAN TELVOCK

Spotsylvania's chief prosecutor says a county School Board member told him the board regularly violated the state's open-meeting law, supporting allegations by former County Attorney **Mark Taylor**. In an e-mail to current County Attorney Jacob Stroman, Commonwealth's Attorney Bill Neely wrote that School Board member Ray Lora told him the board violated the Freedom of Information Act, which requires open meetings except in certain situations. Neely wrote that King George Commonwealth's Attorney Matt Britton, who was the special prosecutor in a case last year against Superintendent Jerry Hill, told him he has the same recollection. Lora vehemently denies speaking to Neely or **Taylor** about any violations. He declined to discuss conversations with Britton during the Hill investigation. Neely's e-mail, which The Free Lance-Star obtained from a source, backs up allegations made by **Taylor**.

In an Oct. 9 letter, made available to The Free Lance-Star, **Taylor** asked the Board of Supervisors for permission to go public with statements he said Lora made to him about open-meeting violations. **Taylor**, now the Accomack County attorney, said Lora told him the School Board, directed by Hill, chronically abused laws by not publicly disclosing topics discussed behind closed doors. Neely e-mailed Stroman Oct. 15 that, "**Mark Taylor's** recent letter quoted in [The Free Lance-Star] had the facts straight, and Ray Lora's response was completely untrue." School Board members and Hill said the allegations are political attacks, timed to influence the Nov. 6 elections. Two School Board members-Gary Skinner and Charles Cowsert-are running for the Board of Supervisors.

Taylor, Lora respond **Taylor** said Neely's e-mail vindicates him. "Of course, I told the truth," **Taylor** said. "And of course, this is political. But it is not about personalities. It is about principles. It is about telling the truth and conducting government according to the law." **Taylor's** letter to supervisors states that Lora came to him during the Hill investigation. In December 2005, Britton had been named the special prosecutor for the case against Hill on election-law and obstruction-of-justice charges. Neely was assigned the case, but he handed it off to Britton because Neely's wife is a Spotsylvania teacher. A judge eventually dismissed one charge against Hill and Britton dropped the second one. Lora, a former U.S. marshal who now trains police officers at the Rappahannock Regional Criminal Justice Academy, said the timing of the allegations is intended to create political turmoil, not open government. "Ray Charles could see there is something funny here," Lora said. "I am telling you it is fiction. It is not true."

Neely Explains E-mail Hill has a pending FOIA case against the county government. He alleges the county illegally blacked out portions of e-mails turned over to him. He is seeking information to be used for a possible civil lawsuit over his prosecution. Neely was in the audience for a hearing in the FOIA case Oct. 15. Neely said he sent Stroman the "confidential" e-mail before

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

the hearing to give him background information. He "reluctantly" spoke to a reporter about it. "[Lora] did make those statements to me and, as I understand it, to Matt Britton," Neely said. "Whether they were true or not, we'll never know because they were never litigated." School Officials React Hill said even if Lora did tell people the School Board violated the open-meeting law, it doesn't mean it's true. "I don't know what Ray said to who, and I have no reason to disbelieve any of these people. I have no facts," Hill said. "All I can tell you is we follow very closely the state statute with closed sessions."

School Board member Marty Wilder said Neely's e-mail is "very troubling." But in his 14 years on the School Board, "never once" has it violated FOIA by discussing issues in closed session that were not on the public agenda. "Why [Lora] may have said these things to certain individuals is beyond me," he said. Skinner wondered why these allegations are public now.

Taylor said he asked supervisors one other time if he could make public the conversation he says he had with Lora, but was denied permission. He would not say when he made that original request. Neely said he wasn't trying to make it public but someone leaked his e-mail to a reporter. "I still believe it is a political ploy," Skinner said. "If an attorney thought we were misusing the power, it was [his] responsibility to bring it to the public or tell us then."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
September 13, 2006

Culpeper hires former Spotsylvania attorney

Former Spotsylvania County Attorney **Mark B. Taylor** has been hired as Culpeper County's new assistant county attorney. **Taylor**, 47, will assume his new duties Monday. **Taylor** served six years in the Spotsylvania post before resigning earlier this year.

"It is rare when you can find a candidate who has such a broad range of local government legal experience and demonstrated dedication to public service," Culpeper County Attorney Dave Maddox said yesterday.

Taylor becomes only the second assistant county attorney in Culpeper history. Bob Beard held the job during the late 1990s, but the position was not filled after he left. Due to Maddox's increasingly heavy workload, the Board of Supervisors included funding for the position in its fiscal year 2007 budget.

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Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
March 1, 2006

County attorney calls it quits**Spotsylvania counselor Mark Taylor resigns, is praised by supervisors for long service.**

By GEORGE WHITEHURST

Spotsylvania County Attorney **Mark Taylor** submitted his resignation last night to the Board of Supervisors. He will leave the post, which he has held for a decade, effective March 17. **Taylor** declined to give a reason for his departure, saying, "It's been contemplated for a while."

In a statement he read to the board, **Taylor** hailed the people of the county and their public servants for enriching his life. "I came here realizing that Spotsylvania County is a great place to live," he said. "I have found great professional growth and personal satisfaction serving Spotsylvania County, and I thank you, the Board of Supervisors, for the opportunity I have had to serve as county attorney."

Board Chairman Hap Connors praised **Taylor** for his service to the residents of Spotsylvania. "I want to thank **Mark** for serving the county for the past 10 years," he said. "We've undergone tremendous change in this time, and we've faced numerous legal challenges we couldn't have gotten through without your help. We wish you the best."

Taylor, a native of Washington, D.C., joined Spotsylvania government in 1996 as an assistant county attorney. Prior to that, he had worked for Fairfax County, where he handled planning and zoning matters. **Taylor** became Spotsylvania's acting county attorney in December 1999 following the departure of then-County Attorney William Donelly. The supervisors hired him full time one month later.

Supervisor Gary Jackson last night praised **Taylor** as "a skilled attorney and a man of absolute impeccable integrity." "I'm thrilled that we had you for a decade," Jackson said. "I know that great things await you as you progress in your career."

During his tenure as Spotsylvania's top legal officer, **Taylor** dealt with matters both controversial and mundane. He shepherded county government through legal battles over its attempts to cut the number of homes that can be built without rezonings. He described that issue-which took him all the way to the Virginia Supreme Court-as "my passion."

Taylor also worked to help the county combat-or at least regulate-the application of treated-sewage sludge, sometimes dubbed biosolids, to farmland. At one point, he even packed a container of sludge in the trunk of his car and hauled it to Richmond for a General Assembly hearing. Most recently, at the supervisors' behest, he asked Commonwealth's Attorney Bill Neeley to investigate whether the Spotsylvania School Board and Superintendent Jerry Hill violated state election law last year by producing a flier critical of a county school bond referendum. That investigation led to Hill's indictment last month on misdemeanor charges.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Taylor said last night he also was proud to have provided legal counsel necessary to help lure a planned hospital to Spotsylvania. He then shook each supervisor's hand and received a round of applause from them. Asked afterward about his immediate plans, **Taylor** vowed to "take a nice vacation from my cell phone, and then, beyond that, we'll see."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
September 29, 2005

Flier prompts probe - SPOTSYLVANIA: School officials say they are sure they did not violate law

Author/Byline: GEORGE WHITEHURST

A special prosecutor is looking into whether the Spotsylvania County School Board and School Superintendent Jerry Hill violated state law by producing and distributing a flier about the upcoming school bond referendum. King George County Commonwealth's Attorney Matt Britton said yesterday that he was asked to look into the matter by Spotsylvania Commonwealth's Attorney Bill Neely. Neely's wife is a Spotsylvania County schoolteacher, a possible conflict of interest for him. Britton declined to answer any questions, saying he doesn't discuss pending cases.

Neely was unavailable for comment yesterday, but he apparently tried unsuccessfully to contact School Board Chairman Marty Wilder yesterday morning to inform him of the probe. Neely did deliver the news to School Board Vice Chairman Ray Lora, who declined to talk about the conversation. "I choose not to be involved in this whole thing," Lora said. "This is not why I came onto the School Board."

Yesterday's revelation was the latest chapter in an ongoing feud between the supervisors and the School Board over a \$41 million education bond referendum that will appear on the November ballot. The School Board had requested a \$184 million bond question. The supervisors demanded Hill institute cost savings suggested in a recent independent audit of the Spotsylvania schools. When Hill said that couldn't be done before the bond vote, the supervisors cut the referendum to \$41 million. The School Board then threatened to sue the supervisors. Later, the board directed Hill to produce a flier for distribution at back-to-school nights earlier this month. The flier complains that the referendum "will not address the increased facilities needs of our students caused by anticipated growth." It also accuses the supervisors of usurping the School Board's right to decide which capital projects are necessary for efficient operation of the school system.

The School Board approves a proposed budget, but supervisors have the final say on all county spending, including the amount allocated for the school system. The flier doesn't explicitly advocate passage or defeat of the referendum, but is it neutral? Several supervisors and County Attorney **Mark Taylor** argue that the flier violates a state statute that requires such materials to offer a "neutral explanation" and bars "arguments by either proponents or opponents of the proposal." The supervisors held a closed session before a Tuesday night work session, and sources said that discussion centered on the flier and whether it violated state law. One source said there was a consensus among the seven supervisors to "make sure that this is pursued." **Taylor** said yesterday that county government merely alerted Neely of a possible violation of state law. "The county did no more than bring the schools' publication and the relevant state code

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

provision to the attention of the commonwealth's attorney," he said. "Commendably, Mr. Neely is doing his duty."

Hill defended the flier yesterday, saying it was intended to educate parents about the school component of the four-question bond referendum. "I think if you look at the flier, you'll see that everything on it is a fact as documented between the two boards over the past few months," he said. "We are very aware that neither the county nor we may propose the defeat of or the passage of a bond referendum."

Wilder also described as legal both the flier and a 7 p.m. informational meeting slated for this evening at Courtland High School. "I'm convinced that the information we have provided is factual," he said. "It's not advocacy for or against any bond referendum or any portion thereof."

Supervisor Vince Onorato—who has publicly sparred with Hill over money matters—isn't convinced. "I've seen county staff bend over backward to be neutral on the bond issue," he said. "I have not seen the superintendent, who is an employee of the county, do the same."

Board of Supervisors Chairman Bob Hagan dismissed any suggestion that the investigation is politically motivated. "We all saw the editorial cartoon in The Free Lance-Star that questioned the validity of the flier, so I guess you'd have to ask Bill Neely what motivated him," he said. "If it's a violation of the law, there's no one to blame but those who violated the law. If it's not a violation of the law, then there's no one to blame, period."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
March 26, 2005

Lack of trust stymies mall deal

By GEORGE WHITEHURST and BETTY HAYDEN SNIDER

When Spotsylvania Mall's owners first approached Spotsylvania County officials last year to discuss expanding and renovating the 25-year-old shopping mecca, county staff advised them to submit a rezoning request. But the Youngstown, Ohio-based company balked at spending what it estimated would be \$5 million to \$6 million to prepare a rezoning application. Some supervisors say that's one of the key reasons they delayed offering Cafaro millions of dollars in industrial development grants. The mall deal remains in limbo after the board's 6-0 vote Tuesday night to approve a resolution voicing support for the mall project without committing to specific economic incentives. The resolution indicated incentives could follow a successful rezoning. But Executive Vice President J.J. Cafaro has called that arrangement "impossible." He told county officials Wednesday that "he was not interested in spending that kind of money unless he was certain that the board would provide the incentives he requested," according to a memo County Administrator Randy Wheeler wrote this week. The Free Lance-Star obtained a copy of the memo. In another confidential memo to the board obtained by the newspaper, County Attorney **Mark Taylor** advised supervisors March 18 not to promise any incentives until Cafaro applies for a rezoning. He said Cafaro had set deadlines for approval that appeared to be "insincere, and simply intended to pressure the board." "If there really is no deadline, then this project should have just gone through the regular rezoning process, as your staff directed the mall company initially," **Taylor** wrote. Supervisor Chris Yakabouski introduced the revised resolution, and also said Cafaro should have sought a rezoning first.

The incentives at issue include \$18.1 million in industrial development grants over 22 years and the creation of a community development authority. These authorities can issue bonds to finance road and other infrastructure improvements. Before cashing in on the incentives, Cafaro would have to spend \$12 million renovating the mall, \$80 million on an open-air shopping complex and up to \$40 million on road projects. The largest project would be a four-lane road connecting the mall to Harrison Road. Cafaro also would widen a half-mile portion of Harrison and add an entrance to the mall that lines up with Carl D. Silver Parkway, the main entrance to Fredericksburg's Central Park. Cafaro's reluctance to apply for the rezoning-needed to allow the open-air shopping area-led Board of Supervisors Chairman Bob Hagan to negotiate a resolution promising the financial incentives. "The Cafaro Co. said they would proceed on a handshake deal," Hagan said yesterday. "Without that handshake, there will be no rezoning application, as we now know."

Supervisor Hap Connors said **Taylor's** memo undercut Hagan's negotiations. But Supervisor Gary Jackson, who opposed the initial deal that Hagan brokered, said he doesn't believe the mall deal should have been handled any differently than the Silver Cos.' Cosner's Corner, the last major retail project the county approved. The two proposals were similar in scope: 764,000 square feet of space at the mall and up to 850,000 of space at the Silver's Massaponax-area

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

center. Former Supervisor Mary Lee Carter tried to fast-track a rezoning for the Silver project in November 2003, a month before she left office. Other supervisors and the public insisted on a go-slow approach, and the project won approval in February 2004 after Silver held a series of public information meetings and submitted a rezoning request. Silver proffered road improvements to the area valued at roughly \$9.5 million, in addition to paying for other road work required for the shopping center. In September 2004, supervisors approved a special tax district for Cosner's Corner, allowing collection of 25 cents per \$100 of assessed value to be paid by retailers on top of county real-estate taxes. The board decided the project was not complex enough to warrant creation of a Community Development Authority. Silver received no industrial development grants.

Connors, a supporter of the original Cafaro resolution who reluctantly voted for the second, said the Silver project was different. "Mrs. Carter's proposal down at Cosner's Corner resulted in widespread public backlash, which caused the board to slow it down," Connors said. "Mr. Hagan's negotiations with the mall have enjoyed widespread public support, and the public is urging us to move forward so that we don't lose this opportunity. "If Mr. Jackson is suggesting that he's now supporting a board-initiated rezoning, maybe we'll run that up the flagpole." Jackson said he's not ready to commit to a board-initiated rezoning-something supervisors have done in the past to encourage business growth-but he would like to see Cafaro file a rezoning application. "This is a learning experience of why we need to follow our policies and procedures," he said. "The public needs to have an opportunity to weigh in on this." That's the way things should have unfolded from the start, he argued. "I can't do handshake deals," Jackson said. "I can't spend the public's money that way." He wants specifics on how much the road projects would cost, how much the development authority would collect and a number of other issues. Spotsylvania Planning Director Ric Goss prepared estimates for the four-lane connector road that ranged from \$25.4 million to \$29.8 million. Estimates for the other road improvements were not included. Hagan said the deal was a win-win for the county and Cafaro. The \$18.1 million cap on the grants "was the upper limit of what the county would have to pay back as an incentive," Hagan said. "It was half of the new sales-tax revenue generated. Therefore, every dollar that went back to the Cafaros would be matched by a brand-new tax dollar that was coming in to the county." Cafaro estimated the county would collect about \$2 million in new property and sales tax revenue annually, after paying out the industrial grants. In the days since Tuesday's meeting, Cafaro publicly has suggested he might build the lifestyle center in Stafford County or try to work out a deal with the city of Fredericksburg. "Building this lifestyle center in the location proposed is my number one choice, and if there is a way to work with the city of Fredericksburg as opposed to Spotsylvania County I will be more than happy to work with the city," he said yesterday. Hagan, who has touted the mall expansion as a potential boon for Spotsylvania, still hopes his colleagues will cut a deal with Cafaro. "I hope that one of the alternatives that [Cafaro] will consider, and the board will consider, is returning to a resolution that will have the necessary commitments by both sides," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
December 20, 2004

Preservationist blasts new PDR plan - Spotsylvania brass 'gutted' curb on growth, activist says - Preservationist fumes that Spotsylvania's new development-rights initiative gives short shrift to historic sites

Author/Byline: GEORGE WHITEHURST

As Spotsylvania supervisors consider how to preserve open space in the county, a disagreement may be brewing about a revised version of the plan. Historic-preservation activist Caroline Hayden is sounding alarm bells over what she sees as the lack of attention to sites' historic and cultural characteristics in two top officials' alternative to the Purchase of Development Rights proposal. "The bottom line is that I am left totally at a loss of words as to why they want to eliminate the cultural resources," Hayden said of the new proposal prepared by County Administrator Randy Wheeler and County Attorney **Mark Taylor**. "They basically gutted the part including properties with cultural resources. They basically wanted to go back and make it almost completely an agricultural concern."

Hayden served on the county committee that developed a PDR proposal-under which landowners could receive cash and lower property-tax bills for not turning their properties into strip malls and subdivisions. That plan would divide property eligible for the program into two categories, one of which includes land and homes that "exhibit natural, scenic or historic resources." The supervisors voted last month to delay implementing a PDR program, wanting more time to fine-tune it. The alternative written by Wheeler and **Taylor** makes no specific mention of eligible properties having cultural and historic character. It does, however, grant eligibility to lands that abut national parks and historic battlefields, as well as property that "contains related Civil War Battlefield sites as delineated by the National Park Service."

Taylor said recently that the plan he and Wheeler are working on is very fluid, and that they welcome comments from the community. **Taylor** added that he and Wheeler are trying to streamline the committee's plan and cut the cost of administering it. "The biggest difference is that the committee approach would use appraisals in the valuation process, at a cost to the applicant of both money and time," **Taylor** said. "The concept that we're working on use the standard development-right valuation that would relieve both the applicant and the county from the cost and the time and the potential contention involved in using experts to appraise development rights." The supervisors have made clear that any PDR program they adopt will be strictly voluntary. Any landowner who entered the program would sell his development rights to the county, state government and/or a private conservation organization. A perpetual conservation easement then would be placed on the property. If the owner eventually sold the land, the easement would prevent the buyer from developing it.

Supervisor Vince Onorato expressed confidence that a compromise between the two proposals can be reached. "I'm generally in favor of the PDR program, and will support a good version," he said. "I think that's what we'll eventually wind up with. It's still a document that's in the working

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

stages." Supervisor Chris Yakabowski agreed, though he wants the final program to specifically mention historically and culturally significant properties. "Our county is very historic, and that needs to be one of the top priorities," he said.

Taylor and Wheeler hope to present a final proposal to the board in January, allowing the supervisors to schedule a public hearing on the matter. The county attorney argues that a PDR program would give the supervisors another tool to manage Spotsylvania's exploding growth rate. "Buying development rights can mean fewer houses getting built, can mean less change happening now, can mean less stress," **Taylor** said. "The program can also help preserve some of the most beautiful, culturally rich and historically significant properties in the county."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Free Lance-Star, The (Fredericksburg, VA)
February 5, 2004

Boards pass code of ethics - Spotsylvania supervisors adopt ethics policy.

Author/Byline: ANNETTE JONES

Ethics captured the attention of both the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors and School Board last week. The Board of Supervisors adopted a code of ethics at its meeting last Tuesday that clearly defines what behavior will be tolerated and what won't. On its heels, the School Board also adopted an ethics code at its meeting two nights later. "This sends a very large message," said Alfred King, a Fawn Lake resident and member of the advocacy group Committee of 500. He spoke in favor of the ethics code at the supervisors meeting Jan. 27. "This isn't going to solve the transportation problems or the school problems," he said in a phone interview, pointing out that at least people will know that the boards are acting in the residents' best interests. In a unanimous vote, supervisors agreed these rules will govern both its behavior and the behavior of the boards and commissions it appoints. "The touchstone of ethics is a knowable right, knowable wrong," said County Attorney **Mark Taylor** in an interview after the vote. **Taylor**, along with County Administrator J. Randall Wheeler, crafted the multi-page document to reflect what is important to the Spotsylvania community. The document isn't totally original, **Taylor** said. It borrows heavily from a similar document in Fauquier County, which borrowed heavily from a California community. The new code was prompted by Salem District Supervisor Gary Jackson, who first raised the idea at the beginning of his first term four years ago. It was placed on the back burner then but was rekindled as the new board took office at the beginning of the year. "The strength of it is that it plainly tries to qualify ethical versus unethical behavior as we are trying to define it," **Taylor** said.

The code is said to be straightforward. For instance, in reference to the conduct of members, it states, "The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members. "Members must be prepared for meetings and conduct themselves courteously and refrain from interrupting other speakers or making personal comments not germane to the business of the body." And then there is the segment on gifts. Not only must the board member disclose gifts of more than \$50, per state law, but the ethics code encourages board members to refrain from accepting gifts altogether. The code also mandates that members represent the board's views when they're acting as delegates. "When presenting their individual opinions and positions or otherwise speaking without the express direction or authorization of the body, members shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or Spotsylvania County, nor will they allow the inference that they do," the code states. The ethics code allows supervisors to place sanctions on those whose conduct doesn't comply with the code, such as stripping members of committee chairmanships and assignments. In the case of appointed boards, the supervisors may remove the appointee. "The idea is to encourage the best of behavior at the start," **Taylor** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Daily Press (Newport News, VA)
January 29, 2002

BILL WOULD LET AREAS REJECT SLUDGE

Author/Byline: The Associated Press

People in rural counties need the authority to block farmers from slathering their fields with sewage sludge, offending their olfactories and threatening to contaminate their waterways and wells, Sen. Creigh Deeds said Monday. Deeds, D-Bath County, and representatives of farm localities said they were virtually powerless to block the processed human waste from big-city sewage-treatment plants -- and even some out-of-state sludge --from being spread next to their homes and schools. Farm organizations oppose Deeds' bill. They say sludge is a safe and natural way to fertilize their crops as it solves a disposal problem for cities. "This stuff is nothing you ever smelled on your granddaddy's farm when you were growing up," Deeds said at a news conference in a Capitol meeting room that reeked of an odor from two sealed plastic bags containing the pasty dark- gray sludge. A state Supreme Court ruling in 2000, in a legal effort to halt sludge spreading, gave authority over issuing sludge permits to the state Department of Health, taking discretion from counties and towns. His bill would give localities control.

Sludge is a particular problem in areas such as Spotsylvania or Albemarle counties, where suburban residential and commercial development has pushed outward into farm areas, Kay Slaughter said. Slaughter is an attorney for the nonprofit Southern Environmental Law Center in Charlottesville. "Aside from the issues of odor and aesthetics, the application of sewage sludge creates a potential water-quality problem for cities and counties that depend on uncontaminated surface or groundwater," said Slaughter, a former Charlottesville mayor. Rainfall runoff from fields coated with sludge is a threat to fish and oyster beds in Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the Rev. John Debbins said. He's the pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Northumberland County on the Northern Neck. "Our Health Department ... has condemned things such as pig pens because the pig-pen waste is a threat to our oyster beds and our fish, and even our chicken pens, which there used to be so many of," Debbins said.

Mark Taylor, the attorney for Spotsylvania County, said sludge contractors had sued his county for its efforts to stop sludge spreading. "Our local determination to protect our citizens will be effectively undone if we're compelled to accept the spreading of imported sludge pursuant to a (state Health Department) permit with no local regulation or control," **Taylor** said. "We're not surprised, but we are disappointed, that some urban localities oppose this bill," he said.

With cities in their opposition to the bill is the Virginia Farm Bureau and the Virginia Agribusiness Council. Farm Bureau lobbyist Martha Moore said the Health Department was the proper overseer of permits because sludge application was done statewide and standards should be uniform.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Mark Brian Taylor***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Virginian-Pilot, The (Norfolk, VA)
February 11, 1991

PROJECTED COAL FACILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

To the Editor:

Regarding the proposed coal facility planned for the Windsor area in Isle of Wight County, I have many concerns that have not been answered by Norfolk Southern personnel:

1. Depletion of groundwater supply by Norfolk Southern for coal-dust suppression. Groundwater - i.e., wells - are the only source of potable water for Isle of Wight and neighboring rural Suffolk. Will the pumping of water by Norfolk Southern cause wells to go dry or cause saltwater contamination due to the depletion of the aquifer? What happens to local residents if Norfolk, Portsmouth or Virginia Beach start using their emergency wells there? (Virginia Beach faces water problems without drought conditions at this time.)
2. Source-point runoff from filtering ponds. How effective is this system when ponds are full of sediment and during heavy rains? The Hampton Roads Sanitation District is unable to remove the heavy metals and other toxins and, consequently, will not accept the effluent. How does Norfolk Southern propose to dispose of or contain these heavy metals and toxins when HRSD cannot?
3. Non-point sources, such as leaching through the soil cement used under the piles into the groundwater? What of runoff from coal piles during heavy rains that does not go through settling ponds? What about airborne particulate which will settle in the surrounding area (approximately a five-mile radius) and will be washed into the surrounding wetlands and then into the Hampton Roads area water supply? Will the surrounding wetlands eventually become large natural settling ponds themselves?
4. After reviewing Norfolk Southern's past record on adherence and non-compliance to state guidelines and laws, how does the state plan to force Norfolk Southern into compliance on this project? To date, Norfolk Southern has been able to violate these laws with relative impunity.

MARK B. TAYLOR

Windsor, Jan. 18, 1991

Research Compiled by: Shannon Farr
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

City of Cocoa Beach City Commission Agenda Item Summary

**DEPARTMENT MAKING
REQUEST/NAME:**

City Clerk /
Michael Bryan, Assistant to the City Clerk

MEETING DATE

August 19, 2025

REQUESTED MOTION/ACTION

Set Date and Time for City Manager Candidate Interviews, Including Commission Meeting for Group Interviews.

Representative: Colin Baenziger & Associates

Recommendation: Set the date and time for August 29th

IS THIS ITEM BUDGETED (IF APPLICABLE)?

NA

BACKGROUND:

Date and time is to be confirmed and approved by City Commission to have an open meeting regarding the city manager search.

Cocoa Beach - Possible Interview Schedule for City Manager - Example

As of July 28, 2025

August 28, 2025 1:00 p.m.: Tour of City.

3:30 p.m.: Cheese and cracker reception with staff

5:00 p.m.: Finalists have free time.

5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.: Reception with community and/or Commission.

August 29, 2025 One-on-One Interviews

Time	Capizzi	Hutcherson	Jackson	Tumulty	Williams
8:45 a.m.	Coffee, tea, danish and fruit				
9:00 to 9:30 a.m.	Finalist #1	Finalist #2	Finalist #3	Finalist #4	Finalist #5
9:30 to 10:00 a.m.	Open	Finalist #1	Finalist #2	Finalist #3	Finalist #4
10:00 to 10:30 a.m.	Open	Open	Finalist #1	Finalist #2	Finalist #3
10:30 to 10:40 a.m.	Break				
10:40 to 11:10 a.m.	Finalist #5	Open	Open	Finalist #1	Finalist #2
11:10 to 11:40 a.m.	Finalist #4	Finalist #5	Open	Open	Finalist #1
11:40 to 12:10 p.m.	Finalist #3	Finalist #4	Finalist #5	Open	Open
12:10 to 12:40 p.m.	Finalist #2	Finalist #3	Finalist #4	Finalist #5	Open

12:40 to 1:10 p.m.	Light lunch for Finalists and Commission Members
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Special Meeting - Interviews with the Commission as a Whole at City Hall

Time	Name
1:10 to 1:15 p.m.	Review procedures for interviews
1:15 to 1:45 p.m.	Finalist #1
1:45 to 2:15 p.m.	Finalist #2
2:15 to 2:45 p.m.	Finalist #3
2:45 to 2:55 p.m.	Break
2:55 to 3:25 p.m.	Finalist #4
3:25 to 3:55 p.m.	Finalist #5

Note: Since the afternoon interviews are sequential, you can take more or less time with each candidate. The important thing is for you to be comfortable with your choice for City Manager and to have all the information you need to make the right decision. You can also take any extra breaks you feel are helpful.

4:00 p.m.: Commission meets to make a selection or discuss next steps.

September 4, 2025 If it has not already been done, the Commission selects next Manager and appoints a negotiating team to develop an employment agreement with the selected Finalist.