



TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

February 26, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Council Chambers – 340 Ocean Drive and YouTube

NOTICE: If any person decides to appeal any decision of the Town Council at this meeting, he or she will need a record of the proceedings and for that purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, such record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. The Town does not prepare or provide such record. *Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in the meeting should contact Caitlin E. Copeland-Rodriguez, Town Clerk, at least 48 hours in advance to request such accommodations.*

The meeting will be broadcast live on The Town of Juno Beach YouTube page and can be viewed any time at: <https://www.youtube.com/@townofjuno-beach477/streams>

HOW CITIZENS MAY BE HEARD: Members of the public wishing to comment publicly on any matter, including items on the agenda may do so by: Submitting their comments through the Public Comments Webform at: https://www.juno-beach.fl.us/towncouncil/webform/public-comments#_blank (all comments must be submitted by Noon on day of Meeting). Please be advised that all email addresses and submitted comments are public record pursuant to Chapter 119, Florida Statutes (Florida Public Records Law). The Town Clerk or designee will read public comments into the record at the appropriate time for no more than three (3) minutes; or make their comment in-person; or participate from a remote location using Zoom – please contact the Town Clerk at ccopeland@juno-beach.fl.us by Noon on the day of the meeting to receive the Meeting ID and Access Code. (Please note that all members participating via Zoom must login at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting and will be muted upon entry until Public Comments is called).

****Please note that the Zoom meeting will lock for public comments at 5:30pm and no other entries will be permitted.***

All matters listed under Consent Agenda, are considered to be routine by the Town Council and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, SUBSTITUTIONS TO THE AGENDA

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER, THE TOWN ATTORNEY, AND STAFF

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

All Non-Agenda items are limited to three (3) minutes. Anyone wishing to speak is asked to complete a comment card with their name and address prior to the start of the meeting as well as state their name and address for the record when called upon to speak (prior to addressing the Town Council). Town Council will not discuss these items at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Proclamation – Problem Gambling Awareness Month
2. Proclamation – Florida Bicycle Month - March 2025
3. Proclamation – National Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2025
4. Special Event Request - Bike MS: Breakaway to the Palm Beaches 2025
5. Special Event Request – Town of Jupiter Turtle Trot 5K Run
6. Resolution No. 2025-03 - Interlocal Agreement with Palm Beach County to Re-Adopt the 6-Cent Local Option Fuel Tax
7. Year to Date (YTD) Financial Statements
8. Reimbursement Request from The Waterford
9. Approval of Continuing Contracts for Engineering Services

COUNCIL ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

10. Revised Code of Conduct and Enforcement Options
11. Resolution No. 2025-01 (Amending the Town’s Quasi-Judicial Procedures)
12. Discussion on Filling Vacant Seat on Audit Oversight Review Committee
13. Selection of Town Manager Finalists
14. Ordinance No. 792 (Establishing a Temporary Moratorium on Commercial, Mixed-Use and Multi-Family Development Applications) (**First Reading**)
15. Discussion on Lighting and Cameras around Pelican Lake
16. 2024 Town Council Goal - Enhancing the Beautification of the Town (US Highway 1 Median).
17. Discussion on Subterranean Parking
18. Discussion on a Policy for Funding Additional Training for Council Members

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL

ADJOURNMENT



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: C. Copeland-Rodriguez, Town Clerk
Item Title: Proclamation – Problem Gambling Awareness Month

DISCUSSION:

Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) is held annually in March and is designed to increase public awareness of problem gambling.

The Town Council has approved this Proclamation since 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Staff recommends Town Council approve the Proclamation for Problem Gambling Awareness Month.



Proclamation
Town of Juno Beach of Palm Beach County, Florida

PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, the Town of Juno Beach has recognized **March 2025** as **Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM)** to demonstrate its support in addressing problem gambling and the initiative of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling in bringing awareness to the issues surrounding problem gambling in our community; and

WHEREAS, problem gambling is a serious public health issue which impacts family, friends, and businesses with significant societal and economic costs, affecting more than one million Floridians of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds in all communities; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that more than six (6) million people nationwide of every age, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status suffer from problem gambling and need treatment; and

WHEREAS, the issue of problem gambling is a community issue, as 8-10 people are affected for every problem gambler, and conservative estimated social costs are \$7 Billion annually; and

WHEREAS, educating the public about how problem gambling affects everyone in the community, including youth, older adults, and families, is essential if we are to be proactive about this problem; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling's 2025 Problem Gambling Awareness Month campaign provides an opportunity for the public, policymakers, educators, businesses, mental health providers, criminal justice professionals, the gaming industry, and others, to make known the adverse effects of problem gambling, as well as available treatment; and

WHEREAS, any individual, professional, or organization dedicated to assisting those in need, can participate in raising awareness of problem gambling and available resources by promoting the statewide 24-hour confidential, multilinguals HelpLine, 888-ADMIT-IT; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Juno Beach, can participate in this nationally recognized awareness month through declaration of proclamation of the month of March 2025 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month in the Town of Juno Beach.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Halpern, of the Town of Juno Beach, Florida do hereby proclaim the month of **March 2025** as **Problem Gambling Awareness Month** in the Town of Juno Beach.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED this 26th day of February, 2025.

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA

Peggy Wheeler, Mayor

ATTEST:

Caitlin E. Copeland-Rodriguez, MMC, Town Clerk



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: C. Copeland-Rodriguez, Town Clerk
Item Title: Proclamation – Florida Bicycle Month - March 2025

DISCUSSION:

Per the request of the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency and in recognition of Florida Bicycle Month, the Town of Juno Beach would like to request the Town Council to adopt a Florida Bicycle Month Proclamation.

Florida Bicycle Month (March 2025) is a chance to showcase the many benefits of bicycling and encourage more folks to give bicycling a try.

The Town Council has approved this Proclamation since 2015.

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Staff recommends Town Council approve the Proclamation for Florida Bicycle Month.



Proclamation

Town of Juno Beach of Palm Beach County, Florida

DECLARING MARCH 2025 AS FLORIDA BICYCLE MONTH

WHEREAS, Town of Juno Beach residents and visitors engage in bicycling as a viable and environmentally sound form of transportation and an excellent form of physical activity and recreation; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida designates March as Bicycle Month and Palm Beach County will recognize it locally; and

WHEREAS, Florida Bicycle Month features a number of fitness opportunities, educational programs, races, commuting and charity events for riders of all ages and abilities to enjoy throughout the month at various parks and locations throughout Palm Beach County; and

WHEREAS, the recognition of Florida Bicycle Month will raise awareness of bicycling and ultimately promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles by elevating bicycling as a more widely accepted choice of transportation;

WHEREAS, the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency plans and recommends projects to make bicycling more accessible and promotes comprehensive community education efforts aimed at improving bicycle safety; and

WHEREAS, creating a bicycle-friendly community has been shown to improve citizen’s health, well-being, and quality of life, growing the economy of Town of Juno Beach, attracting tourism dollars, improving traffic safety, supporting student learning outcomes, and reducing pollution, congestion, and wear and tear on our streets; and

WHEREAS, Palm Beach County has an ever-expanding designated or enhanced bicycle lane network, with over 270 miles of existing and 745 miles of planned facilities to create a safe, connected system of bicycle infrastructure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE Town of Juno Beach, assembled in regular session this 26th day of February 2025, that the month of March 2025, in the Town of Juno Beach, is hereby proclaimed:

Florida Bicycle Month

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED BY THE Town of Juno Beach, that this proclamation is duly sealed, ribboned and executed by the members of this Town Council. The foregoing proclamation was sponsored by Honorable Mayor Peggy Wheeler, and upon unanimous consent of the Town Council, the Mayor declared the proclamation duly enacted.

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA

Peggy Wheeler, Mayor

ATTEST:

Caitlin E. Copeland-Rodriguez, MMC, Town Clerk



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: C. Copeland-Rodriguez, Town Clerk
Item Title: Proclamation – National Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2025

DISCUSSION:

National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (NEDAwareness Week) is an annual campaign to educate the public about the realities of eating disorders and to provide hope, support, and visibility to individuals and families affected by eating disorders.

The Town Council has approved this Proclamation since 2016.

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Staff recommends Town Council approve the Proclamation for Eating Disorders Awareness Week.



Proclamation

Town of Juno Beach of Palm Beach County, Florida

NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK 2025

WHEREAS, eating disorders affect 28.8 million Americans or 9% of the U.S. population during their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders, including the specific disorders of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder, and other specified feeding or eating disorders, are complex, biologically based illnesses; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders are associated with serious physical health consequences, including irregular heartbeats, heart disease and heart failure, kidney failure, osteoporosis, gastric rupture, tooth decay, obesity, gallbladder disease, diabetes, and death; and

WHEREAS, at least once every 52 minutes, someone dies as direct result of an eating disorder, resulting in 10,200 deaths per year and anorexia nervosa has the second highest mortality rate among all psychiatric illnesses; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders know no boundaries with respect to genders/gender identity, ages, races, ethnicities, body shapes and weights, abilities, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders have a high prevalence amongst active military services members and veterans; and

WHEREAS, the yearly economic cost of eating disorders is \$64.7 Billion with an additional loss of wellbeing per year of \$326.5 billion; and

WHEREAS, with early detection and intervention, full recovery from an eating disorder is possible; and

WHEREAS, The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a leading, national eating disorders organization, headquartered in the State of Florida, dedicated to the outreach, education, support, and early intervention for all eating disorders.

NOW THEREFORE, Town of Juno Beach, Florida hereby proclaims February 24, 2025 – March 2, 2025 as:

NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Town of Juno Beach to be affixed this 26th day of February, 2025.

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA

Peggy Wheeler, Mayor

ATTEST:

Caitlin E. Copeland-Rodriguez, Town Clerk



Meeting Name: Town Council
Meeting Date: February 26th 2025
Prepared By: I. Hickey
Item Title: Special Event Request - Bike MS: Breakaway to the Palm Beaches 2025

DISCUSSION:

Staff received a request for a special event from Ms. Talia Barreau, representative for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, for a fundraising bicycle ride that will start and end at the Boca Raton Innovative Campus (BRIC). **This event is a recurring event in Town along Ocean Drive and is why staff put it on the Consent Agenda.**

The time of this event takes place on Saturday, April 5th, 2025, from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. The event will start and end on Saturday at the Boca Raton Innovative Campus (BRIC) (Please refer to the attached bike route map). The event will have approximately 350 participants and approximately 75 employees/volunteers working at this event. The sponsor will have directional signs to direct riders. This event is not a timed race, the riders will be instructed to follow the rules of the road, thus no road closures are being proposed. The bike ride route will occur on US Highway 1 and Ocean Drive.

The applicant will be charged the permit fee of \$100 and a \$500 Security Deposit for this event based on the attached adopted fee schedule for Off-Site Special Events. This fee and deposit do not include the required costs for outside assistance by Police, or any other necessary support. Those costs are the responsibility of the applicant during the application process.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Town Council consider the request for the special event proposed in Juno Beach as stated above, subject to the applicant being responsible for the application process of the special event and all conditions and requirements following said application, including any additional agency reviews/approvals/fees.



TOWN OF JUNO BEACH
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
340 OCEAN DRIVE
JUNO BEACH, FL 33048
PHONE 561.626.1122 • FAX 561.775.0812

For Official Use Only
Date Stamp
JAN 31 2025

Item #4.

Application for Off-Site Special Event

Note: The issuance of any Special Event permit from the Town of Juno Beach does not exempt the applicant from obtaining the appropriate Business Tax License (occupational license) and temporary liquor license from the State of Florida, Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco under Florida Statute, or, any other county or state required permits.

Fee Schedule:

<u>Event Type</u>	<u>Deadlines Application/Obligations</u>	<u>Application Fee</u>	<u>Permit Fee*</u>	<u>Security Deposit</u>	<u>Deadline Late Fee</u>
Low-Impact (Up to 999 attendees)**	60/14 days prior to event	\$100	\$100/day	\$500	\$200
Medium-Impact (1000-4999 attendees)	120/45 days prior to event	\$200	\$500/day	\$1,000	\$400
High-Impact (5000+ attendees)	120/45 days prior to event	\$300	\$1,000/day	\$5,000	\$600

*Permit Fee will be determined by the Town Council for off-site events lasting 4 or more consecutive days.

**Low-Impact events consisting of 25 attendees or less will be approved administratively.

Notes: Please initial each item below to confirm your understanding:

TB Application Fee is due at time of Application submittal and is not refundable. Deadline Late Fee (if applicable) is an additional charge and is not refundable.

TB Applications are not approved, nor Permit granted, until applicant has received a "Letter of Approval" from the Planning and Zoning Department outlining obligations and fees.

TB Permit Fees and Security Deposit are due 14/45 days prior to the event. These fees may be refunded if the event is canceled or postponed at least 7/14 days prior to the event date.

TB After the event, Security Deposit, or a portion of, may be returned after an inspection is completed by Town Staff. The Town shall determine what portion of the Security Deposit may be returned.

TB Failure to comply with restrictions imposed automatically forfeits the Security Deposit.

TB Town Staff will determine if application will require additional conditions to be added or existing conditions modified, dependent upon each individual event.

TB Failure to provide the required obligations, fees and deposits 14 or 45 days prior to the event date, as indicated above, will subject the applicant to the Late Fee and/or cancellation of event.

TB Additional charges may apply for Police and/or Public Works services, Town Staff will determine what services are required. Please read Sections III and IV. Deadline for these fees are 14 or 45 days prior to the event date, as indicated above, subject to Late Fee and/or cancellation of event.

TB

If it is determined that your event will require Police staff to be present, you must contact Extra Duty solutions in order to schedule the required Officers prior to your application being approved. Please note that the Extra Duty Solutions obligations shall be submitted 30 days prior to the event. Additional information on Extra Duty Solutions is provided in "Section III".

TB

If any road closures are proposed, attach maintenance of traffic (MOT) plan. The individual preparing the MOT must be certified by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or equivalent to prepare a MOT. The MOT plan is required 45 days prior to the event. Police Officers may be required to direct traffic, and if so, a fee will be assessed.

Section I Instructions for Applicant

1. Applicant shall complete Section II of this application. (Town Staff will review the Applicants submittal and complete other sections as required.)
2. Attach the following with this application:
 - a) Attach Application Fee, and Late Fee if applicable. (All fees are Payable to the Town of Juno Beach.)
 - b) Plot/Site Plan (drawing/sketch), showing the site upon which you are proposing your special event, identifying parking areas, adjacent roadways, existing structures, proposed (temporary) structures/items, road closures, barricades/fences, etc.;
 - c) Attach letter(s) of approval from all outside agencies: (i.e. Palm Beach County (PBC) Parks and Recreation, PBC-Traffic Division, PBC-Fire Rescue, Florida Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Resources Management, Coast Guard, etc.)
 - d) Copy of current insurance certification(s) with the **Town of Juno Beach** listed as **"Additionally Insured" with a minimum amount of \$1,000,000.00 liability coverage;** (or state your ability to provide it with all other obligations).
 - e) Notarized Letter of approval from property owner(s).
 - f) Copy of Driver License.
3. Sign and date this application at the end of Section II.

Section II Required Information

▪ **Regarding the Applicant:**

Name of Applicant/Sponsor: National MS Society Phone: 954 676-3926 ext. 56926

Relationship to Organization Represented: Production Company, Event Production Manager

Address of Applicant/Sponsor: 3250 W. Commercial Blvd Suite 340, Ft. Lauderdale

Name, Address, Phone of Organization Represented: same

Principal contact person on Event Day/Phone: Sandy Harslem 817-939-4992

Alternate contact person on Event Day/Phone: Talia Barreau 954-882-5611

▪ **Regarding the Subject Location (where the proposed special event is being requested):**

Address/Location: Please see attached

Name of Subdivision: _____

▪ **Regarding the Special Event Specifics:**

Please describe the special event being requested: _____
Bike MS: Breakaway to the Palm Beaches is a two-day charity bicycle event starting and finishing at Boca Raton Innovation Campus (BRIC). Cyclists will follow the rules of the road. This is not a race.

Indicate roadway(s) to be closed: No road closures needed

Indicate if amusement rides (type/quantity) are part of the event: NO

Indicate if alcohol will be served at the event and who will serve: no

Indicate types of equipment, tents, trailers or other temporary structures that will be part of the event: n/a

Number of employees/volunteers working the event: 75

Number of anticipated attendees for the event: 350

Length of time proposed for the event to take place, including set-up and tear down, (dates/times): Event day is 4/05/2025 from 8am until 3pm. Route marking will take place on Thursday 4/03/2025 and all signs will be removed by 6pm Saturday 4/05/2025.

▪ **Regarding other Town Services:**

If Police and/or Public Works services are being requested, please indicate your anticipated duties: *(Regardless of your anticipated need, Town staff may determine that Police and/or Public Works services are required for your event, refer to letter of approval):*

We will hire PD and/or Public works as deemed necessary.

▪ **Please initial each line to confirm attachments:**

TB

_____ Application Fee, and Late Fee, if applicable. (Payable to Town of Juno Beach)

TB _____ Plot/Site Plan

_____ Outside agency letter(s) of approval

_____ Insurance Certificate

_____ Notarized Letter from property owner

_____ Copy of Driver License

Indicate items not submitted and reasons for non-submittal: _____

Hold Harmless Agreement:

In accordance with the Town of Juno Beach Code of Ordinances, in permitting any special event, the applicant shall meet all requirements set forth in Chapter 34 and is subject to Town Council approval. In addition, Town Staff shall prescribe appropriate conditions and safeguards and obligations and fees as required.

By submittal of this application, the sponsor agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Town of Juno Beach, its officers, employees and agents from and against all loss, costs, expenses, including attorney's fees, claims, suits and judgments, whatsoever in connection with injury to or death of any person or persons or loss of or damage to property resulting from any and all operations performed by sponsor, its officers, employees, and agents under any of the terms of this Special Event Application.

If any unforeseen circumstance(s) occur and/or the sponsor fails to meet the requirements the Town has set forth, the Town Manager or Police Chief shall have the right to cancel or stop the event either before commencement of the event and/or during the event.

Applications are not approved, nor Permit granted, until applicant has received a "Letter of Approval" from the Planning and Zoning Director outlining obligations and fees.

Talia Barreau

Applicant/Sponsor Signature

01/31/2025

Date

Talia Barreau

Print Name

Office Use Only:

Isabella Hickey

Received By

JAN 31 2025

Jan 31 2025 JH

Date (Please Date Stamp)

Section III Police Department-Special Event Requirements



The following are additional obligations your organization may have to meet. To schedule the required Police Officers for your event please visit Extra Duty Solutions at https://portal.extradutysolutions.com to submit your request, if this is your first time using the Extra Duty Solutions customer portal please register as a new customer. You can also reach our Extra Duty Solutions account team at 561-437-4499 or JunoBeachFL@extradutysolutions.com. As part of the Special Event review process the Police Department may impose fees for services as deemed appropriate for the type and impact of the proposed event. The Police Department may schedule a meeting to review the event specifics and Police Operational or Action Plan as determined by the Town. Items reviewed in the Plan include, but are limited to, the following:

- Operations Command Post needs, Incident Management;
• Traffic Control Plan, Road Closures, Parking Plan, Event Route management;
• Staffing needs, Day and Night patrol, Coordination with other agencies;
• Vendor setup and security;
• Attendee/Pedestrian access, security, monitoring and control;
• Equipment needs motorized and non-motorized, Communications;
• Providing of adequate volunteers, Volunteer meeting(s) with Police representative prior to, or on event day(s);
• The Principal of the event shall remain accessible to the Police Supervisor at all times during the event to provide necessary event management and control.

The Police Department will attempt to place officers during the requested dates and hours. Because of unforeseen circumstances, this application may not be filled when requested. Juno Beach Police Officers will not work in the capacity of a "bouncer" at a bar or other establishment where alcohol is served.

Rates

Regular Staff - \$35.00 Officer - \$68.94 Supervisor (if required) - \$80.43

(Rates are subject to a \$15.00 an hour premium on Town designated Holidays.)

*An additional 10% scheduling fee will apply to all police department pay rates

- THERE IS A THREE (3)-HOUR MINIMUM FOR ALL EXTRA-DUTY EMPLOYMENT.
• IF MORE THAN THREE (3) OFFICERS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE EVENT, A SUPERVISOR IS REQUIRED.
• ALL CANCELLATIONS OF POLICE SERVICES MUST BE MADE 48-HOURS IN ADVANCE OR A THREE (3)-HOUR, PER OFFICER CHARGE WILL BE FORFEITED.

Office Use Only:
_____ Officers @ \$68.94/hour: total of _____ hours = \$ _____
_____ Supervisors @ \$80.43/hour: total of _____ hours = \$ _____
Additional Fee(s): _____ \$ _____
Payment Due Date: _____ Total Amount Due: \$ _____ Payment Received: Y / N
* Payment shall be received no later than 14/45 days prior to event date, as indicated in Fee Schedule.
Reviewed By: _____
Approved by Police Chief/Designee: _____

Section IV Public Works Department-Special Event Requirements

As part of the Special Event review process the Public Works Department may impose fees for services as deemed appropriate for the type and impact of the proposed event.

Public Works services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Delivery, set-up and removal of traffic or parking control devices including portable message boards, barricades, signs, stakes, traffic cones and/or any other devices requested by the Town’s Police Department.
- Random event site inspections to insure the Applicant removes trash/litter or debris from the event site as needed. Event usage area final inspection of public properties to insure adequate cleaning at event’s end/closing and prior to release of security deposits, if applicable.
- Public Works staff time to clean, remove and dispose of any and all residual debris, trash or to repair damaged property incurred by the Applicant or Applicant’s agents on the event site public property.

Rates

<i>Regular Staff</i>	<i>\$35.00</i>
<i>Supervisor (if required)</i>	<i>\$45.00</i>

- ***THERE IS A THREE (3)-HOUR MINIMUM FOR ALL EXTRA-DUTY EMPLOYMENT.***
- ***IF MORE THAN THREE (3) STAFF MEMBERS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE EVENT, A SUPERVISOR IS REQUIRED.***
- ***ALL CANCELLATIONS OF PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES MUST BE MADE 48-HOURS IN ADVANCED OR A THREE (3)-HOUR, PER STAFF MEMBER CHARGE WILL BE FORFEITED. PLEASE CONTACT FDAVILA@JUNO-BEACH.FL.US AND SHALLOCK@JUNO-BEACH.FL.US.***

Office Use Only:

_____ Regular Staff @ \$35.00/hour: total of _____ hours = \$ _____
 _____ Supervisors @ \$45.00/hour: total of _____ hours = \$ _____

Payment Due Date: _____ Total Amount Due: \$ _____ Payment Received: Y / N

**** Payment shall be received no later than 14/45 days prior to event date, as indicated in Fee Schedule.***

Reviewed By: _____

Approved by Director of Public Works/Designee: _____

Section V Application Review

Director of Planning & Zoning Date

Police Chief Date

Public Works Director Date

Finance Director Date

Town Manager Date

Section VI Post Event Inspection and Security Deposit Status

Post event Comments, Issues List and recommended Security Deposit withheld:

* _____ *Amount and Date Returned of the Security Deposit.*
Amount Date

Director of Planning & Zoning Date

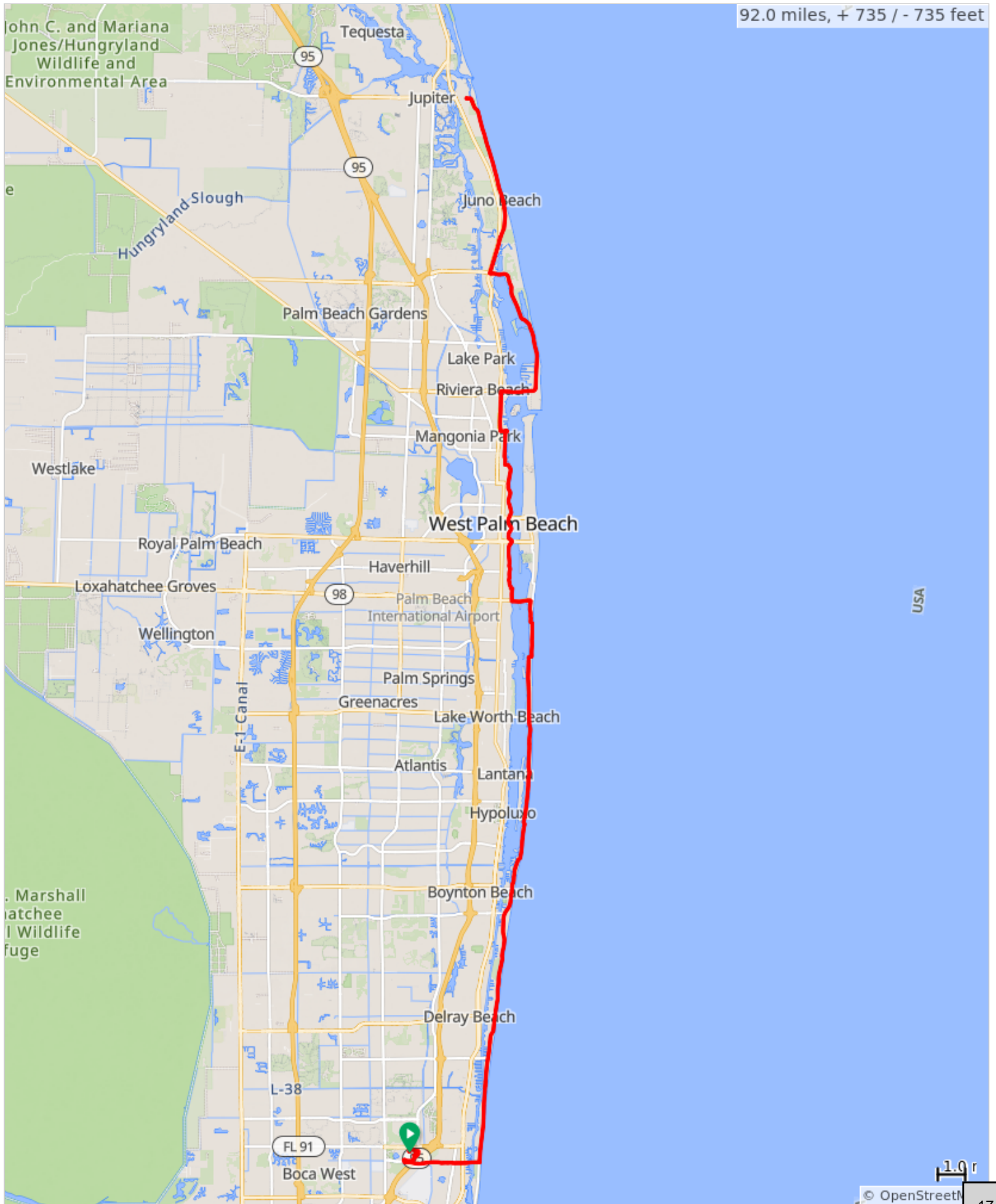
Police Chief Date

Public Works Director Date

Finance Director Date

Town Manager Date

2025 Bike MS: Breakaway to Palm Beaches Day 1 - 92M



2025 Bike MS: Breakaway to Palm Beaches Day 1 - 92M

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
1.	0.0	0.0	📍	Start of route	0.0
2.	0.0	0.0	←	L onto Blue Lake Dr/T-Rex Ave	0.1
3.	0.1	0.1	→	R onto Teleco m Dr E	0.2
4.	0.3	0.2	←	L onto 50th St	0.1
5.	0.4	0.1	→	R onto Technol ogy Way	0.7

0.4 miles. +2/-0 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Item #4.
6.	1.2	0.7	←	L at the 1st cross street onto Broken Sound Blvd	0.1
7.	1.2	0.1	←	L at the 1st cross street onto NW 40th St/ Spanis h River Blvd	2.7
8.	3.9	2.7	←	L onto A1A / Ocean Ave	10.2

3.5 miles. +36/-28 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
9.	14.1	10.2	→	R to access rest stop 1	0.0
10.	14.1	0.0	💧	Rest Stop 1: Ocean Front Beach Park - 6415 N Ocean Blvd., Ocean Ridge, FL 33435	5.9
11.	20.0	5.9	→	R to access rest stop 2	0.0

16.1 miles. +41/-45 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
12.	20.0	0.0	💧	Rest Stop 2: Lake Worth Beach Park - 10 S Ocean Blvd., Lake Worth, FL 33460	4.3
13.	24.4	4.3	↑	At the traffic circle, take the 2nd exit onto Souther n Blvd	0.7

4.3 miles. +39/-35 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
14.	25.1	0.7	→	R at the 1st cross street onto S Flagler Dr	0.5
15.	25.6	0.5	→	R onto Washington Rd	0.3
16.	25.9	0.3	↑	Continue onto S Flagler Dr	4.3
17.	30.2	4.3	←	L to stay on N Flagler Dr	0.1

5.9 miles. +21/-19 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
18.	30.3	0.1	→	R at the 1st cross street onto N Flagler Dr/ Poinsettia Ave	1.2
19.	31.5	1.2	→	R to access rest stop 3	0.0

1.3 miles. +5/-3 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
20.	31.5	0.0	⬇	Rest Stop 3: Manatee Lagoon - 6000 N Flagler Dr., West Palm Beach, FL 33407	0.2
21.	31.7	0.2	↑	Continue West onto 59th St	0.2

0.2 miles. +1/-1 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
22.	31.8	0.2	→	R at the 1st cross street onto Broadway	1.4
23.	33.3	1.4	→	R onto Blue Heron Blvd	1.2
24.	34.5	1.2	↑	Continue onto N Ocean Dr	0.1

2.8 miles. +10/-15 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
25.	34.6	0.1	↑	Continue straight onto Florida A1A N/ State Hwy 703/N Ocean Dr	4.8
26.	39.5	4.8	→	R at the 1st cross street onto US-1 N/ U.S. Hwy 1 N	1.2
27.	40.6	1.2	→	Slight R	0.2

6.2 miles. +26/-19 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Item #4.
28.	40.8	0.2	↑	Merge onto Ocean Dr	5.2
29.	46.0	5.2	←	L onto E Indiantown Rd	0.1
30.	46.1	0.1	→	R to access rest stop.	0.0

5.5 miles. +39/-50 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
31.	46.1	0.0	i	Rest Stop 4: Maltz Jupiter Theatre Inc. - 1001 E Indiantown Rd., Jupiter, FL 33477	0.0
32.	46.1	0.0	←	L onto E Indiantown Rd to exit rest stop	0.1

0.0 miles. +0/-0 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
33.	46.3	0.1	→	R at the 1st cross street onto Florida A1A S	5.2
34.	51.5	5.2	←	L onto US-1 S	1.4
35.	52.8	1.4	←	L onto Florida A1A S/ State Hwy 703/ Jack Nicklaus Dr	5.2

6.7 miles. +62/-55 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
36.	58.0	5.2	↑	Continue straight onto Blue Heron Blvd	1.0
37.	59.0	1.0	←	L onto Broadway	1.4
38.	60.4	1.4	←	L onto 59th St	0.2
39.	60.6	0.2	→	R onto N Flagler Dr/ Poinsettia Ave	0.0

7.8 miles. +16/-5 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Item #4.
40.	60.6	0.0	⬇️	Rest Stop 5: Manatee Lagoon - 6000 N Flagler Dr., West Palm Beach, FL 33407	1.2
41.	61.8	1.2	←	L to stay on N Flagler Dr	0.1

1.2 miles. +3/-5 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
42.	61.9	0.1	→	R at the 1st cross street to stay on N Flagler Dr	2.3
43.	64.3	2.3	→	R onto S Flagler Dr	2.0
44.	66.2	2.0	↑	Continue onto Washington Rd	0.3
45.	66.6	0.3	←	L onto S Flagler Dr/ Greenwood Dr	0.5

4.8 miles. +19/-19 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
46.	67.1	0.5	←	L onto Southern Blvd	0.7
47.	67.8	0.7	↑	At the traffic circle, take the 1st exit onto S Ocean Blvd	4.3
48.	72.1	4.3	←	L to access rest stop 6	0.0

5.5 miles. +40/-40 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
49.	72.1	0.0	🚰	Rest Stop 6: Lake Worth Beach Park - 10 S Ocean Blvd., Lake Worth, FL 33460	11.3
50.	83.4	11.3	🚰	Rest Stop 7: Anchor Park - 340 S Ocean Blvd., Delray Beach, FL 33483	4.8

11.3 miles. +99/-87 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Item #4.
51.	88.2	4.8	➔	R at the 1st cross street onto NE Spanish River Blvd	2.7
52.	90.8	2.7	➔	R at the 2nd cross street onto Broken Sound Blvd	0.1

7.5 miles. +27/-36 feet

Num	Dist	Prev	Type	Note	Next
53.	90.9	0.1	➔	R at the 1st cross street onto Technology Way	0.4
54.	91.3	0.4	➡	L onto Network Way	0.1
55.	91.5	0.1	➔	R onto Telecom Dr E	0.5
56.	92.0	0.5	➔	R onto T-Rex Ave	0.0
57.	92.0	0.0	📍	End of route	0.0

1.1 miles. +3/-3 feet



Meeting Name: Town Council
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: I. Hickey
Item Title: Special Event Request – Town of Jupiter Turtle Trot 5K Run

DISCUSSION:

Staff received a request for a special event from Michael Frabotta, Recreation Coordinator with the Town of Jupiter, for the Turtle Trot 5K Run/Walk. The entire event will take place within the Town of Jupiter, but will require the roadway closure of Ocean Drive, starting at Donald Ross Road. Participants will start at Marcinski Road, head north on Ocean Drive, then turn around just north of Beach Access #48, and finish at Ocean Cay Park. The closure of Ocean Drive starting at Donald Ross Road was recommended by the Juno Beach Police Department for added safety to participants and vehicular traffic during the event. **This event is a recurring event in Town at the same location along Ocean Drive, therefore it is being placed on the consent portion of the agenda. As a note, staff is working with the applicant (Town of Jupiter) and recommends waiving all fees due to the applicant being the Town of Jupiter.**

The location of this event will take place at Ocean Cay Park, located in the Town of Jupiter (along Marcinski Road and Ocean Drive) and extends into the Town via Ocean Drive with only the road closure north of Donald Ross Road. The event will require the roadway (Ocean Drive) to be closed during the event (Saturday, May 3, 2025, from 6:00 am to 10:00am). The event is expected to attract up to 650 athletes. The Town of Jupiter is both producing and managing this event with a support staff of 50-75 employees/volunteers.

Staff recommends the Town of Jupiter not be charged the Permit Fee of \$100 and a \$500 Security Deposit for this event as they are an adjacent Municipality seeking an Off-Site Special Event. Staff also recommend that the required costs for outside assistance by Juno Beach Police, or any other necessary support also be waived based on mutual aid. Based on the event type the applicant will be responsible for providing all required items and Staff will apply all the regular conditions for such an event plus any identified by the Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Town Council consider the request for the Off-Site Special Event proposed in Juno Beach as stated above, subject to all conditions and requirements of the application, including any additional agency reviews and approvals.



TOWN OF JUNO BEACH
 PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
 340 OCEAN DRIVE
 JUNO BEACH, FL 33048
 PHONE 561.626.1122 • FAX 561.775.0812

For Official Use Only
 Date Stamp
**TOWN OF JUNO
 BEACH RECEIVED
 FEB 4 2025**

Application for Off-Site Special Event

Note: The issuance of any Special Event permit from the Town of Juno Beach does not exempt the applicant from obtaining the appropriate Business Tax License (occupational license) and temporary liquor license from the State of Florida, Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco under Florida Statute, or, any other county or state required permits.

Fee Schedule:

<u>Event Type</u>	<u>Deadlines Application/Obligations</u>	<u>Application Fee</u>	<u>Permit Fee*</u>	<u>Security Deposit</u>	<u>Deadline Late Fee</u>
Low-Impact (Up to 999 attendees)**	60/14 days prior to event	\$100	\$100/day	\$500	\$200
Medium-Impact (1000-4999 attendees)	120/45 days prior to event	\$200	\$500/day	\$1,000	\$400
High-Impact (5000+ attendees)	120/45 days prior to event	\$300	\$1,000/day	\$5,000	\$600

*Permit Fee will be determined by the Town Council for off-site events lasting 4 or more consecutive days.
 **Low-Impact events consisting of 25 attendees or less will be approved administratively.

Notes: Please initial each item below to confirm your understanding:

- Application Fee is due at time of Application submittal and is not refundable. Deadline Late Fee (if applicable) is an additional charge and is not refundable.
- Applications are not approved, nor Permit granted, until applicant has received a “Letter of Approval” from the Planning and Zoning Department outlining obligations and fees.
- Permit Fees and Security Deposit are due 14/45 days prior to the event. These fees may be refunded if the event is canceled or postponed at least 7/14 days prior to the event date.
- After the event, Security Deposit, or a portion of, may be returned after an inspection is completed by Town Staff. The Town shall determine what portion of the Security Deposit may be returned.
- Failure to comply with restrictions imposed automatically forfeits the Security Deposit.
- Town Staff will determine if application will require additional conditions to be added or existing conditions modified, dependent upon each individual event.
- Failure to provide the required obligations, fees and deposits 14 or 45 days prior to the event date, as indicated above, will subject the applicant to the Late Fee and/or cancellation of event.
- Additional charges may apply for Police and/or Public Works services, Town Staff will determine what services are required. Please read Sections III and IV. Deadline for these fees are 14 or 45 days prior to the event date, as indicated above, subject to Late Fee and/or cancellation of event.

If it is determined that your event will require Police staff to be present, you must contact Extra Duty solutions in order to schedule the required Officers prior to your application being approved. Please note that the Extra Duty Solutions obligations shall be submitted 30 days prior to the event. Additional information on Extra Duty Solutions is provided in "Section III".

 If any road closures are proposed, attach maintenance of traffic (MOT) plan. The individual preparing the MOT must be certified by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or equivalent to prepare a MOT. The MOT plan is required 45 days prior to the event. Police Officers may be required to direct traffic, and if so, a fee will be assessed.

Section I Instructions for Applicant

1. Applicant shall complete Section II of this application. (Town Staff will review the Applicants submittal and complete other sections as required.)
2. Attach the following with this application:
 - a) Attach Application Fee, and Late Fee if applicable. (All fees are Payable to the Town of Juno Beach.)
 - b) Plot/Site Plan (drawing/sketch), showing the site upon which you are proposing your special event, identifying parking areas, adjacent roadways, existing structures, proposed (temporary) structures/items, road closures, barricades/fences, etc.;
 - c) Attach letter(s) of approval from all outside agencies: (i.e. Palm Beach County (PBC) Parks and Recreation, PBC-Traffic Division, PBC-Fire Rescue, Florida Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Resources Management, Coast Guard, etc.)
 - d) Copy of current insurance certification(s) with the **Town of Juno Beach** listed as **"Additionally Insured" with a minimum amount of \$1,000,000.00 liability coverage**; (or state your ability to provide it with all other obligations).
 - e) Notarized Letter of approval from property owner(s).
 - f) Copy of Driver License.
3. Sign and date this application at the end of Section II.

Section II Required Information

▪ **Regarding the Applicant:**

Name of Applicant/Sponsor: Town of Jupiter Re Phone: 561-741-2400

Relationship to Organization Represented: _____

Address of Applicant/Sponsor: 200 Military Trail
Jupiter FL 33458

Name, Address, Phone of Organization Represented: _____

Principal contact person on Event Day/Phone: Michael Frassetta
561-313-6783

Alternate contact person on Event Day/Phone: Julie Wolnawitz
561-301-0321

- **Regarding the Subject Location (where the proposed special event is being requested):**

Address/Location: Ocean Cay Park

Name of Subdivision: N/A

- **Regarding the Special Event Specifics:**

Please describe the special event being requested: 5K Run/Walk

Indicate roadway(s) to be closed: A1A (Beach Road)
closed @ Donal Ross Rd

Indicate if amusement rides (type/quantity) are part of the event: None

Indicate if alcohol will be served at the event and who will serve: None

Indicate types of equipment, tents, trailers or other temporary structures that will be part of the event: All Event Equipment will be
placed in Ocean Cay Park

Number of employees/volunteers working the event: 50-75

Number of anticipated attendees for the event: 650

Length of time proposed for the event to take place, including set-up and tear down, (dates/times): Road will be closed
approximately 6AM - 10AM

▪ **Regarding other Town Services:**

If Police and/or Public Works services are being requested, please indicate your anticipated duties: *(Regardless of your anticipated need, Town staff may determine that Police and/or Public Works services are required for your event, refer to letter of approval):*

Police Detail at Donald Ross/Al2
to divert Traffic

▪ **Please initial each line to confirm attachments:**

- NI Application Fee, and Late Fee, if applicable. (Payable to Town of Juno Beach)
- NI Plot/Site Plan
- NI Outside agency letter(s) of approval
- NI Insurance Certificate
- NI Notarized Letter from property owner
- NI Copy of Driver License

Indicate items not submitted and reasons for non-submittal: _____

Hold Harmless Agreement:

In accordance with the Town of Juno Beach Code of Ordinances, in permitting any special event, the applicant shall meet all requirements set forth in Chapter 34 and is subject to Town Council approval. In addition, Town Staff shall prescribe appropriate conditions and safeguards and obligations and fees as required.

By submittal of this application, the sponsor agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Town of Juno Beach, its officers, employees and agents from and against all loss, costs, expenses, including attorney's fees, claims, suits and judgments, whatsoever in connection with injury to or death of any person or persons or loss of or damage to property resulting from any and all operations performed by sponsor, its officers, employees, and agents under any of the terms of this Special Event Application.

If any unforeseen circumstance(s) occur and/or the sponsor fails to meet the requirements the Town has set forth, the Town Manager or Police Chief shall have the right to cancel or stop the event either before commencement of the event and/or during the event.

Applications are not approved, nor Permit granted, until applicant has received a "Letter of Approval" from the Planning and Zoning Director outlining obligations and fees.


Applicant/Sponsor Signature

2/4/25
Date

Michael Fradette
Print Name

Office Use Only:	TOWN OF JUNO BEACH RECEIVED FEB 4 2025
Isabella Hickey	
Received By	Date (Please Date Stamp)

Section III Police Department-Special Event Requirements



The following are additional obligations your organization may have to meet.

To schedule the required Police Officers for your event please visit Extra Duty Solutions at <https://portal.extradutysolutions.com> to submit your request, if this is your first time using the Extra Duty Solutions customer portal please register as a new customer. You can also reach our Extra Duty Solutions account team at 561-437-4499 or JunoBeachFL@extradutysolutions.com. As part of the Special Event review process the Police Department may impose fees for services as deemed appropriate for the type and impact of the proposed event. The Police Department may schedule a meeting to review the event specifics and Police Operational or Action Plan as determined by the Town. Items reviewed in the Plan include, but are limited to, the following:

- Operations Command Post needs, Incident Management;
- Traffic Control Plan, Road Closures, Parking Plan, Event Route management;
- Staffing needs, Day and Night patrol, Coordination with other agencies;
- Vendor setup and security;
- Attendee/Pedestrian access, security, monitoring and control;
- Equipment needs motorized and non-motorized, Communications;
- Providing of adequate volunteers, Volunteer meeting(s) with Police representative prior to, or on event day(s);
- The Principal of the event shall remain accessible to the Police Supervisor at all times during the event to provide necessary event management and control.

The Police Department will attempt to place officers during the requested dates and hours. Because of unforeseen circumstances, this application may not be filled when requested. Juno Beach Police Officers will not work in the capacity of a “bouncer” at a bar or other establishment where alcohol is served.

Rates

Regular Staff - \$35.00 Officer - \$68.94 Supervisor (if required) - \$80.43
(Rates are subject to a \$15.00 an hour premium on Town designated Holidays.)

**An additional 10% scheduling fee will apply to all police department pay rates*

- ***THERE IS A THREE (3)-HOUR MINIMUM FOR ALL EXTRA-DUTY EMPLOYMENT.***
- ***IF MORE THAN THREE (3) OFFICERS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE EVENT, A SUPERVISOR IS REQUIRED.***
- ***ALL CANCELLATIONS OF POLICE SERVICES MUST BE MADE 48-HOURS IN ADVANCE OR A THREE (3)-HOUR, PER OFFICER CHARGE WILL BE FORFEITED.***

Office Use Only:

_____ Officers @ \$68.94/hour: total of _____ hours = \$ _____
 _____ Supervisors @ \$80.43/hour: total of _____ hours = \$ _____
 Additional Fee(s): _____ \$ _____

Payment Due Date: _____ Total Amount Due: \$ _____ Payment Received: Y / N
 * *Payment shall be received no later than 14/45 days prior to event date, as indicated in Fee Schedule.*

Reviewed By: _____

Approved by Police Chief/Designee: _____

Section IV Public Works Department-Special Event Requirements

As part of the Special Event review process the Public Works Department may impose fees for services as deemed appropriate for the type and impact of the proposed event.

Public Works services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Delivery, set-up and removal of traffic or parking control devices including portable message boards, barricades, signs, stakes, traffic cones and/or any other devices requested by the Town’s Police Department.
- Random event site inspections to insure the Applicant removes trash/litter or debris from the event site as needed. Event usage area final inspection of public properties to insure adequate cleaning at event’s end/closing and prior to release of security deposits, if applicable.
- Public Works staff time to clean, remove and dispose of any and all residual debris, trash or to repair damaged property incurred by the Applicant or Applicant’s agents on the event site public property.

Rates

<i>Regular Staff</i>	<i>\$35.00</i>
<i>Supervisor (if required)</i>	<i>\$45.00</i>

- ***THERE IS A THREE (3)-HOUR MINIMUM FOR ALL EXTRA-DUTY EMPLOYMENT.***
- ***IF MORE THAN THREE (3) STAFF MEMBERS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE EVENT, A SUPERVISOR IS REQUIRED.***
- ***ALL CANCELLATIONS OF PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES MUST BE MADE 48-HOURS IN ADVANCED OR A THREE (3)-HOUR, PER STAFF MEMBER CHARGE WILL BE FORFEITED. PLEASE CONTACT FDAVILA@JUNO-BEACH.FL.US AND SHALLOCK@JUNO-BEACH.FL.US.***

Office Use Only:

_____ Regular Staff @ \$35.00/hour: total of _____ hours = \$ _____
 _____ Supervisors @ \$45.00/hour: total of _____ hours = \$ _____

Payment Due Date: _____ Total Amount Due: \$ _____ Payment Received: Y / N

**** Payment shall be received no later than 14/45 days prior to event date, as indicated in Fee Schedule.***

Reviewed By: _____

Approved by Director of Public Works/Designee: _____

Section V Application Review

Director of Planning & Zoning Date

Police Chief Date

Public Works Director Date

Finance Director Date

Town Manager Date

Section VI Post Event Inspection and Security Deposit Status

Post event Comments, Issues List and recommended Security Deposit withheld:

*** Amount and Date Returned of the Security Deposit.**

Director of Planning & Zoning Date

Police Chief Date

Public Works Director Date

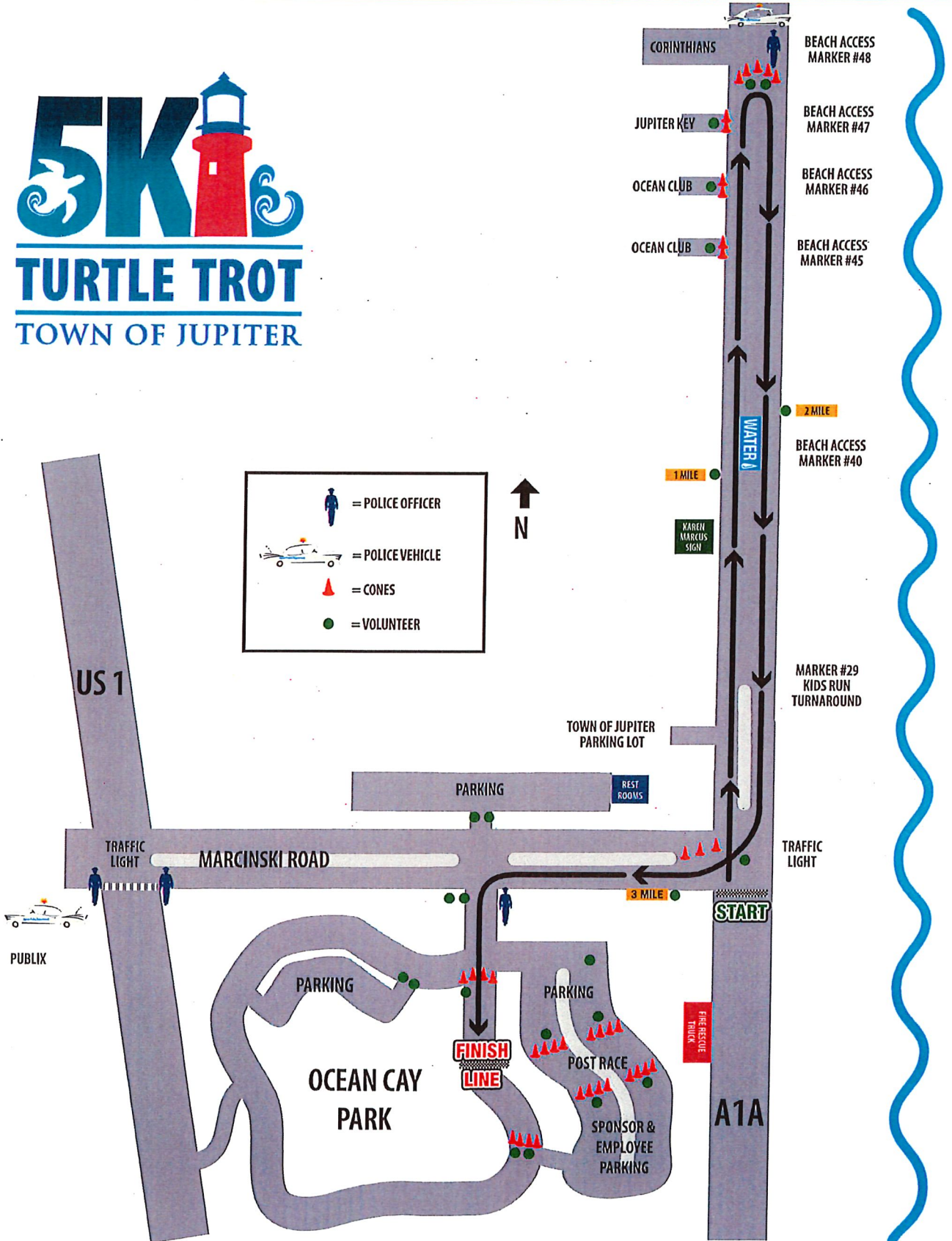
Finance Director Date

Town Manager Date



TOWN OF JUPITER

5K TURTLE TROT TOWN OF JUPITER





January 23, 2025

Michael Frabotta
200 Military Trail
Jupiter, FL 33458

SUBJECT: 33rd ANNUAL TURTLE TROT 5K RUN

Dear Mr. Frabotta

The Palm Beach County Traffic Engineering Division has reviewed your request to close S. A1A from south of Marcinski Road to south of Ocean Way on Saturday, May 3, 2025 from approximately 6:00 am to 10:30am.

It is our understanding that Jupiter Police Department will assume responsibility for traffic control and will coordinate with other emergency departments.

This permit is only valid with the presence of the Jupiter Police Department to oversee the traffic control.

If you have any further questions, please contact Graciela M' Causland at 684-4030.

Sincerely,

Graciela M' Causland
Chief Traffic Inspector
Traffic Division

GM:ep

Attachment: Special Event Application, Route Map,

ec: Motasem Al-Turk, Ph.D., P.E., Director – Traffic Division
Melissa Ackert, P.E., Assistant Director – Traffic Division
Hossam Eldeen Abdel All, P.E., Traffic Signal Systems Manager – Traffic Division
Lee Gao, P.E., Senior Professional Engineer – Traffic Division
Fattoush Jafar, Ph.D., P.E., Traffic Engineer Ops Manager – Traffic Division
Sean Reilly, Chief Traffic Inspector – Traffic Division
Shoshoni Deeley, Office Manager – Traffic Division
Adam Faustini, Director – Road & Bridge
Thomas A. Coppini, Public Works Superintendent – Road & Bridge
Chase Miller, Construction Project Manager – Road & Bridge
Zachary King, Chief Construction Coordinator – Construction Coordination
Albert W. Hoffman, Division Director III – Construction Coordination
William Tanto, Chief Construction Coordinator – Construction Coordination
Kathleen Farrell, Division Director III – Roadway Production
Kristine Frazell-Smith, Senior Professional Engineer – Roadway Production
Lisa De La Rionda, Director – Department of Public Affairs
Heather C. Shirm, Manager Digital Marketing and Communications – Public Affairs
Javier H. Lopez, Digital Marketing Coordinator – Public Affairs
Kara Dery, Supervisor Special Facilities – Parks & Recreation Division
Yash Nagal, Director of Transit Planning – Palm Tran
Captain Marc Bujnowski – Jupiter Police Department – 1104@jupiter.fl.us Jose M. Gonzalez – PBC Fire Rescue - FIRE-FOO@pbcgov.org and JMgonzal@pbcgov.org

File: General - Special Events
Roads –

N:\TRAFFIC\SPECIAL EVENTS\2025 Special events approved\Turtle Trot 5k\Special Event Form Letter-Graciela M'Causland (north of Southern Blvd).docx

**Engineering and
Public Works Department**
P.O. Box 21229
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-1229
(561) 684-4000
FAX: (561) 684-4050
www.pbc.gov



**Palm Beach County
Board of County
Commissioners**

María G. Marino, Mayor

Sara Baxter, Vice Mayor

Gregg K. Weiss

Joel Flores

Marci Woodward

Maria Sachs

Bobby Powell, Jr.

County Administrator

Verdenia C. Baker

"An Equal Opportunity
Affirmative Action Employer"

CERTIFICATE OF COVERAGE

ISSUED ON: 01/28/2025

COVERAGE PROVIDED BY: **PREFERRED GOVERNMENTAL INSURANCE TRUST**

PACKAGE AGREEMENT NUMBER: PK FL1 0502011 24-22

COVERAGE PERIOD: 10/01/2024 TO 10/01/2025 12:01 AM

COVERAGES: This is to certify that the agreement below has been issued to the designated member for the coverage period indicated. Notwithstanding any requirement, term or condition of any contract or other document with respect to which this certificate may be issued or may pertain, the coverage afforded by the agreement described herein subject to all the terms, exclusions and conditions of such agreement.

Mail to: Certificate Holder
Town of Juno Beach
340 Ocean Drive
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Designated Member
Town of Jupiter
210 Military Trail
Jupiter, FL 334585784

LIABILITY COVERAGE

- X **Comprehensive General Liability, Bodily Injury, Property Damage and Personal Injury:**
Limit \$2,000,000 \$25,000 Deductible
- X **Employee Benefits Liability**
Limit \$2,000,000 \$25,000 Deductible
- X **Employment Practices Liability**
Limit \$1,000,000 \$50,000 Deductible
- X **Public Officials Liability**
Limit \$1,000,000 \$50,000 Deductible
- X **Law Enforcement Liability**
Limit \$1,000,000 \$25,000 Deductible

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE

- WC AGREEMENT NUMBER:
- Self Insured Workers' Compensation
 - Statutory Workers' Compensation
 - Employers Liability
 - \$ Each Accident
 - \$ By Disease
 - \$ Aggregate Disease

PROPERTY COVERAGE

- X **Buildings & Personal Property**
Limit: Per schedule on file with Trust \$25,000 Deductible
Note: See coverage agreement for wind, flood, and other deductibles.
- X **Rented, Borrowed and Leased Equipment**
Limit: \$ 250,000 TIV See Schedule for Deductible
- X **Total All other Inland Marine**
Limit: \$ 3,848,845 TIV See Schedule for Deductible

AUTOMOBILE COVERAGE

- X **Automobile Liability**
Limit \$1,000,000 \$25,000 Deductible
 - X All Owned
 - Specifically Described Autos
 - X Hired Autos
 - X Non-Owned Autos
- X **Automobile Physical Damage**
 - X Comprehensive See Schedule for Deductible
 - X Collision See Schedule for Deductible
 - X Hired Auto with limit of \$35,000
- Garage Keepers
 - Liability Limit
 - Liability Deductible
 - Comprehensive Deductible
 - Collision Deductible

CRIME COVERAGE

- X **Employee Dishonesty**
Limit \$250,000 \$1,000 Deductible
- X **Forgery or Alteration**
Limit \$250,000 \$1,000 Deductible
- X **Theft Disappearance & Destruction**
Limit \$250,000 \$1,000 Deductible
- X **Computer Fraud**
Limit \$250,000 \$1,000 Deductible

NOTE: Additional Covered Party status is excluded for non-governmental entities. The most we will pay is further limited by the limitations set forth in Section 768.28(5), Florida Statutes (2010) or the equivalent limitations of successor law which are applicable at the time of loss.

Description of Operations/ Locations/ Vehicles/Special items-*(This section completed by member's agent, who bears complete responsibility and liability for its accuracy):*
Certificate Holder included as an Additional Covered Party with respect to the Turtle Trot at Ocean Cay Park, held on May 3rd, 2025 from 6am to 10am.

This certificate is issued as a matter of information only and confers no rights upon the certificate holder. This certificate does not amend, extend or alter the coverage afforded by the agreement above.

Administrator
Public Risk Underwriters®
P.O. Box 958455
Lake Mary, FL 32795-8455

CANCELLATIONS
SHOULD ANY OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED AGREEMENT BE CANCELLED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION DATE THEREOF, NOTICE WILL BE DELIVERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COVERAGE AGREEMENT PROVISIONS.

Producer
Risk Management Associates, Inc.

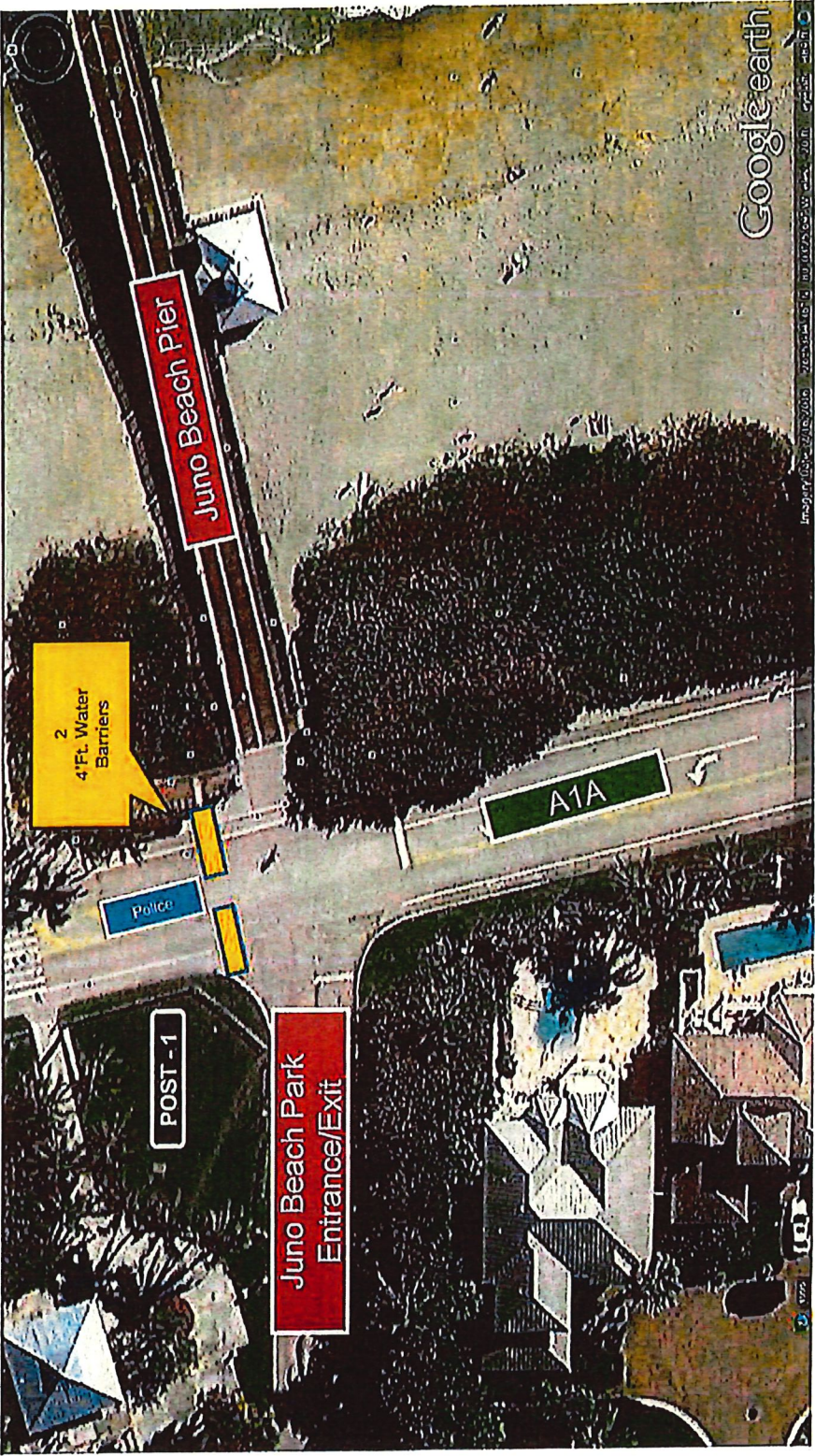
300 North Beach Street,

Daytona Beach, FL 32114



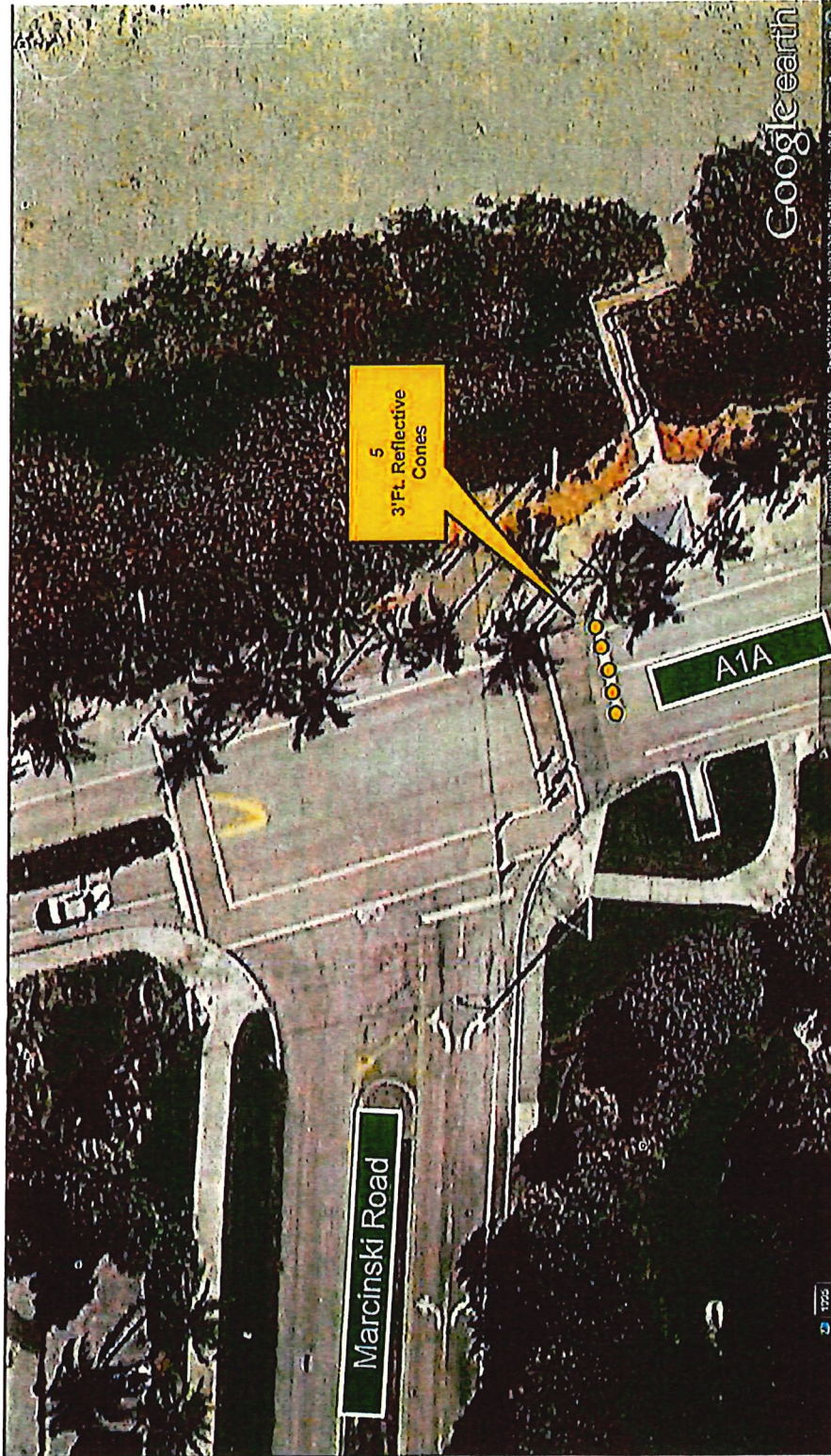
AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

Diagram #1 – Juno Beach Park & A1A
Juno Beach Police Department (Post #1)



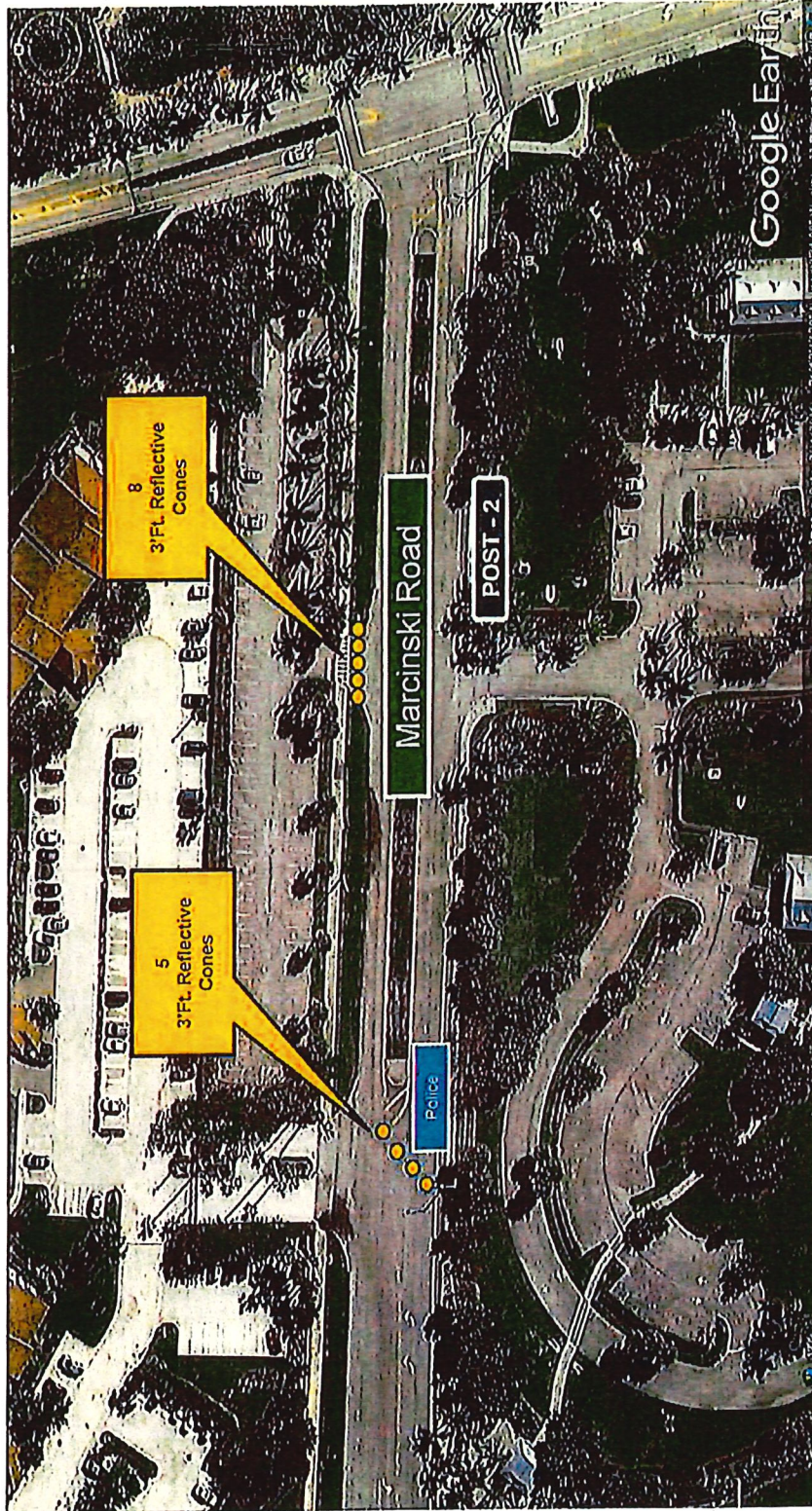
- 2 – 4FT. Water Barriers – Juno Beach Police Department
- 1 – Marked Police Vehicle
- 1 – Uniformed Police Officer (Juno Beach Police Officer)

Diagram #2 – Marcinski Road & A1A
Jupiter Police Department



5 – 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones
(1 Week Prior – VMB south of Marcinski Road on A1A for northbound traffic)

Diagram #3 – Marcinski Road
Jupiter Police Department (Post #2)



- 13 – 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones (At two (2) noted locations)
 - 1 – Marked Police Vehicle
 - 2 – Uniformed Police Officers
- (1 Week Prior – VMB east of US Highway 1 on Marcinski Road for eastbound traffic)

Diagram #4 – Ocean Cay Park
Jupiter Police Department

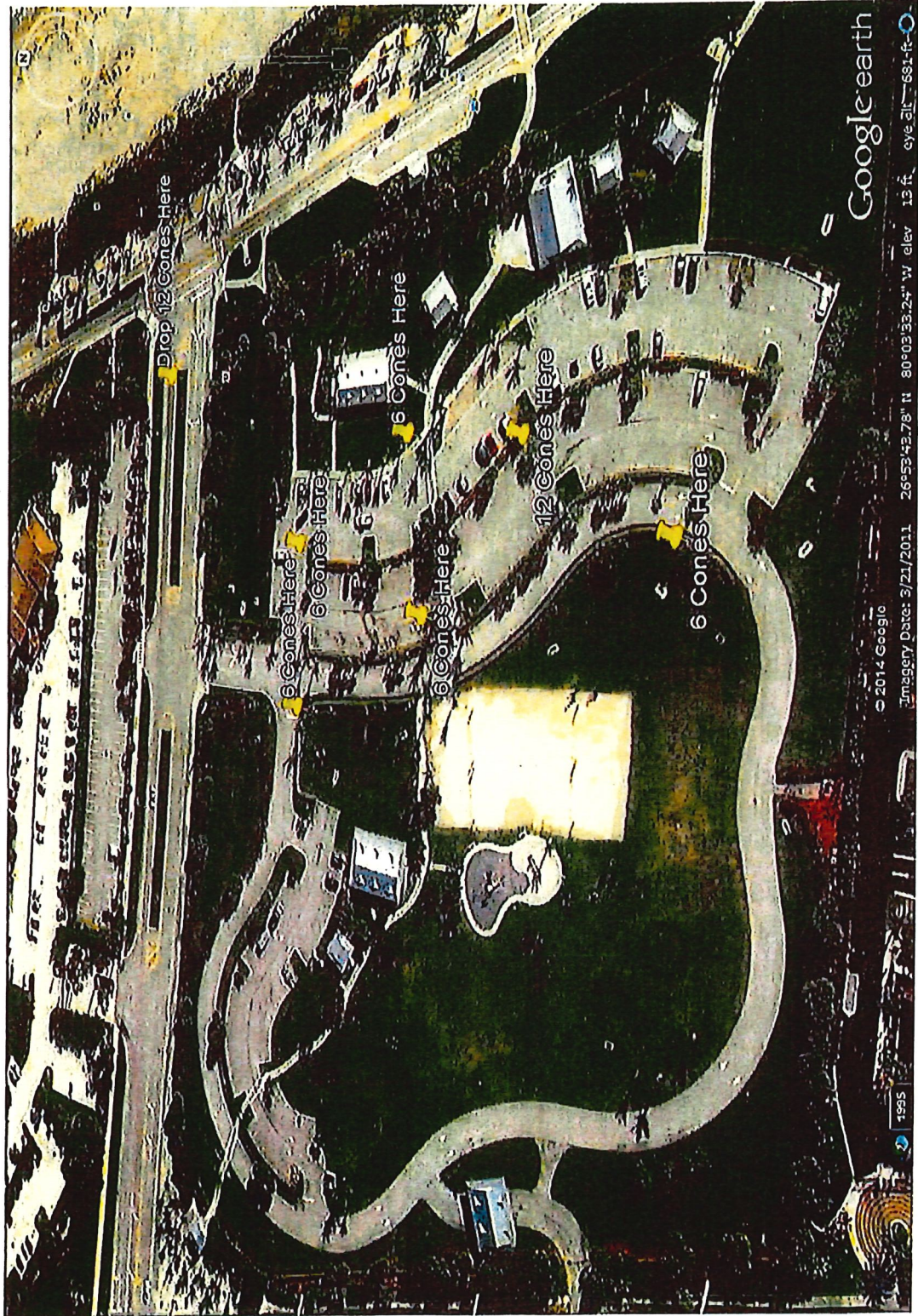
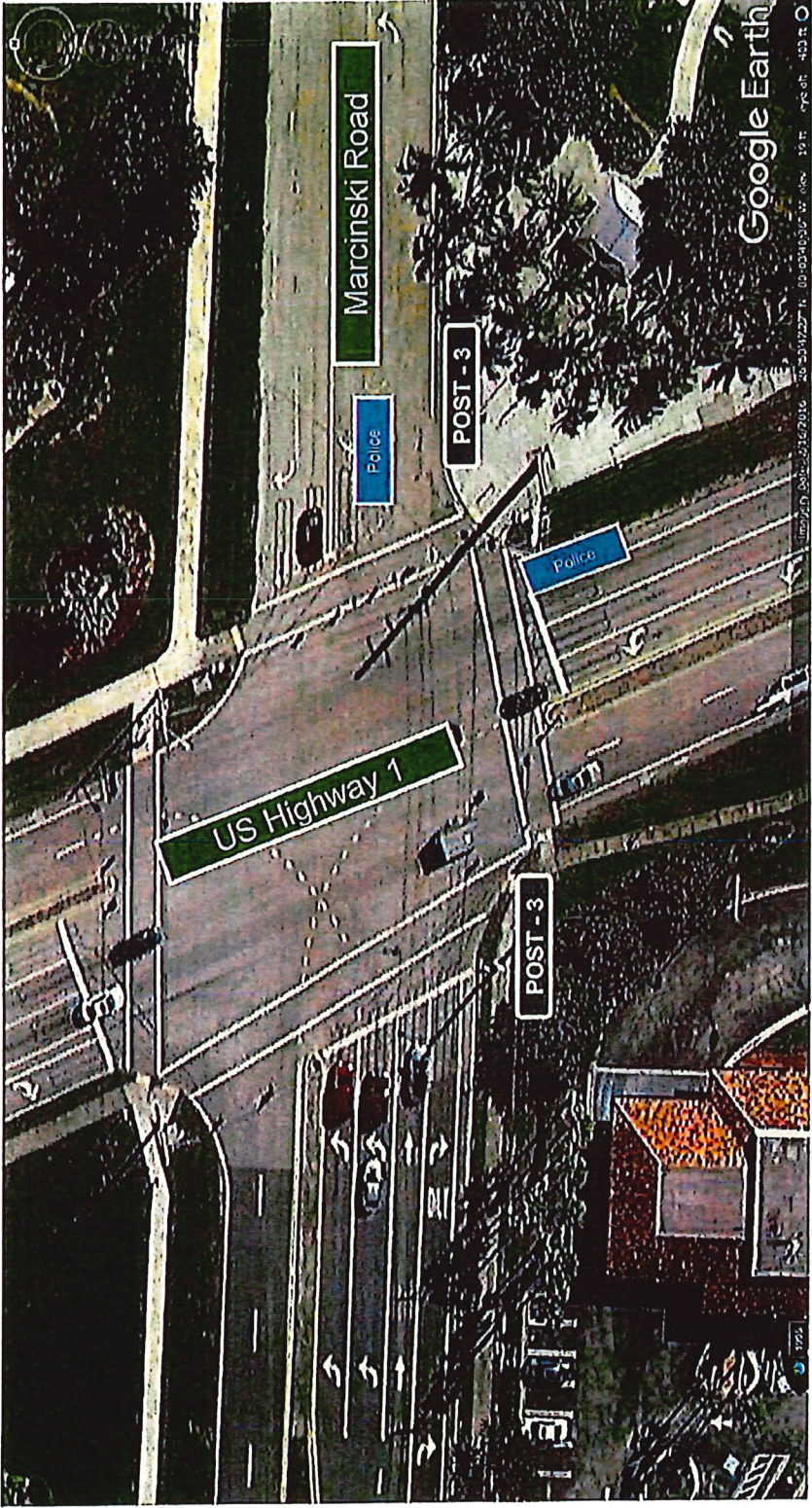
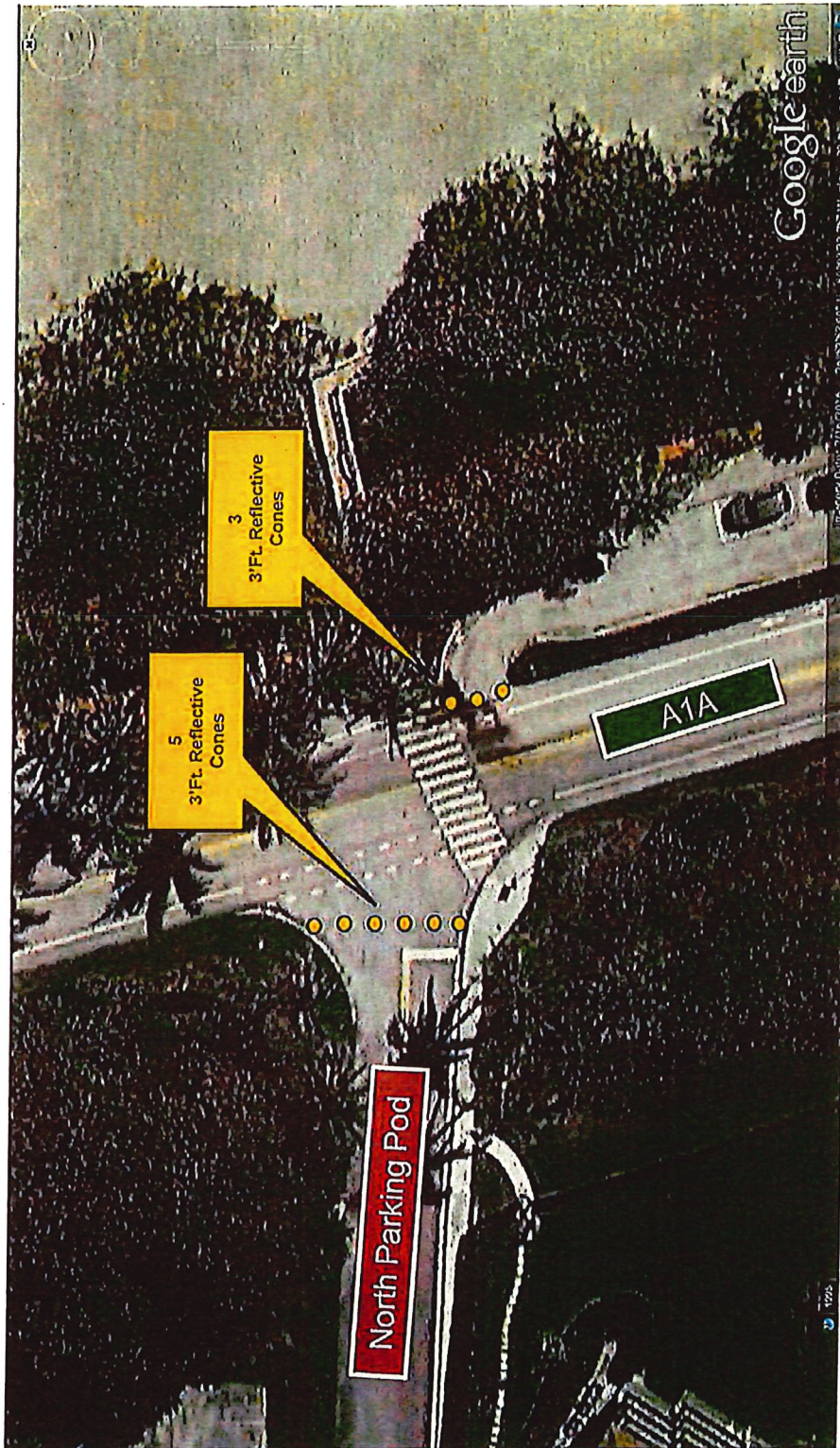


Diagram #5 – Intersection of US Highway 1 and Marcinski Road
Jupiter Police Department (Post #3 – 2 Police Officers)



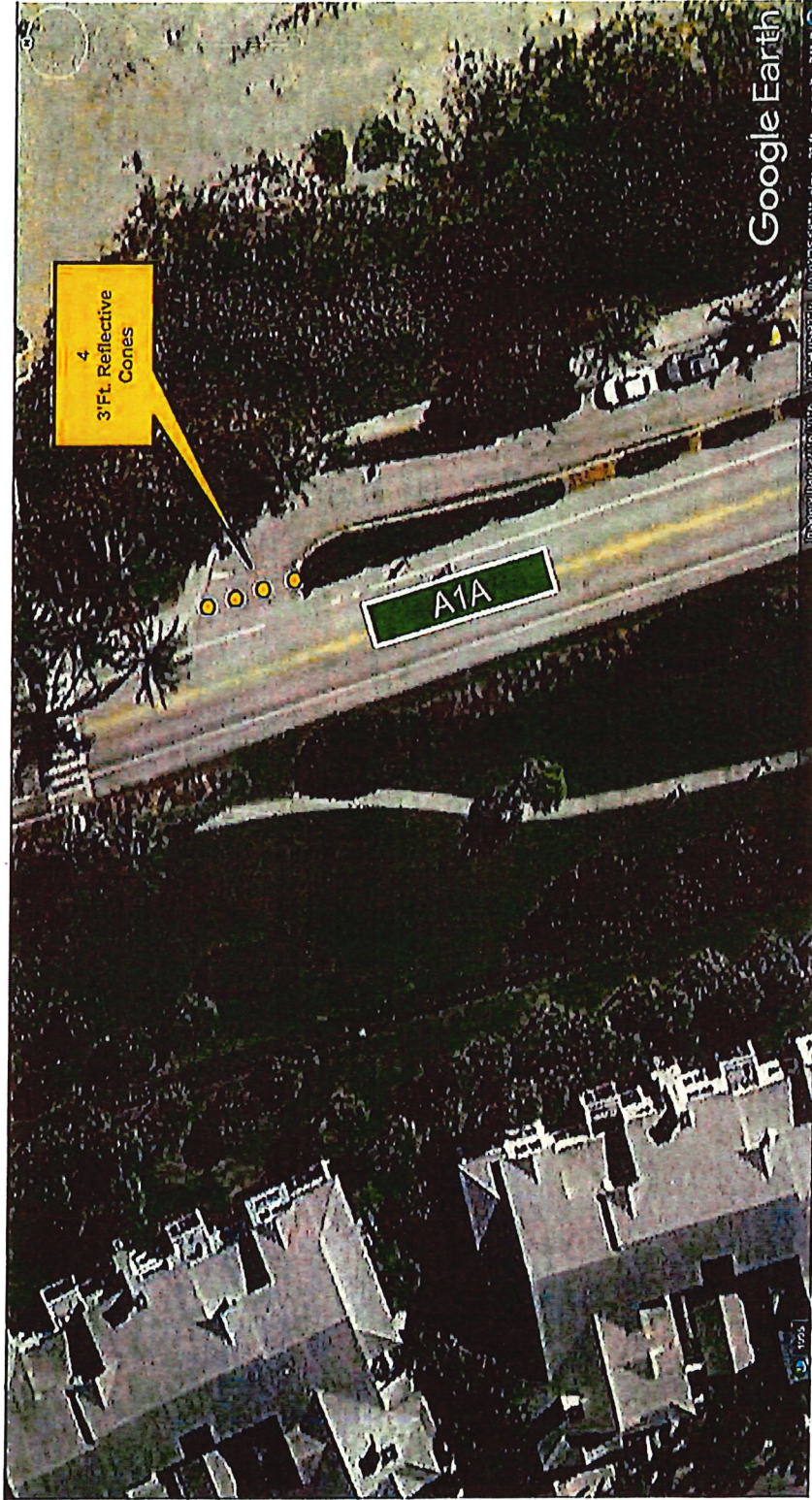
- 2 – Marked Police Vehicles
- 2 – Uniformed Police Officers

Diagram #6 – North Parking Pod & A1A
Jupiter Police Department



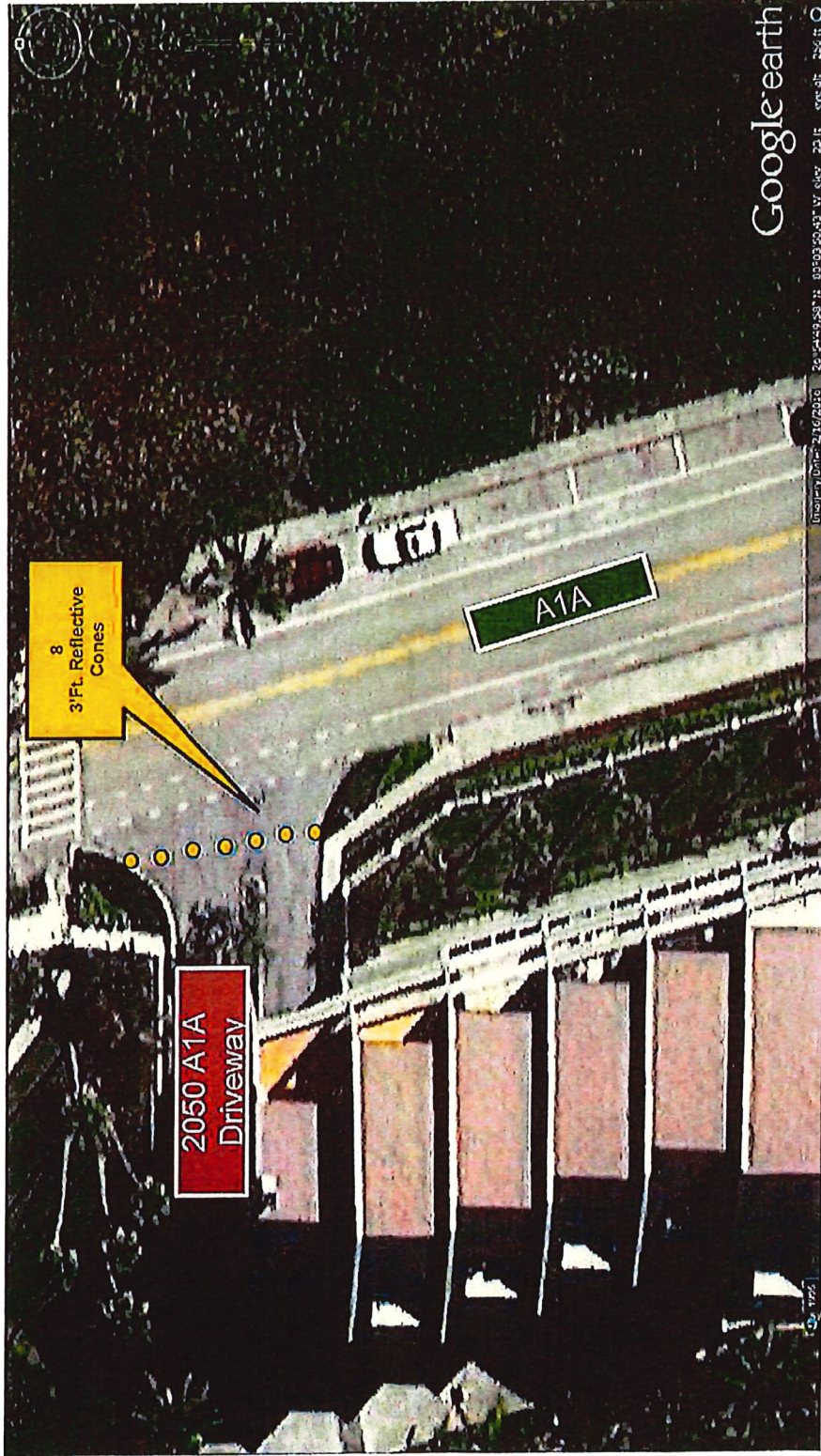
8 – 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones (At two (2) noted locations)

Diagram #7 – North End of Double Roads & A1A
Jupiter Police Department



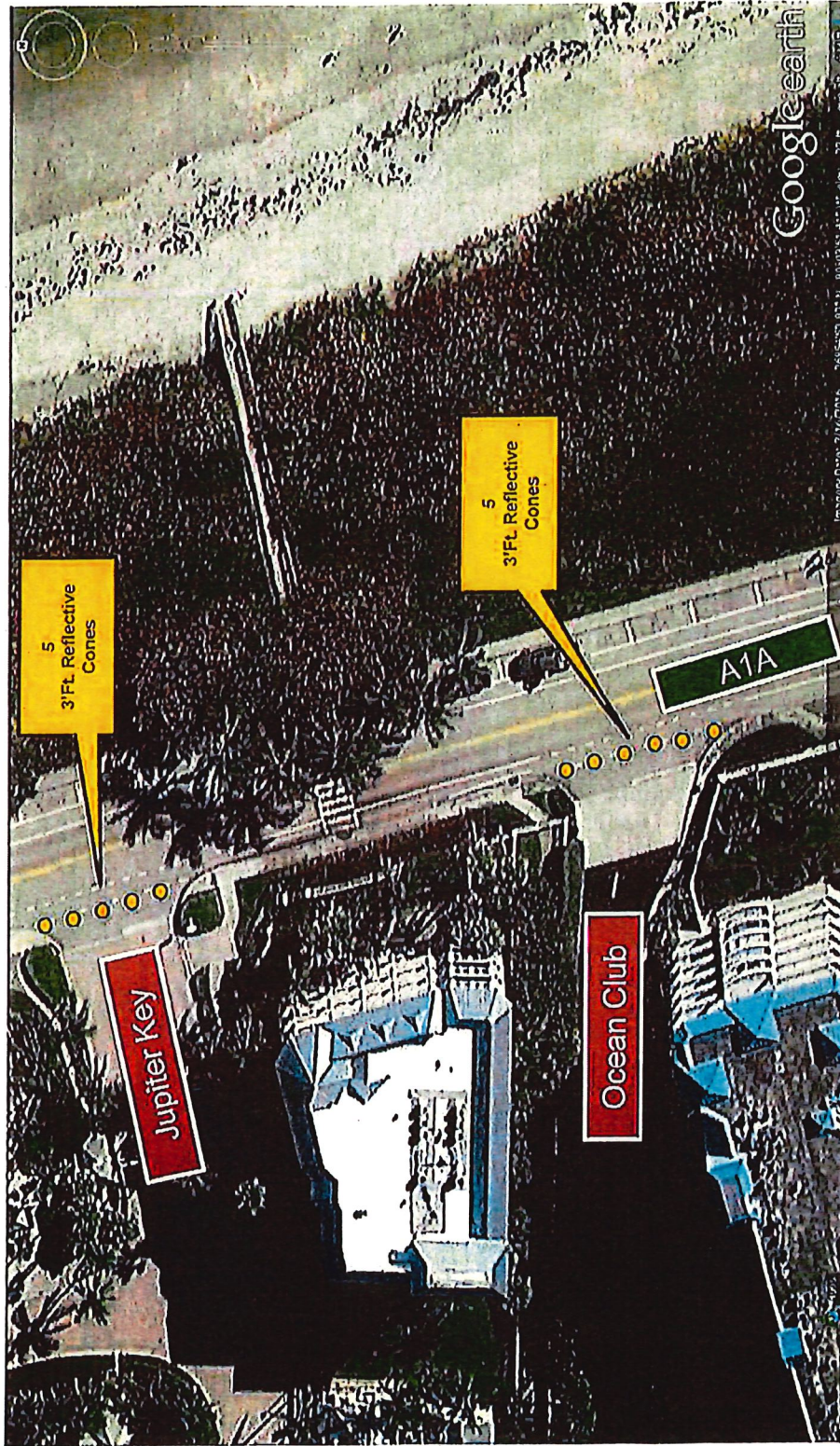
4 – 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones

Diagram #8 – 2050 Driveway & A1A
Jupiter Police Department



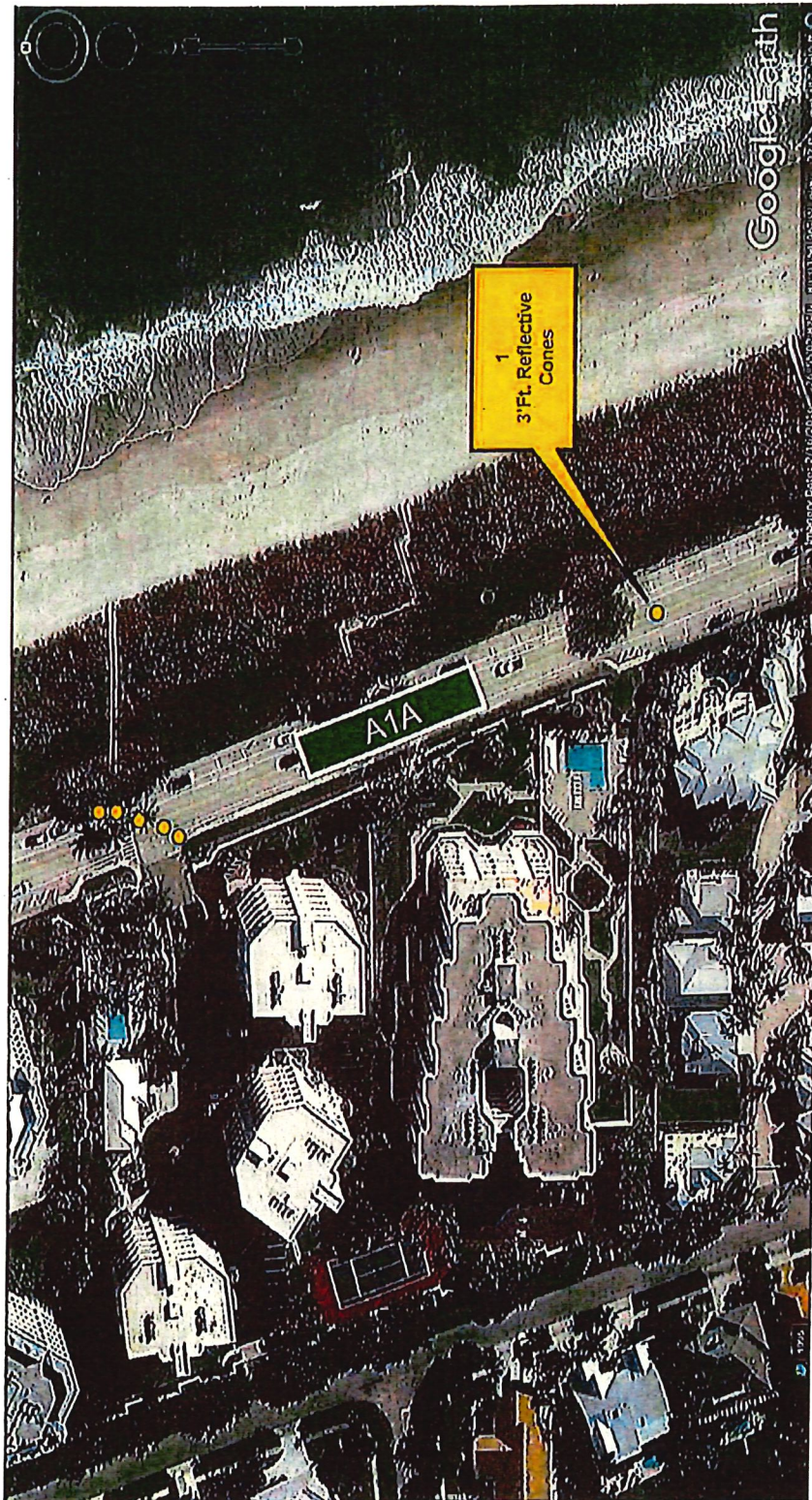
8 – 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones

Diagram #9 – Jupiter Key & Ocean Club Entrance/Exit
Jupiter Police Department



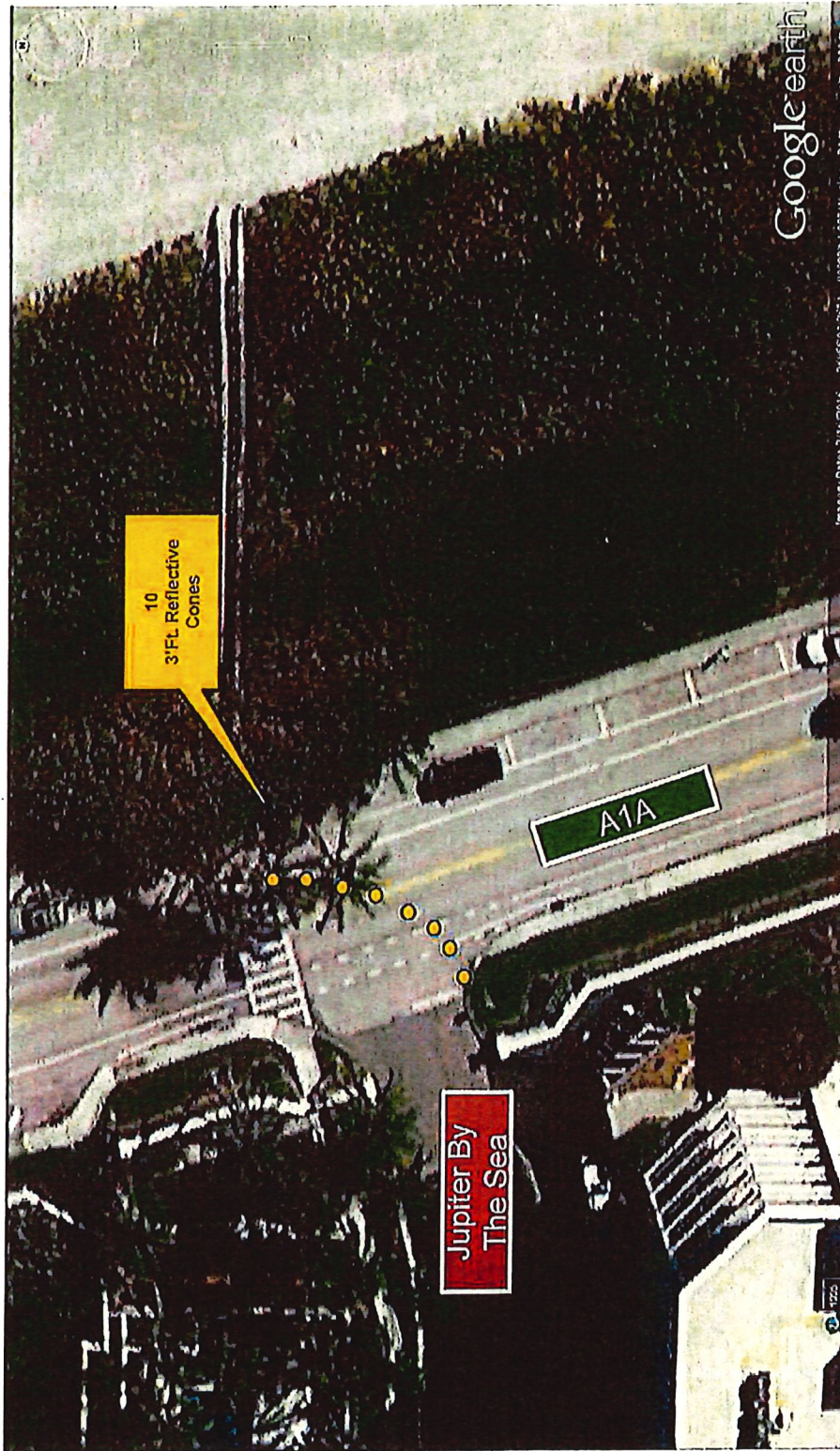
10 – 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones (At two (2) noted locations)

Diagram #10 – Runners Turnaround
Jupiter Police Department



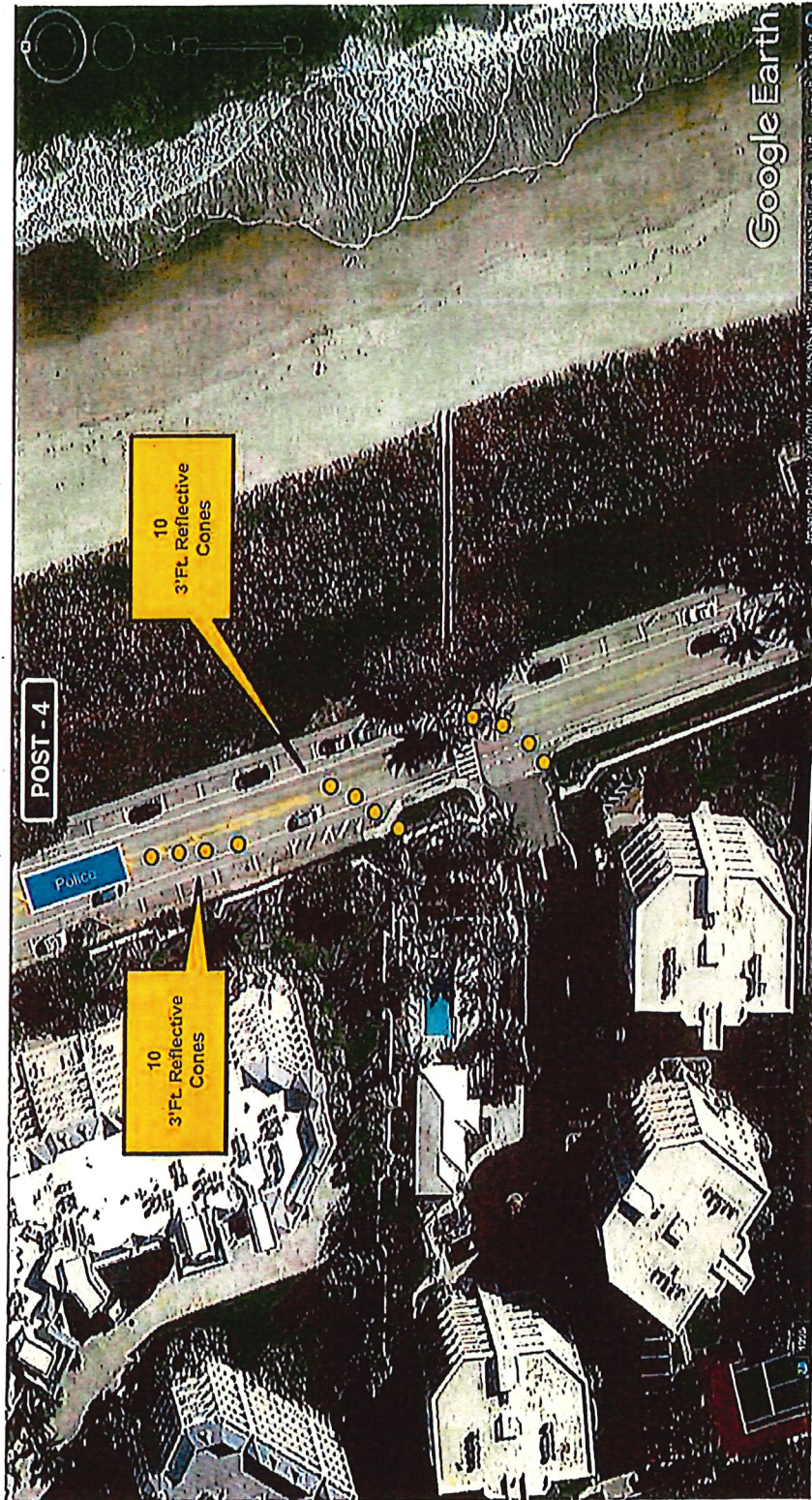
1 – 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones

Diagram #11- Jupiter By The Sea
Jupiter Police Department



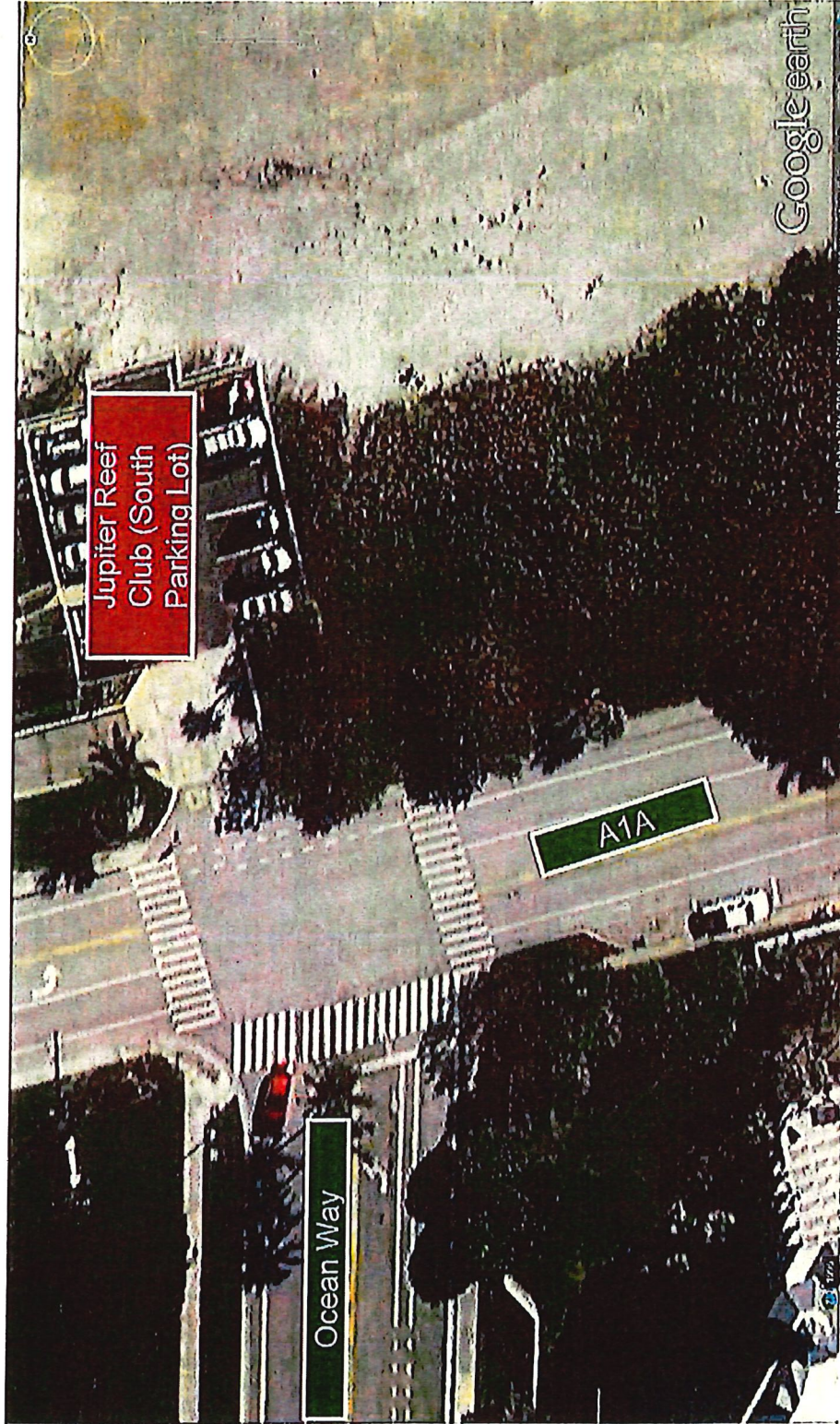
10 - 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones

Diagram #12— Direct All Traffic Northbound
Jupiter Police Department (Post #4)



- 20 – 3FT. Orange Reflective DOT Traffic Cones (At two (2) noted locations)
- 1 – Marked Police Vehicle
- 1 – Uniformed Police Officer

Diagram #13 – Ocean Way & A1A
Jupiter Police Department



1 Week Prior – VMB south of Ocean Way on A1A for southbound traffic



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: F. Davila, CFM, Interim Town Manager
Item Title: Resolution No. 2025-03 - Interlocal Agreement with Palm Beach County to Re-Adopt the 6-Cent Local Option Fuel Tax

DISCUSSION:

The 6-cent-per-gallon Local Option Gasoline Tax (LOGT) is set to expire in August 2025. Revenue from this tax is distributed as follows: 66.6% to Palm Beach County and 33.3% to the municipalities. To extend the LOGT, municipalities representing a majority of the incorporated population in the County must enter an Interlocal Agreement with Palm Beach County.

The Town receives approximately \$41,000 annually from this tax. Specifically, for the last three fiscal years, the Town received the following amounts: FY22 \$39,984.17; FY23 \$42,555.88; and FY24 \$40,195.49 These funds are restricted and may only be used for road projects, maintenance, and rights-of-way improvements.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Town Council approve the Interlocal Agreement with Palm Beach County to Redetermine, Re-Adopt and Ratify Existing Distribution Formula for Six (6)-Cent Local Option Fuel Tax.

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT TO REDETERMINE, RE-ADOPT AND RATIFY EXISTING DISTRIBUTION FORMULA FOR SIX (6) CENT LOCAL OPTION FUEL TAX

THIS INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT is dated, made, and entered into on this 26th day of February, 2025, by and between Palm Beach County, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, hereinafter referred to as the COUNTY, and Town of Juno Beach, a municipal corporation located in Palm Beach County, Florida, and organized and existing in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida, hereinafter referred to as the MUNICIPALITY.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Section 336.025(1)(a), *Florida Statutes* (STATUTE) authorizes a one (1), two (2), three (3), four (4), five (5), and/or six (6) cent local option fuel tax to be levied upon the sale of every gallon of motor fuel and special fuel within the COUNTY; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the STATUTE, in 1995, the COUNTY re-levied the six (6) cent local option fuel tax (TAX) for a 30-year term, as provided in County Code Chapter 17, Article I, Section 17-3 (1995 ORDINANCE). Pursuant to the STATUTE and prior to enacting the 1995 ORDINANCE, the COUNTY established by interlocal agreement with various municipalities representing a majority of the population of the incorporated area within the COUNTY, the distribution formula for dividing the entire proceeds of the TAX among the COUNTY and all eligible municipalities within the COUNTY (collectively, 1995 INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT); and

WHEREAS, the 1995 ORDINANCE and the 1995 INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT will, by their own terms and in accordance with the STATUTE, terminate on August 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the COUNTY desires to once again re-levy and re-impose the TAX for a new 30 year term pursuant to the STATUTE, and enter into this Interlocal Agreement to redetermine the distribution formula for dividing the entire proceeds of the TAX among the COUNTY and all eligible municipalities within the COUNTY; and

WHEREAS, representatives of the COUNTY and the various municipalities, utilizing the Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc., (LEAGUE) have met and negotiated mutually acceptable terms and conditions for this Interlocal Agreement, which terms are set forth herein; and

WHEREAS, once effective, this Interlocal Agreement re-adopts and ratifies the distribution

formula currently in effect for dividing the entire proceeds of the TAX among the COUNTY and all eligible municipalities within the COUNTY.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and the mutual covenants herein contained and for such other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which the parties hereby expressly acknowledge, the COUNTY and the MUNICIPALITY hereto covenant and agree to enter into this Interlocal Agreement as follows:

Section 1: This Interlocal Agreement is entered into with the specific contemplation that the Board of County Commissioners of Palm Beach County (BCC) will enact an appropriate ordinance to relevel the TAX to be effective September 1, 2025 (2025 ORDINANCE). In the event the BCC fails or refuses to enact the 2025 ORDINANCE to relevel the TAX, this Interlocal Agreement shall be null and void.

Section 2: The term of this Interlocal Agreement shall be for the same duration as the 2025 ORDINANCE relieving the TAX. Upon the expiration of the levy of the TAX, as provided in the 2025 ORDINANCE, this Interlocal Agreement shall terminate; except that if the BCC reimposes the TAX again as provided in the STATUTE, then this Interlocal Agreement may be renewed as provided for in the STATUTE.

Section 3:

A. All proceeds of the TAX collected pursuant to Section 336.025(1)(a), *Florida Statutes* shall be divided between the COUNTY and the municipalities, as follows (DISTRIBUTION FORMULA):

1. The COUNTY shall receive 66.5648 percent of the TAX collected.
2. The municipalities collectively shall receive 33.4352 percent of the TAX collected (TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE).

B. All money shall be collected and distributed to the respective parties as provided in Section 336.025(2), *Florida Statutes*.

C. The MUNICIPALITY (and all other municipalities eligible to participate in the distribution of the proceeds of the TAX) shall receive a pro rata share of the TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE pursuant to a formula (MUNICIPAL SHARE FORMULA) that is based seventy percent (70%) on lane miles located within the MUNICIPALITY (and for all other municipalities eligible to

participate in the distribution of the proceeds of the TAX) for which the MUNICIPALITY (or the other eligible municipalities) is responsible for maintenance, and thirty percent (30%) on the population of the MUNICIPALITY (or the other eligible municipalities) based upon the most recent University of Florida Population Estimate. The MUNICIPAL SHARE FORMULA is:

(30% x (Municipality's population/sum of all of Municipalities' population)) + (70% x (Municipality's lane miles/sum of all of Municipalities' lane miles)) = Municipality's Pro Rata Share.

Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference identifies each eligible municipality's pro rata share of the TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE. The calculation(s) of the MUNICIPAL SHARE FORMULA may be amended not more than once annually by the Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc., by the preparation of a new Exhibit A on behalf of the municipalities and based upon changes in the MUNICIPAL SHARE FORMULA and submitting the new Exhibit A to the COUNTY Administrator no later than June 1 of any year. The COUNTY Administrator shall then transmit the new Exhibit A to the Florida Department of Revenue.

D. In the event that a new municipality is incorporated in the COUNTY, the new municipality's share of the TAX shall be provided from the share formerly allocated to the COUNTY and the TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE, as set forth below.

1. In the first full fiscal year following incorporation, the new municipality will receive a share based solely on its population, as opposed to the MUNICIPAL SHARE FORMULA that considers lane miles and population, as set forth in Section 3C above. The new municipality's share shall be determined pursuant to **Exhibit B** attached hereto which shows an example of the calculations for a hypothetical new municipality with a population of 40,000.

a. The combined COUNTY and collective municipalities contributions shall equal one hundred percent (100%) of the new municipality's share.

b. Section 3C above shall continue to apply as the MUNICIPAL SHARE FORMULA for the remaining municipalities after their contribution to the new municipality's share as set forth in Section 3 D1 above.

2. In the subsequent fiscal years after the first full fiscal year following incorporation of the new municipality:

a. The percentage allocated to the COUNTY in the DISTRIBUTION FORMULA in Section 3A above, as may be amended, shall be reduced by an amount that reflects the COUNTY's contribution to the new municipality's share, as set forth in Section 3D1, above.

b. Likewise, the TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE, including the new municipality, in Section 3A above, as may be amended, shall be increased by an amount that reflects the COUNTY's contribution to the new municipality's share, as set forth in Section 3D1 above.

c. Section 3C below shall apply to the new municipality in all annual distributions in the years after the first full fiscal year following incorporation of the new municipality.

E. In the event an existing municipality in the COUNTY is dissolved, the former municipality's share of the TAX shall be distributed to the COUNTY and to the remaining collective municipalities by applying in reverse the process set forth in Section 3D, above.

F. In the event of proposed legislation which would either create or dissolve a municipality in the COUNTY, the COUNTY and the subject municipality agree that the COUNTY Legislative Delegation and the Florida Legislature (and Governor, if deemed necessary) be made aware of this Interlocal Agreement and appropriately incorporate its provisions into such proposed legislation. The subject municipality may accomplish this by supporting the LEAGUE, as the organization that is in place to convey municipal consensus on legislative matters.

Section 4: This Interlocal Agreement between the COUNTY and the MUNICIPALITY is one of several identical interlocal agreements between the COUNTY and other municipalities providing the same terms for the distribution of the proceeds of the TAX. As such, this Interlocal Agreement along with all other identical interlocal agreements may be executed in multiple counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which combined shall constitute one in the same Interlocal Agreement for purposes of Section 336.025 *Florida Statutes*. The Interlocal Agreement between the COUNTY and the MUNICIPALITY, along with the identical interlocal agreements executed by other municipalities in the COUNTY represent a majority of the incorporated population of the COUNTY.

Section 5: The COUNTY and the MUNICIPALITY agree to meet every two (2) years to

evaluate the method of distribution of the TAX revenues as required by Section 336.025(1)(d), *Florida Statutes*. The MUNICIPALITY and all other municipalities that have executed an identical interlocal agreement shall be collectively represented at said meeting by the Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc. The COUNTY shall be represented at said meeting by representatives selected by the COUNTY Administrator's Office. The MUNICIPALITY or the COUNTY may call for said meeting by providing thirty (30) days' notice to the other as set forth in Section 12 below.

Section 6: Nothing in this Interlocal Agreement shall preclude either the COUNTY or the MUNICIPALITY from litigating against the other on matters completely unrelated to and not contemplated by this Interlocal Agreement.

Section 7: This Interlocal Agreement shall take effect only upon execution by both the COUNTY, and the MUNICIPALITY along with those other municipalities representing a majority of the population of the incorporated areas of the COUNTY. In the event that either the COUNTY fails or refuses to execute this Interlocal Agreement, or fails or refuses to adopt the 2025 ORDINANCE, as more fully described in Section 1 above, or in the event that those municipalities representing a majority of the population of the incorporated areas of the COUNTY fail to execute this Interlocal Agreement, then this Interlocal Agreement shall be null and void and the parties hereto shall have no further rights or responsibilities hereunder.

Section 8: The invalidity of any portion, article, paragraph, provision, clause or any part thereof of this Interlocal Agreement shall have no effect upon the validity of any other part of this Interlocal Agreement.

Section 9: To the extent allowed by law, the venue for any action arising from this Interlocal Agreement shall be in Palm Beach County, Florida.

Section 10: This Interlocal Agreement shall be governed by and in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida.

Section 11: Any costs or expenses including reasonable attorney's fees associated with the enforcement of the terms or conditions of this Interlocal Agreement shall be borne by the respective parties.

Section 12: Any notice required under the provisions of this Interlocal Agreement shall be in writing and shall be delivered by hand or by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, to:
For the COUNTY:

Palm Beach County

Board of County Commissioners
 301 North Olive Avenue
 West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

With a copy to:

Palm Beach County
 County Attorney
 301 North Olive Avenue
 West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

For the MUNICIPALITY:

Town of Juno Beach
 340 Ocean Drive
 Juno Beach, FL 33408
 Attention: Town Clerk

With a copy to:

Torcivia, Donlon, Goddeau, & Rubin, P.A.
 Northpoint Corporate Center
 701 Northpoint Parkway, Suite 209
 West Palm Beach, FL 33407
 Attention: Leonard G. Rubin, Esq.

The LEAGUE, upon receipt of any notice proved for herein, shall provide like notice to each municipality that is a party to this Interlocal Agreement and all other identical interlocal agreements.

Notice by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, shall be deemed effective on the date that such notice is deposited with a United States Post Office.

Section 13: The COUNTY and the MUNICIPALITY expressly agree that time is of the essence in this Interlocal Agreement and the failure by a party to complete performance within the time specified, or within a reasonable time if no time is specified herein, shall, at the option of the other party without liability, in addition to any other rights or remedies, relieve the other party of any obligation to accept such performance.

Section 14: The parties hereto expressly covenant and agree that in the event either party is in default of its obligations herein, the party not in default shall provide to the party in default thirty (30) days written notice to cure said default before exercising any of its rights as provided for in this Interlocal Agreement or as may otherwise exist in law or equity.

Section 15: The Inspector General of Palm Beach County has the authority to investigate and

audit matters relating to the negotiation and performance of this Interlocal Agreement, and in furtherance thereof may demand and obtain records and testimony from the parties and, any, if applicable, subcontractors and lower tier subcontractors. The parties understand and agree that in addition to all other remedies and consequences provided by law, failure of a party or, if applicable, subcontractors and lower tier subcontractors to fully cooperate with the Inspector General when requested will be deemed to be a breach of this Interlocal Agreement. Failure to cooperate with the Inspector General, or interfering with or impeding any investigation shall be in violation of Palm Beach County Code, Section 2-421- 2-440, and may be punished pursuant to Section 125.69, *Florida Statutes*, in the same manner as a second degree misdemeanor.

Section 16: In accordance with Sec. 119.0701, *Florida Statutes*, the parties to this Interlocal Agreement must keep and maintain this Interlocal Agreement and any other records associated therewith. Upon request by either party's custodian of public records, the non-requesting party must provide the requesting party with copies of requested records, or allow such records to be inspected or copied, within a reasonable time in accordance with access and cost requirements of Chapter 119, *Florida Statutes*. Failure to do so may subject the non-requesting party to attorney's fees and costs pursuant to Sec. 119.0701, *Florida Statutes*, and other penalties pursuant to Sec. 119.10, *Florida Statutes*. Further, the parties shall ensure that any exempt or confidential records associated with this Interlocal Agreement are not disclosed except as authorized by law for the duration of the Interlocal Agreement term.

IF EITHER PARTY HAS QUESTIONS REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF CHAPTER 119, *FLORIDA STATUTES*, TO ITS DUTY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC RECORDS RELATING TO THIS INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT, PLEASE CONTACT THE RECORDS CUSTODIAN FOR THE OTHER PARTY IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 13 ABOVE.

Section 17: The parties agree that this Interlocal Agreement sets forth the entire agreement between the parties, and there are no promises or understandings other than those stated herein. None of the provisions, terms, or conditions contained in this Interlocal Agreement may be added to, modified, superseded, or otherwise altered except by written instrument executed by the COUNTY, the MUNICIPALITY, along with those other municipalities representing a majority of the population of the incorporated areas of the COUNTY.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hands and seals in the day set forth above.

ATTEST:

(NAME OF MUNICIPALITY)

By: _____
Municipal Clerk

By: _____
Mayor

(SEAL)

ATTEST:

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA BY
ITS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

By: _____
County Clerk

By: _____
Mayor

(SEAL)

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL
SUFFICIENCY

APPROVED AS TO TERMS AND
CONDITIONS

By: _____
County Attorney

By: _____
County Engineer

Exhibit A
APPLICATION OF MUNICIPAL SHARE FORMULA
33.4352% (TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE)
6 Cent Gas Tax

City	Street Lane Miles	Alley Lane Miles	Total Municipal Lane Miles	Percent of Municipal Lane Miles	2023 BEBR Population	Percent of Municipal Population	Weighted Distribution of 70% Lane Miles and 30% Population (MUNICIPAL SHARE FORMULA)	Pro Rata Share of TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE
				Value "A"		Value "B"		
Atlantis	26.800	0.000	26.800	0.699%	2,147	0.249%	0.56395%	0.18856%
Belle Glade	106.999	0.000	106.999	2.790%	17,286	2.006%	2.55498%	0.85426%
Boca Raton	480.522	0.000	480.522	12.530%	100,491	11.664%	12.27022%	4.10257%
Boynton Beach	244.312	2.142	246.454	6.427%	82,208	9.542%	7.36110%	2.46120%
Briny Breezes	0.528	0.000	0.528	0.014%	500	0.058%	0.02705%	0.00904%
Cloud Lake	1.599	0.000	1.599	0.042%	140	0.016%	0.03406%	0.01139%
Delray Beach	298.454	14.251	312.705	8.154%	67,213	7.801%	8.04826%	2.69095%
Glen Ridge	3.496	0.000	3.496	0.091%	215	0.025%	0.07130%	0.02384%
Golf	10.555	0.000	10.555	0.275%	281	0.033%	0.20245%	0.06769%
Greenacres	49.264	0.000	49.264	1.285%	45,476	5.278%	2.48272%	0.83010%
Gulf Stream	8.882	0.000	8.882	0.232%	959	0.111%	0.19552%	0.06537%
Haverhill	14.447	0.000	14.447	0.377%	2,193	0.255%	0.34007%	0.11370%
Highland Beach	2.516	0.000	2.516	0.066%	4,303	0.499%	0.19576%	0.06545%
Hypoluxo	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000%	2,687	0.312%	0.09356%	0.03128%
Juno Beach	10.166	0.157	10.323	0.269%	3,883	0.451%	0.32364%	0.10821%
Jupiter	308.473	2.155	310.628	8.100%	61,333	7.119%	7.80560%	2.60982%
Jupiter Inlet Colony	5.455	0.000	5.455	0.142%	400	0.046%	0.11350%	0.03795%
Lake Clarke Shores	25.658	0.000	25.658	0.669%	3,556	0.413%	0.59216%	0.19799%
Lake Park	60.089	1.231	61.320	1.599%	9,025	1.048%	1.43354%	0.47931%
Lake Worth Beach	205.897	0.500	206.397	5.382%	43,432	5.041%	5.27973%	1.76529%
Lantana	63.141	4.052	67.193	1.752%	12,244	1.421%	1.65283%	0.55263%
Loxahatchee Groves	109.934	0.000	109.934	2.867%	3,373	0.391%	2.12410%	0.71020%
Manalapan	4.896	0.000	4.896	0.128%	420	0.049%	0.10399%	0.03477%
Mangonia Park	16.637	0.000	16.637	0.434%	2,369	0.275%	0.38617%	0.12912%
North Palm Beach	58.853	4.532	63.385	1.653%	13,145	1.526%	1.61470%	0.53988%
Ocean Ridge	13.260	0.000	13.260	0.346%	1,830	0.212%	0.30576%	0.10223%
Pahokee	43.880	0.249	44.129	1.151%	5,607	0.651%	1.00073%	0.33460%
Palm Beach	84.546	1.324	85.870	2.239%	9,207	1.069%	1.88800%	0.63125%
Palm Beach Gardens	151.491	4.628	156.119	4.071%	61,517	7.140%	4.99173%	1.66899%
Palm Beach Shores	9.833	0.000	9.833	0.256%	1,309	0.152%	0.22506%	0.07525%
Palm Springs	77.160	0.000	77.160	2.012%	27,167	3.153%	2.35439%	0.78719%
Riviera Beach	162.863	0.505	163.368	4.260%	38,795	4.503%	4.33285%	1.44870%
Royal Palm Beach	152.059	0.000	152.059	3.965%	40,299	4.677%	4.17880%	1.39719%
South Bay	25.240	0.000	25.240	0.658%	4,958	0.575%	0.63335%	0.21176%
South Palm Beach	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000%	1,469	0.171%	0.05115%	0.01710%
Tequesta	44.689	0.189	44.878	1.170%	6,179	0.717%	1.03432%	0.34583%
Wellington	382.394	0.000	382.394	9.971%	61,788	7.172%	9.13141%	3.05310%
West Palm Beach	503.170	30.870	534.040	13.926%	122,157	14.179%	14.00151%	4.68143%
TOTAL	3768.158	66.785	3834.943	100%	861,561	100%	100%	33.4352%

** Westlake is not eligible to receive local option gas tax revenue distributions; those totals are not included in this summary

Calculation Legend:
 Value "A" = Individual municipality's percentage of total municipal lane miles
 Value "B" = Individual municipality's percentage of total municipal population
 Value "C" = 70% of Value "A" + 30% of Value "B"
 Value "D" = Value "C" x 33.4352 Municipal Split

Example for a hypothetical new municipality with a population of 40,000

2024 Distribution Formula:

County Share	66.5648%
Municipalities' <u>TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE</u>	33.4352%

2024 Total Municipal Population = 861,561

New Municipality's 1st full fiscal year share is based solely on the percentage of its population:

$$40,000/861,561 = 4.643\%$$

New Municipality's Pro Rata Share of the TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE:

$$4.643\% \times 33.4352\% = 1.552\%$$

Calculation for the Change in the County Share:

$$1.552\% \times 66.5648\% = 1.0333\%$$

Resulting in the Updated County Share:

$$66.5648\% - 1.0333\% = \underline{65.5315\%}$$

And the Updated TOTAL MUNICIPAL SHARE:

$$33.4352\% + 1.0333\% = \underline{34.4685\%}$$



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: E. Alves, CPA, Finance/HR Director
Item Title: Year to Date (YTD) Financial Statements

DISCUSSION:

Please find attached the YTD financial reports for your review. Figures are unaudited and subject to additional reconciliations and adjustments.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an informational report to Town Council only and no action is required.

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH

BALANCE SHEET FOR 2025 4

FUND: 01 GENERAL FUND			NET CHANGE FOR PERIOD	ACCOUNT BALANCE
ASSETS				
01	10101	GENERAL FUND CHECKING	-20,068.94	-49,369.98
01	10102	PAYROLL CHECKING	4,658.48	12,421.77
01	10106	CREDIT CARD ACCOUNT	43,321.53	1,369,603.89
01	10201	PETTY CASH	.00	600.00
01	10202	PETTY CASH-PD	.00	250.00
01	10410	WELLS FARGO-MM SWEEP	-286,150.27	4,210,704.62
01	10412	MONEY MARKET	.00	2,726,063.66
01	10420	POOLED CASH-STATE BD OF A	.00	684,808.68
01	10421	FL PALM INVESTMENT	.00	3,207,970.54
01	10424	FMIT-0-2 HQ BOND FUND	.00	245,387.92
01	10425	FMIT-SHORT TERM BOND	.00	466,703.31
01	10426	FMIT-INTERMEDIATE TERM BD	.00	560,746.08
01	10435	CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT	.00	1,047,760.27
01	11510	ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	-656.70	-2,606.70
01	11590	AR-RETIREE INSURANCES	-2,488.11	-535.57
01	13310	DUE FROM OTHER GOV'T UNIT	.00	-15,482.94
01	13501	ACCRUED INTEREST RECEIVABLE	.00	188,194.37
01	15500	PREPAID EXPENSES	-375.00	92,121.93
TOTAL ASSETS			-261,759.01	14,745,341.85
LIABILITIES				
01	20200	ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	.00	-31.02
01	20205	FRIENDS OF THE ARTS	985.01	183.02
01	20210	PENSION PAYABLE-FRS	-28,429.76	-80,806.10
01	20211	RETIRE-GEN. EMP. PAYABLE	-1,068.31	-1,068.31
01	20220	DEFERRED COMPENSATION	1,068.31	1,068.31
01	20241	125-CAFE.HEALTH INSURANCE	1,496.60	-1,803.86
01	20242	125-CAFE. MEDICAL FSA	-297.66	4,330.36
01	20245	ALLSTATE VOLUNTARY INSURANCE	-.03	-304.97
01	20250	125-CAFE. VISION CARE	7.93	-2.77
01	20295	PD-TAKE HOME CAR	-1,345.00	-10,850.00
01	20810	DUE TO PALM BEACH COUNTY	-85,226.35	-86,136.48
01	20830	DUE TO STATE-BLDG PERMIT FEES	1,144.69	-5,086.02
01	21700	WITHHOLDING TAXES	-17,610.22	4,275.90
01	21720	SOCIAL SECURITY TAXES	-20,926.57	-42,815.54
TOTAL LIABILITIES			-150,201.36	-219,047.48
FUND BALANCE				
01	17200	REVENUE CONTROL	-467,717.70	-5,824,282.89
01	24200	EXPENDITURE CONTROL	879,678.07	2,526,701.20
01	24500	RESERVE FOR ENCUMBRANCE	.00	-87,500.00
01	28000	NON-SPENDABLE PREPAID ITEMS	.00	-76,028.84
01	28100	RESTRICTED-IMPACT FEE	.00	-81,892.60
01	28101	RESTRICTED-IMPACT FEE LAW ENFO	.00	-8,831.01
01	28102	RESTRICTED-CAPITAL PROJECTS	.00	-23,562.39
01	28103	RESTRICTED ONE-CENT SURTAX	.00	-1,304,452.95
01	28115	BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT	.00	-2,290,118.45
01	28120	RESTRICTED-LAW ENFORCEMENT	.00	-13,581.25
01	28121	RESTRICTED-STATE/LOCAL FORFEIT	.00	-109,314.40

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH

BALANCE SHEET FOR 2025 4

FUND: 01 GENERAL FUND			NET CHANGE FOR PERIOD	ACCOUNT BALANCE
FUND BALANCE				
01	28300	ASSIGNED-SUBSEQUENT YEAR	.00	-2,942,500.00
01	28400	UNASSIGNED-FUND BALANCE	.00	-4,253,488.03
01	28410	UNASSIGNED-CONTRIBUTIONS	.00	-40,571.32
TOTAL FUND BALANCE			411,960.37	-14,529,422.93
TOTAL LIABILITIES + FUND BALANCE			261,759.01	-14,748,470.41

** END OF REPORT - Generated by Emily Alves **

**TOWN OF JUNO BEACH
MONTH ENDING JANUARY 31, 2025**

GENERAL FUND

	Original	Amended	Actual		
	FISCAL YEAR	FISCAL YEAR	YTD 1/31/25	Difference	% To Amended Budget
	<u>2024-2025</u>	<u>2024-2025</u>			
REVENUES					
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$4,231,420	\$4,231,420	\$3,738,389	\$493,031	88%
Local Option, Use & Fuel Taxes	57,283	57,283	14,277	43,006	25%
One-Cent Discretionary Surtax	305,851	305,851	79,017	226,834	26%
Utility Services Taxes	953,364	953,364	256,764	696,600	27%
Local Business Tax	70,000	70,000	16,413	53,587	23%
Building Permits	1,100,000	1,100,000	226,742	873,258	21%
Franchise Fees	100,000	100,000	24,776	75,224	25%
Permits, Fees & Special Assessments	159,950	159,950	130,876	29,074	82%
Grants	577,500	577,500	1,053,824	(476,324)	182%
Intergovernmental Revenue	536,079	536,079	133,480	402,599	25%
Charges for Services	40,000	40,000	11,611	28,389	29%
Fines and Forfeitures	25,500	25,500	1,198	24,302	5%
Investment Earnings	250,000	250,000	108,056	141,944	43%
Miscellaneous	86,000	86,000	28,859	57,141	34%
From Impact Fees-Restricted	38,840	38,840	0	38,840	0%
From Forfeiture Fund-Restricted	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	0%
From Contributions-Restricted	111,581	111,581	0	111,581	0%
From One-Cent Surtax-Restricted	566,649	566,649	0	566,649	0%
From Unassigned Fund Balance	<u>1,565,360</u>	<u>1,565,360</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,565,360</u>	0%
TOTAL REVENUES	<u>\$10,785,377</u>	<u>\$10,785,377</u>	<u>\$5,824,283</u>	<u>\$4,961,094</u>	54%
EXPENDITURES BY DEPARTMENT					
LEGISLATIVE					
Salaries	\$42,000	\$42,000	\$12,600	\$29,400	30%
Employee Benefits	3,213	3,213	964	2,249	30%
Operating Expenses	<u>12,500</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>378</u>	<u>12,122</u>	3%
TOTAL LEGISLATIVE	57,713	57,713	13,942	43,771	24%
FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION					
Salaries	\$727,000	\$727,000	\$180,792	\$546,208	25%
Employee Benefits	234,753	234,753	50,994	183,759	22%
Professional Fees	130,000	130,000	84,433	45,567	65%
Operating Expenses	190,900	190,900	58,948	131,952	31%
Capital Outlay	<u>145,000</u>	<u>145,000</u>	<u>35,648</u>	<u>109,352</u>	25%
TOTAL FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION	1,427,653	1,427,653	410,814	1,016,839	29%

**TOWN OF JUNO BEACH
MONTH ENDING JANUARY 31, 2025**

	FISCAL YEAR	FISCAL YEAR	Actual	Difference	% To Amended Budget
	<u>2024-2025</u>	<u>2024-2025</u>	YTD 1/31/25		
<u>COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING</u>					
Salaries	\$568,300	\$568,300	\$186,578	\$381,722	33%
Employee Benefits	190,294	190,294	51,886	138,408	27%
Professional Fees	1,054,000	1,054,000	96,755	957,245	9%
Operating Expenses	71,700	71,700	22,778	48,922	32%
Capital Outlay	<u>7,500</u>	<u>7,500</u>	<u>0</u>	7,500	0%
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING	1,891,794	1,891,794	357,997	1,533,797	19%
<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT</u>					
Salaries	\$1,989,200	\$1,989,200	\$592,409	\$1,396,791	30%
Employee Benefits	1,035,402	1,035,402	338,500	696,902	33%
Professional Fees	53,700	53,700	7,592	46,108	14%
Operating Expenses	418,700	418,700	161,578	257,122	39%
Capital Outlay	<u>268,000</u>	<u>268,000</u>	<u>133,292</u>	134,708	50%
TOTAL LAW ENFORCEMENT	3,765,002	3,765,002	1,233,371	2,531,631	33%
<u>PUBLIC WORKS</u>					
Salaries	\$368,250	\$368,250	\$112,845	\$255,405	31%
Employee Benefits	146,155	146,155	29,629	116,526	20%
Professional Fees	20,000	20,000	593	19,407	3%
Operating Expenses	604,810	604,810	215,143	389,667	36%
Capital Outlay	<u>1,414,000</u>	<u>1,414,000</u>	<u>47,900</u>	<u>1,366,100</u>	3%
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	2,553,215	2,553,215	406,110	2,147,105	16%
<u>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</u>					
Insurance	440,000	440,000	104,467	\$335,533	24%
Town Debt Service	0	0	0	0	0%
Contingency	<u>650,000</u>	<u>650,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>650,000</u>	0%
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	1,090,000	1,090,000	104,467	985,533	10%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>\$10,785,377</u>	<u>\$10,785,377</u>	<u>\$2,526,701</u>	<u>\$8,258,676</u>	<u>23%</u>
Net Income YTD	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3,297,582</u>		



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: Emily Alves, CPA, Finance/HR Director
Item Title: Universe Blvd. Reimbursement Request from The Waterford

DISCUSSION:

At the January 22, 2025, Town Council meeting a representative from the Waterford verbally requested a refund of the amounts they paid for the Universe Blvd. drainage repair costs. Staff did a review and determined that The Waterford paid \$30,105.06. On February 3, 2025, the Town received an official reimbursement request from The Waterford for the Universe Blvd. drainage repair costs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Town Council reimburse The Waterford \$30,105.06 from contingency.

February 3, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

Please see attached documentation regarding the Universe Blvd stormwater drainage system and payments you received from The Waterford. It has been brought to our attention that this was recently approved as an infrastructure project, with the town paying the full cost. We are requesting a full refund in the amount of \$30,105.06. Please let us know if you need anything further to expedite this request.

Sincerely,



Leanna Lopez

Director Financial Services

Unviersse Blvd Repair Contributions Payments per Town Records

	Waterford aka Lifesapce
FY 2014	\$ 7,136.00
FY 2015	\$ 4,005.37
FY 2016	\$ 11,383.10
FY 2017	\$ 3,466.01
FY 2018	
FY 2019	
FY 2020	\$ 2,301.34
FY 2021	\$ 1,813.24
FY 2022	
FY 2023	
FY 2024	
FY 2025	
FY 2026	
	\$ 30,105.06



TOWN OF JUNO BEACH
340 OCEAN DRIVE
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December 13, 2013

Sean Nealon, Executive Director
The Waterford
601 Universe Boulevard
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Re: Universe Boulevard-Stormwater Drainage System

Dear Mr. Nealon,

The Town of Juno Beach has been working to provide needed maintenance to the Universe Boulevard stormwater drainage system. The stormwater drainage system servicing the properties along Universe Boulevard consists of a series of inlets and underground pipes beneath that roadway. The stormwater collected in the system flows through 35 year old corrugated metal pipe which varies in size from 18” to 60” in diameter. The flow is conveyed along Ellison Wilson Road and discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway. There are approximately 5,000 feet of pipe in this system.

In 2010 a pipe repair was performed and upon further investigation there was evidence of further deterioration. Since that time the Town has been working with Florida Power & Light to further analyze the situation and determine the best plan of action based on need and cost to provide the best solution. In early 2013 three companies were contacted to inspect, determine infrastructure integrity and provide repair costs. Proline Vector Services provided the lowest price of \$38,505 for the inspection/evaluation phase, and the resulting repair phase cost of \$11,400 for a total cost of \$49,905 and has completed all of the contracted work.

As a fair and equitable means to have abutters maintain the infrastructure into which they discharge, the Juno Beach Town Council agreed that Universe Boulevard abutters (stakeholders) should share the costs for improvements to that drainage system. The Town and the PBC Property Appraisers Office identified the size of each stakeholder’s land parcel. Based on the parcels, the Town determined the stakeholder’s proportionate cost for the improvements.

Stakeholders	Acreage	% of Total	Share of Cost
FPL	58.48	60.0%	\$29,944
Ocean Trace	18.93	19.5%	\$9,731
Waterford	13.93	14.3%	\$7,136
DSS Jupiter	0.98	1.0%	\$499
Juno Beach	5.03	5.2%	\$2,595

This letter shall serve as an Invoice for your share of the inspection, evaluation and repairs. Based on the criteria stated above, your cost is \$7,136.00 and is now due and payable. Payment shall be made payable to the Town of Juno Beach and forwarded to the address above. As an alternate payment option the Town is offering an interest-free payment plan of 3 equal payments which will be due annually on January 1 of 2014, 2015 and 2016. If you would like to take advantage of this option please contact me and we will provide a written agreement outlining the provisions.

A report detailing the condition of the system and improvements are available for your review. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Meriano, Director of Public Works at 561-656-0310 or me at 561-656-0320.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pazanski
Finance Director



TOWN OF JUNO BEACH
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October 2, 2014

Sean Nealon, Executive Director
 The Waterford
 601 Universe Boulevard
 Juno Beach, FL 33408

Re: Universe Boulevard-Storm Water Drainage System REPAIR-August 2014

Dear Mr. Nealon,

Last year we reported to you that the Town of Juno Beach had worked to provide needed maintenance to the Universe Boulevard storm water drainage system, an evaluation of the drainage system and a pipe repair was performed. As we noted at that time, the storm water drainage system servicing the properties along Universe Boulevard consists of a series of inlets and underground pipes beneath that roadway. The storm water collected in the system flows through 35 year old corrugated metal pipe which varies in size from 18” to 60” in diameter. The flow is conveyed along Ellison Wilson Road and discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway. There are approximately 5,000 feet of pipe this system.

In August 2014, we experienced another pipe failure. An ensuing emergency repair was performed by a local contractor, Deevan Incorporated of Lake Park. This repair, replaced a portion of a 48” corrugated pipe and the total cost was \$28,009.57.

As you know from the prior repair, the Juno Beach Town Council agreed that Universe Boulevard abutters (stakeholders) should share the costs for improvements to that drainage system. As with the prior repair we again used our predetermined “Cost Share” based on the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser Office to identify the size of each stakeholder’s land parcel and based on the parcels size, determined each stakeholder’s proportionate cost for the improvements.

Stakeholders	Acreage	% of Total	Share of Cost
FPL	58.48	60.0%	\$16,805.73
Uno Lago Env.	18.93	19.5%	\$5,461.87
Waterford	13.93	14.3%	\$4,005.37
DSS Jupiter	0.98	1.0%	\$280.10
Juno Beach	5.03	5.2%	\$1,456.50

This letter shall serve as an Invoice for your share of the August, 2014 pipe repair. Based on the criteria stated above, your cost is \$4,005.37 and is now due and payable. Payment shall be made payable to the Town of Juno Beach and forwarded to the address above. A report detailing the condition of the system and improvements are available for your review. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Meriano, Director of Public Works at 561-656-0310 or me at 561-656-0322.

Before closing, I would like to invite you or your representative to a meeting on Wednesday, October 8th at 10:00 a.m. at the Juno Beach Town Center to meet with Town staff, personnel from the Town’s consultant engineering firm and other concerned shareholders to discuss maintenance options for the future of the Universe Boulevard storm drain system. We encourage and welcome your attendance at this important meeting.

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Lo Bello
 Town Manager



TOWN OF JUNO BEACH
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December 18, 2015

Sean Nealon, Executive Director
The Waterford
601 Universe Boulevard
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Re: Universe Boulevard-Storm Water Drainage System REPAIR-November 2015

Dear Mr. Nealon,

As you know we have continued to provide needed maintenance and repairs to the Universe Boulevard storm water drainage system. In 2013 and 2014 we completed maintenance, an evaluation of the drainage system and two pipe repairs were performed. As we noted at that time, the storm water drainage system servicing the properties along Universe Boulevard consists of a series of inlets and underground pipes beneath that roadway. The storm water collected in the system flows through 35 year old corrugated metal pipe which varies in size from 18” to 60” in diameter. The flow is conveyed along Ellison Wilson Road and discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway. There are approximately 5,000 feet of pipe this system.

In November 2015, we experienced another pipe failure. An ensuing emergency repair was performed by a local contractor, Deevan Incorporated of Lake Park. This repair, replaced a portion of a 48” corrugated pipe and the total cost was \$19,551.60.

As you know from the prior repair, the Juno Beach Town Council agreed that Universe Boulevard abutters (stakeholders) should share the costs for improvements to that drainage system. As with the prior repair we again used our predetermined “Cost Share” based on the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser Office to identify the size of each stakeholder’s land parcel and based on the parcels size, determined each stakeholder’s proportionate cost for the improvements.

Stakeholders	Acreage	% of Total	Share of Cost
FPL	58.48	60.0%	\$11,730.96
Uno Lago Env.	18.93	19.5%	\$3,812.56
Waterford	13.93	14.3%	\$2,795.88
DSS Jupiter	0.98	1.0%	\$195.52
Juno Beach	5.03	5.2%	\$1,016.68

This letter shall serve as an Invoice for your share of the November 2015 pipe repair. Based on the criteria stated above, your cost is \$2,795.88 and is now due and payable. Payment shall be made payable to the Town of Juno Beach and forwarded to the address above. A report detailing the condition of the system and improvements are available for your review. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Meriano, Director of Public Works at 561-656-0310 or me at 561-656-0322.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pazanski
Finance Director



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July 26, 2016

Scott Nield, Executive Director
The Waterford
601 Universe Boulevard
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Re: Universe Boulevard-Storm Water Drainage System REPAIR - July 2016

Dear Mr. Nield,

As you may know, the Town of Juno Beach has continued to provide needed maintenance and repairs to the Universe Boulevard storm water drainage system. In 2013 and 2014 we completed maintenance, an evaluation of the drainage system and two pipe repairs were performed; in 2015 we completed an additional repair. As we have noted during this time, the storm water drainage system servicing the properties along Universe Boulevard consists of a series of inlets and underground pipes beneath that roadway. The storm water collected in the system flows through 35 year old corrugated metal pipe which varies in size from 18” to 60” in diameter. The flow is conveyed along Ellison Wilson Road and discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway. There are approximately 5,000 feet of pipe this system.

In July 2016, we experienced another pipe failure. An ensuing emergency repair was performed by a local contractor, Deevan Incorporated of Lake Park. This repair replaced 100’ portion of a 36” corrugated pipe and the total cost was \$60,050.51.

As you know from the prior invoicing and repairs, the Juno Beach Town Council agreed that Universe Boulevard abutters (stakeholders) should share the costs for improvements to that drainage system. As with the prior repair we again used our predetermined “Cost Share” based on the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser Office to identify the size of each stakeholder’s land parcel and based on the parcels size, determined each stakeholder’s proportionate cost for the improvements.

Stakeholders	Acreage	% of Total	Share of Cost
FPL	58.48	60.0%	\$36,030.31
Uno Lago Env.	18.93	19.5%	\$11,709.85
Waterford	13.93	14.3%	\$8,587.22
DSS Jupiter	0.98	1.0%	\$600.50
Juno Beach	5.03	5.2%	\$3,122.63

This letter shall serve as an Invoice for your share of the July 2016 pipe repair. Based on the criteria stated above, your cost is \$8,587.22 and is now due and payable. Payment shall be made payable to the Town of Juno Beach and forwarded to the address above. A report detailing the condition of the system and improvements are available for your review. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Meriano, Director of Public Works at 561-656-0310 or me at 561-656-0322.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pazanski
Finance Director



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August 11, 2017

Scott Nield, Executive Director
The Waterford
601 Universe Boulevard
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Re: Universe Boulevard-Storm Water Drainage System REPAIR INVOICE – June 2017

Dear Mr. Nield,

As you may know, the Town of Juno Beach has continued to provide needed maintenance and repairs to the Universe Boulevard storm water drainage system. In 2013 and 2014 we completed maintenance, an evaluation of the drainage system and two pipe repairs were performed; in 2015 and 2016 we completed additional repairs. As we have noted during this time, the storm water drainage system servicing the properties along Universe Boulevard consists of a series of inlets and underground pipes beneath that roadway. The storm water collected in the system flows through 35+ year old corrugated metal pipe which varies in size from 18” to 60” in diameter. The flow is conveyed along Ellison Wilson Road and discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway. There are approximately 5,000 feet of pipe this system.

In June 2017, we experienced another pipe failure. An ensuing emergency repair was performed by a local contractor, Deevan Incorporated of Lake Park. This repair replaced a portion of a 36” corrugated pipe at an intake structure and replaced a portion of sidewalk that was compromised, the total cost was \$24,237.84.

As you know from the prior invoicing and repairs, the Juno Beach Town Council agreed that Universe Boulevard abutters (stakeholders) should share the costs for improvements to that drainage system. As with the prior repair we again used our predetermined “Cost Share” based on the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser Office to identify the size of each stakeholder’s land parcel and based on the parcels size, determined each stakeholder’s proportionate cost for the improvements.

Stakeholders	Acreage	% of Total	Share of Cost
FPL	58.48	60.0%	\$14,542.70
Uno Lago Env.	18.93	19.5%	\$4,726.38
Waterford	13.93	14.3%	\$3,466.01
DSS Jupiter	0.98	1.0%	\$242.38
Juno Beach	5.03	5.2%	\$1,260.37

This letter shall serve as an Invoice for your share of the June 2017 pipe repair. Based on the criteria stated above, your cost is \$3,466.01 and is now due and payable. Payment shall be made payable to the Town of Juno Beach and forwarded to the address above. A report detailing the condition of the system and improvements are available for your review. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Meriano, Director of Public Works at 561-656-0310 or me at 561-656-0322.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pazanski
Finance Director



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July 23, 2020

Scott Nield, Executive Director
The Waterford
601 Universe Boulevard
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Re: Universe Boulevard-Storm Water Drainage System REPAIR INVOICE – March 2020

Dear Mr. Nield,

As you may know, the Town of Juno Beach has continued to provide needed maintenance and repairs to the Universe Boulevard storm water drainage system. In 2013 and 2014 we completed maintenance, an evaluation of the drainage system and two pipe repairs were performed; in 2015 and 2016 we completed additional repairs. As we have noted during this time, the storm water drainage system servicing the properties along Universe Boulevard consists of a series of inlets and underground pipes beneath that roadway. The storm water collected in the system flows through 35+ year old corrugated metal pipe which varies in size from 18” to 60” in diameter. The flow is conveyed along Ellison Wilson Road and discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway. There are approximately 5,000 feet of pipe this system.

In March 2020, Universe Boulevard stormdrain experienced a pipe failure. An ensuing emergency repair was performed by a local contractor, Deevan Incorporated of Lake Park. This repair replaced a portion of a 36” corrugated pipe at an intake structure and replaced a portion of sidewalk that was compromised, the total cost was \$16,093.29.

As you know from the prior invoicing and repairs, the Juno Beach Town Council agreed that Universe Boulevard abutters (stakeholders) should share the costs for improvements to that drainage system. As with the prior repair we again used our predetermined “Cost Share” based on the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser Office to identify the size of each stakeholder’s land parcel and based on the parcels size, determined each stakeholder’s proportionate cost for the improvements.

Stakeholders	Acreage	% of Total	Share of Cost
FPL	58.48	60.0%	\$9,655.98
Uno Lago Env.	18.93	19.5%	\$3,138.19
Waterford	13.93	14.3%	\$2,301.34
DSS Jupiter	0.98	1.0%	\$160.93
Juno Beach	5.03	5.2%	\$836.85

This letter shall serve as an Invoice for your share of the March 2020 pipe repair. Based on the criteria stated above, your cost is \$2,301.34 and is now due and payable. Payment shall be made payable to the Town of Juno Beach and forwarded to the address above. A report detailing the condition of the system and improvements are available for your review. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Meriano, Director of Public Works at 561-656-0310 or me at 561-656-0322.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pazanski
Finance Director



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 340 OCEAN DRIVE
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Item #8.

April 19, 2021

Scott Nield, Executive Director
 The Waterford
 601 Universe Boulevard
 Juno Beach, FL 33408

Re: Universe Boulevard-Stormwater Drainage System Repair INVOICE – February 2021

Dear Mr. Nield,

As you know, the Town of Juno Beach has continued to provide needed maintenance and repairs to the Universe Boulevard stormwater drainage system. For several years, the Town has been applying for grants and sought out legislative assistance to upgrade the entire system, to date we have been unsuccessful however, we continue our efforts on your behalf.

In February 2021, Universe Boulevard storm drain experienced a pipe failure. An ensuing emergency repair was performed by a local contractor, Deevan Incorporated of Lake Park. This repair replaced a portion of a 18” corrugated pipe at an intake structure and replaced a portion of the roadway that was compromised, the total cost was \$12,663.18.

As you know from prior repairs, the Juno Beach Town Council agreed that Universe Boulevard abutters (stakeholders) should share the costs for improvements to that drainage system. As with prior repairs we again used a “Cost Share” based on the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser Office to identify the size of each stakeholder’s land parcel and based on the parcels size, determined each stakeholder’s proportionate cost for the improvements, these figures were updated in 2021.

Stakeholders	Acreage	% of Total	Share of Cost
FPL	58.3589	59.9732%	\$7,594.51
Uno Lago Env.	18.9362	19.4600%	\$2,464.26
Waterford	13.9336	14.3190%	\$1,813.24
DSS Jupiter	0.9802	1.0073%	\$127.56
Juno Beach	5.0994	5.2405%	\$663.61

This letter shall serve as an Invoice for your share of the February 2021 pipe repair. Based on the criteria stated above, your cost is **\$1,813.24** and is now due and payable. Payment shall be made payable to the Town of Juno Beach and forwarded to the address above. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Meriano, Director of Public Works at 561-656-0310 or me at 561-656-0320.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pazanski
 Finance Director

[Universe Boulevard stormwater drainage system recent activity: In 2013 and 2014 we completed maintenance, an evaluation of the drainage system and two pipe repairs; since that time additional repairs have been completed. As we have communicated during this time, the storm water drainage system servicing the properties along Universe Boulevard consists of a series of inlets and underground pipes beneath that roadway and right or way. The storm water collected in the system flows through 35+ year old corrugated metal pipe which varies in size from 18” to 60” in diameter. The flow is conveyed along Ellison Wilson Road and discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway. There are approximate 5,000 feet of pipe this system.]



Meeting Name: Town Council
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: Leonard G. Rubin, Town Attorney
Item Title: Approval of Continuing Contracts for Engineering Services

DISCUSSION:

In October 2024, the Town issued a Request for Qualifications for Professional Engineering and Related Services (“RFQ”). The Town received nine qualification statements in response to the RFQ, and the Town’s evaluation committee subsequently ranked the firms based on the materials submitted. Upon review of the qualification statements, the committee determined that the top three most qualified firms were: WGI, Inc., Simmons & White, Inc., and Engenuity Group, Inc.

At its January 22, 2025 meeting, the Town Council accepted the Evaluation Committee’s ranking of the top three firms and authorized the Interim Town Manager, the Finance Director, and the Town Attorney to negotiate Continuing Contracts and fee schedules with each of the firms.

The Contracts with each of the firms is attached. While the fee structures vary, the rates are generally within the same range for the types of services most utilized by the Town.

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Staff recommends that Town Council approve the Continuing Contracts for Engineering Services with WGI, Inc., Simmons & White, Inc., and Engenuity Group, Inc. and authorize the Interim Town Manager to execute the Contracts on behalf of the Town.

**CONTINUING CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL
ENGINEERING SERVICES**

This Continuing Contract for Professional Engineering Services is made and entered into by the **Town of Juno Beach**, a Florida municipal corporation (“Town”) and **Simmons & White, Inc.**, a Florida corporation (“Engineer”), in response to the Town’s Request for Qualifications for such services.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 287.055, Florida Statutes (“Consultants’ Competitive Negotiation Act” or “CCNA”), the Town issued a Request for Qualifications for Professional Engineering Services and solicited statements from qualified professional engineering firms for a continuing contract to provide municipal engineering services on an as needed basis; and

WHEREAS, the Town has selected Engineer to provide such professional engineering services and desires to enter a non-exclusive “continuing contract” within the purview of the CCNA; and

WHEREAS, Engineer has considerable expertise and experience in this area and wishes to provide professional engineering services to the Town in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual representations and obligations herein contained and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

Section 1. Recitals:

The foregoing recitals are ratified as true and incorporated herein.

Section 2. Representations by Engineer:

By executing this Contract, Engineer makes the followed express representations to the Town:

- A. Engineer is professionally qualified to provide the professional services outlined in the Request for Qualifications issued by the Town.
- B. Engineer shall maintain all necessary licenses, permits or other authorizations necessary to provide such services.
- C. Professional services performed by Engineer pursuant to this Contract shall comply with all applicable laws, codes and regulations and shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the level of care and skill ordinarily exercised by members of the profession currently practicing within the same locality.

Section 3. Scope of Services:

- A. This Agreement shall authorize Engineer to perform general professional engineering services to the Town on an as needed basis in a manner satisfactory to the Town Council and Town Manager.
- B. The general professional engineering services performed by Engineer may include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Civil, structural, geotechnical, and electrical engineering work;
 - (2) Architectural services, including landscape architecture;
 - (3) Transportation planning and analysis;
 - (4) Permitting;
 - (5) Land use planning, surveying, and geological services;
 - (6) Reviewing land development application and associated documents, including site plans and subdivision plats;
 - (7) Feasibility analysis and cost estimation;
 - (8) Contract and construction management;
 - (9) Stormwater infrastructure, including NPDES permitting;
 - (10) Testing and inspections; and
 - (11) Advising elected official and Town Staff on issues requiring professional engineering and evaluations and matters as may materially affect the Town's physical infrastructure and public assets, including attendance at public meeting.
- C. General engineering services shall be billed on an hourly basis as set forth in Section 7 below. At the option of the Town, authorizations for specific projects or additional services shall be in the form of a Work Authorization. Each Work Authorization shall be approved by the Town Manager and shall set forth the specific scope of services, the maximum amount of compensation, and a completion date.
- D. During the term of this Contract, the professional services provided by Engineer to the Town shall not include projects for which construction costs exceed seven and one-half million dollars (\$7,500,000), as adjusted pursuant to Section 287.055(2)(g)1, Florida Statutes, or any individual study activity

when the fee for such services exceeds five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

- E. This Contract is non-exclusive, and the Town specifically reserves the right to seek the services of other engineers or consultants for any matter, notwithstanding the fact that the project or task may fall within the scope of services of this Contract.

Section 4. Insurance:

- A. During the performance of professional services under this Contract, Engineer shall secure and maintain, at its own expense, the following insurance policies:
 - (1) Professional liability insurance in an amount not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence or claim.
 - (2) Workers' compensation and employer's liability insurance for all employees engaged in work pursuant to this Contract in accordance with Florida law.
 - (3) Comprehensive general liability insurance with bodily injury limits of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000), combined single limit, per occurrence and with property damage limits of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) combined single limit, per occurrence.
 - (4). Comprehensive automobile liability insurance for all owned, non-owned and hired automobiles and other vehicles used by Engineer with a one million dollar (\$1,000,000) combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage liability per occurrence.
- B. All liability insurance, except professional liability insurance, shall specifically provide that the Town is an additional named insured with respect to the required coverages and the operations of Engineer pursuant to this Contract.
- C. All of the policies of insurance required to be purchased and maintained shall contain a provision or endorsement that coverage afforded shall not be canceled, materially changed or renewal refused until at least thirty (30) calendar days after written notice has been given to the Town by certified mail.
- D. All of Engineer's subcontractors and consultants shall be required to include the Town and Engineer as additional insureds on their general liability insurance policies.

- E. Engineer shall not commence work under this Contract until all insurance coverage required by this section has been obtained and certificates evidencing same are filed with the Town.

Section 5. Personnel:

- A. Engineer shall assign only qualified personnel to perform any of the requested professional services.
- B. At the time of execution of this Contract, the parties anticipate that the following named individual(s) will oversee the services provided by Engineer to the Town:

Phillip "Tad" Rowe, P.E.
Bryan G. Kelley, P.E.

- C. Should Engineer reassign this function to new or additional individuals, Engineer shall provide the Town with written notice of any such reassignment within ten (10) calendar days.

Section 6. Duties and Obligations of the Town:

The Town shall afford Engineer access to any project site as may be reasonably necessary for Engineer to properly perform its services under this Contract and shall provide Engineer with sufficient guidance and input to perform all services contemplated by this Contract in a timely manner.

Section 7. Payments:

- A. Town shall pay Engineer for services performed pursuant to this Contract in accordance with the Fee Schedule attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by reference or as otherwise agreed to between the Town and Engineer. Engineer shall not bill the Town for calls or communications of a routine basis that relate solely to the status of pending projects or matters.
- B. As a condition precedent for any payment due under this paragraph, Engineer shall submit monthly, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Town, an invoice to the Town requesting payment for services rendered and expenses incurred.
 - (1) Each invoice shall bear the signature of Engineer, which signature shall constitute Engineer's representation to the Town that the services indicated in the invoice have been properly and timely performed, that the expenses included in the invoice have been reasonably incurred, and that all obligations of Engineer covered by prior invoices have been paid in full (unless expressly indicated otherwise).

- (2) Engineer shall submit detailed time sheets for projects billed on a time and material basis and a written summary of completion for projects billed on a lump sum basis.
- C. All submittals for payment of per diem and travel expenses by Engineer shall comply with the provisions of Section 112.061, Florida Statutes, and all applicable Town policies. The Town shall not pay, nor shall Engineer incur, any per diem or travel expenses without the Town's prior written approval.

Section 8. Indemnification:

- A. Engineer shall indemnify and hold harmless the Town and its officers, agents, and employees, from all liabilities, damages, losses, and costs, including but not limited to reasonable attorney's fees (at the trial and appellate levels) to the extent caused by the negligence, recklessness or intentional conduct of Engineer, its consultants, subcontractors, or other persons employed or utilized by Engineer in the performance of services pursuant to this Contract.
- B. Nothing contained in this Contract shall create a contractual relationship with or a cause of action in favor of a third party against either the Town or Engineer, nor shall this Contract be construed as a waiver of sovereign immunity beyond the limited waiver provided in section 768.28, Florida Statutes.
- C. **PURSUANT TO SECTION 558.0035, FLORIDA STATUTES, EMPLOYEES OF ENGINEER MAY NOT BE HELD INDIVIDUALLY LIABLE FOR ECONOMIC DAMAGES RESULTING FROM NEGLIGENCE UNDER THIS AGREEMENT.**

Section 9. Independent Contractor:

Engineer is, and shall be, in the performance of services pursuant to this Contract, an independent contractor and not an employee, agent, or servant of the Town. All persons engaged in any services performed pursuant to this Contract shall at all times, and in all places, be subject to Engineer's sole discretion, supervision and control, and Engineer shall exercise sole control over the means and manner in which its employees, consultants and subcontractors perform such services.

Section 10. Project Records:

- A. All records reasonably related to the performance of professional services by Engineer or Engineer's consultants or subcontractors, which are not in

possession of the Town, shall be made available to the Town or any state, federal or other regulatory authority for inspection and copying upon written request of the Town. Such records include, but are not limited to, all plans, specifications, submittals, correspondences, minutes, memoranda, sound recordings, video recording and computer files. These records include those documents reflecting the time expended and expenses incurred by the personnel of Engineer and its consultants or subcontractors in performing its obligations pursuant to this Contract.

- B. Engineer shall maintain and protect such records for no less than seven (7) years after final completion of any project, or for any longer period of time as may be required by applicable or sound engineering practice.

Section 11. Ownership of Instruments:

- A. All instruments of professional services including, but not limited to, documents, records, disks, original drawings, plans and specifications and other information created or procured by Engineer for services performed pursuant to this Contract shall become the property of the Town upon completion of the work or project for which the instrument was utilized and upon payment by the Town.
- B. Engineer may maintain copies of all such instruments for its records, provided, however, that any material, products or patent paid for by the Town pursuant to this Contract shall be the property of the Town and shall not be used by Engineer for profit without the prior written consent of the Town.
- C. The Town acknowledges that any re-use of instruments of professional services by the Town, other than for the intended purpose without written verification and adaptation by Engineer for such specific purpose, shall be at the sole risk of the Town without recourse to Engineer.

Section 12. Term of Contract:

The term of this Contract shall be for five (5) years from the Effective Date.

Section 13. Termination of Contract:

- A. *Engineer's Termination for Default.* Engineer may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to the Town, terminate this Contract in the event the Town fails to substantially perform its obligations hereunder and fails to cure such default, if curable, within fifteen (15) days after receiving written notice of such default. Upon such termination, the Town shall pay Engineer for all services performed up to and including the date of termination. Engineer shall not, however, be entitled to any damages from such termination including, but not limited to, loss of anticipated profits.

- B. *Town's Termination for Default:* The Town may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to Engineer, terminate this Contract without prejudice to any other remedy it may have, when Engineer fails to substantially perform its obligations hereunder and failures to cure such default, if curable, within fifteen (15) days after receiving written notice of such default. Upon such termination, the Town may take possession of all materials, products, documents and records necessary to complete pending projects in whatever way it deems expedient. If the expense of completing the project exceeds any unpaid balance due under this Contract to Engineer at the time of termination, Engineer shall be responsible to the Town for the difference.
- C. *Town's Termination without Default:* The Town may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to Engineer, without cause and without prejudice to any other right or remedy, elect to terminate this Contract. Upon such termination, the Town shall pay Engineer for all work executed and expenses incurred in accordance with the terms of this Contract up through the date of termination.

Section 14. Successors and Assigns:

The Town and Engineer each bind itself and its partners, successors, executors, administrators, and assigns to the other party of this Contract and to the partners, successors, executors, administrators and assigns of such other party, in respect to all covenants of this Contract. Neither the Town nor Engineer shall assign, sublet, convey or transfer its interest in this Contract without the written consent of the other.

Section 15. Governing Law, Venue and Remedies:

- A. This Contract shall be governed by the laws of the State of Florida. Any and all legal action necessary to enforce this Contract will be held in Palm Beach County.
- B. No remedy herein conferred upon any party is intended to be exclusive of any other remedy, and each and every such remedy shall be cumulative and shall be in addition to every other remedy given hereunder or now or hereafter existing at law or in equity or by statute or otherwise. No single or partial exercise by any party of any right, power, or remedy hereunder shall preclude any other or further exercise thereof.
- C. **The parties knowingly, voluntarily, and intentionally waiver any right they may have to trial by jury** with respect to any litigation arising out of this Contract.

Section 16. Access and Audits:

Engineer shall maintain adequate records to justify all charges, expenses, and costs incurred in estimating and performing services pursuant to this Contract for at least three (3) years after termination of this Contract. The Town shall have access to such books, records, and documents as required in this section for the purpose of inspection or audit during normal business hours, at Engineer's place of business. In no circumstances will Engineer be required to disclose any confidential or proprietary information regarding its products and service costs.

Section 17. Federal and State Taxes:

The Town is exempt from federal tax and state sales tax and use taxes. Upon request, the Town shall provide an exemption certificate to Engineer. Engineer is not exempt from paying sales tax to its suppliers for materials used to fulfill its obligations under this Contract, nor shall Engineer be authorized to use the Town's tax exemption number in securing such materials.

Section 18. Enforcement Costs:

If any legal action or other proceeding is brought for the enforcement of this Contract, or because of an alleged dispute, breach, default or misrepresentation in connection with any provisions of this Contract, the successful or prevailing party or parties shall be entitled to recover reasonable attorney's fees, court costs and all expenses (including taxes) even if not taxable as court awarded costs (including, without limitation, all such fees, costs and expenses incident to appeals), incurred in that action or proceeding, in addition to any other relief to which such party or parties may be entitled.

19. Severability:

If any term or provision of this Contract, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall, to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Contract, or the application of such terms or provisions, to persons or circumstances other than those as to whom or which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be affected, and every other term and provision of this Contract shall be deemed valid and enforceable to the extent permitted by law.

Section 20. Notice:

All notices required in this Contract shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, and if sent to the Town shall be mailed to:

Town of Juno Beach
Attn: Town Manager
340 Ocean Drive
Juno Beach, FL 33408

and if sent to the Engineer shall be mailed to:

Simmons & White, Inc.
Attn: Bryan Kelley, P.E., Principal
2581 Metrocentre Boulevard West, Suite 3
West Palm Beach, FL 33407

The foregoing names and addresses may be changed if such change is provided in writing to the other party.

Section 21. Entirety of Contract:

The Town and Engineer agree that this Contract sets forth the entire Contract between the parties, and that there are no promises or understandings other than those stated herein. None of the provisions, terms and conditions contained in this Contract may be added to, modified, superseded or otherwise altered, except by written instrument executed by the parties hereto.

Section 22. Terminology and Captions:

All pronouns, singular, plural, masculine, feminine or neuter, shall mean and include the person, entity, firm or corporation to which they relate as the context may require. Wherever the context may require, the singular shall mean and include the plural and the plural shall mean and include the singular. The term "Contract" as used herein, as well as the terms "herein", "hereof", "hereunder", "hereinafter" and the like mean this Contract in its entirety and all exhibits, amendments and addenda attached hereto and made a part hereof. The captions and paragraph headings are for reference and convenience only and do not enter into or become a part of the context of this Contract, nor shall such headings affect the meaning or interpretation of this Contract.

Section 23. Waiver:

Failure of a party to enforce or exercise any of its right(s) under this Contract shall not be deemed a waiver of that parties' right to enforce or exercise said right(s) at any time thereafter.

Section 24. Preparation:

This Contract shall not be construed more strongly against either party regardless of who was more responsible for its preparation.

Section 25. Exhibits and Contract Documents:

Each exhibit and each document referenced in this Contract form an essential part of this Contract. These exhibits and documents, even if not physically attached, should be treated as part of this Contract and are incorporated herein by reference.

Section 26. Survivability:

Any provision of this Contract which is of a continuing nature or imposes an obligation which extends beyond the term of this Contract shall survive its expiration or earlier termination.

Section 27. Representations and Binding Authority:

The persons executing this Contract represent that they have the full power, authority and legal right to execute and deliver this Contract and perform all of its obligations under this Contract.

Section 28. Inspector General.

Engineer is aware that the Inspector General of Palm Beach County has the authority to investigate and audit matters relating to the negotiation and performance of this Contract, and in furtherance thereof, may demand and obtain records and testimony from Engineer and its subcontractors. Engineer understands and agrees that in addition to all other remedies and consequences provided by law, the failure of Engineer or its subcontractors to fully cooperate with the Inspector General when requested may be deemed by the Town to be a material breach of the Contract justifying termination.

Section 29. Public Records.

IF ENGINEER HAS QUESTIONS REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF CHAPTER 119, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO THE ENGINEER'S DUTY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC RECORDS RELATING TO THIS CONTRACT, CONTACT THE CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS, TOWN CLERK CAITLIN COPELAND AT (561) 656-0316 OR CCOPELAND@JUNO-BEACH.FL.US, 340 OCEAN DRIVE, JUNO BEACH, FL 33408

ENGINEER shall comply with the provisions of Section 119.0701, Florida Statutes, and specifically agrees to:

- A. Keep and maintain public records required by the TOWN to perform the service.
- B. Upon request from the TOWN's custodian of public records, provide the TOWN with a copy of the requested records or allow the records to be inspected or copied within a reasonable time at a cost that does not exceed the cost provided in this chapter or as otherwise provided by law.
- C. Ensure that public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements are not disclosed except as authorized by law for the duration of the contract term and following

completion of the contract if ENGINEER does not transfer the records to the public agency.

- D. Upon completion of the contract, transfer, at no cost, to the TOWN all public records in possession of ENGINEER or keep and maintain public records required by the TOWN to perform the service. If ENGINEER transfers all public records to the TOWN upon completion of the contract, ENGINEER shall destroy any duplicate public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements. If ENGINEER keeps and maintains public records upon completion of the contract, ENGINEER shall meet all applicable requirements for retaining public records. All records stored electronically must be provided to the TOWN, upon request from the TOWN's custodian of public records, in a format that is compatible with the information technology systems of the TOWN.

Section 30. E-Verify:

ENGINEER warrants and represents that ENGINEER and all subcontractors are in compliance with Section 448.095, Florida Statutes, as may be amended. ENGINEER has registered to use, and shall continue to use, the E-Verify System (E-Verify.gov) to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly hired employees and has received an affidavit from each subcontractor stating that the subcontractor does not employ, contract with or subcontract with an unauthorized alien. If the TOWN has a good faith belief that ENGINEER has knowingly violated Section 448.09(1), Florida Statutes, the TOWN shall terminate this Contract pursuant to Section 448.095(2), Florida Statutes, as may be amended. If the TOWN has a good faith believe that a subcontractor has knowingly violated Section 448.09(1), Florida Statutes, but ENGINEER has otherwise complied, it shall notify ENGINEER, and ENGINEER shall immediately terminate its contract with the subcontractor.

Section 31. Effective Date:

The Effective Date of this Contract shall be the date on which it is executed by the last party to execute same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the TOWN and ENGINEER hereto have made and executed this Contract as of the day and year first above written.

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH

ENGINEER:

BY: _____
TOWN MANAGER

BY: _____
Name:
Title:

ATTEST:

BY: _____
TOWN CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

BY: _____
TOWN ATTORNEY

AFFIDAVIT

- 1. I am over 18 years of age and otherwise competent to affirm the matters set forth in this Affidavit, which are based on my personal knowledge.
- 2. I am an officer or authorized representative of **Simmons & White, Inc.**
- 3. **Simmons & White, Inc.** does not use coercion for labor or services as defined in Section 787.06, Florida Statutes.

Under the penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing affidavit and that the facts stated in it are true.

By: _____
Print Name:
Title:

S&W Staff	Proposed S&W Juno Beach Rates
Principal	\$225.00
Senior Traffic Engineer	\$200.00
Senior Engineer	\$190.00
Engineer	\$150.00
Senior Technician	\$145.00
Technician	\$125.00
Engineer Intern	\$55.00
Clerical	\$85.00

**CONTINUING CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL
ENGINEERING SERVICES**

This Continuing Contract for Professional Engineering Services is made and entered into by the **Town of Juno Beach**, a Florida municipal corporation (“Town”) and **WGI, Inc.**, a Florida corporation (“Engineer”), in response to the Town’s Request for Qualifications for such services.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 287.055, Florida Statutes (“Consultants’ Competitive Negotiation Act” or “CCNA”), the Town issued a Request for Qualifications for Professional Engineering Services and solicited statements from qualified professional engineering firms for a continuing contract to provide municipal engineering services on an as needed basis; and

WHEREAS, the Town has selected Engineer to provide such professional engineering services and desires to enter a non-exclusive “continuing contract” within the purview of the CCNA; and

WHEREAS, Engineer has considerable expertise and experience in this area and wishes to provide professional engineering services to the Town in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual representations and obligations herein contained and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

Section 1. Recitals:

The foregoing recitals are ratified as true and incorporated herein.

Section 2. Representations by Engineer:

By executing this Contract, Engineer makes the followed express representations to the Town:

- A. Engineer is professionally qualified to provide the professional services outlined in the Request for Qualifications issued by the Town.
- B. Engineer shall maintain all necessary licenses, permits or other authorizations necessary to provide such services.
- C. Professional services performed by Engineer pursuant to this Contract shall comply with all applicable laws, codes and regulations and shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the level of care and skill ordinarily exercised by members of the profession currently practicing within the same locality.

Section 3. Scope of Services:

- A. This Agreement shall authorize Engineer to perform general professional engineering services to the Town on an as needed basis in a manner satisfactory to the Town Council and Town Manager.
- B. The general professional engineering services performed by Engineer may include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Civil, structural, geotechnical, and electrical engineering work;
 - (2) Architectural services, including landscape architecture;
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 - (8) Contract and construction management;
 - (9) Stormwater infrastructure, including NPDES permitting;
 - (10) Testing and inspections; and
 - (11) Advising elected official and Town Staff on issues requiring professional engineering and evaluations and matters as may materially affect the Town's physical infrastructure and public assets, including attendance at public meeting.
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- D. During the term of this Contract, the professional services provided by Engineer to the Town shall not include projects for which construction costs exceed seven and one-half million dollars (\$7,500,000), as adjusted pursuant to Section 287.055(2)(g)1, Florida Statutes, or any individual study activity

when the fee for such services exceeds five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

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 - (3) Comprehensive general liability insurance with bodily injury limits of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000), combined single limit, per occurrence and with property damage limits of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) combined single limit, per occurrence.
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Brett Oldford, P.E.

- C. Should Engineer reassign this function to new or additional individuals, Engineer shall provide the Town with written notice of any such reassignment within ten (10) calendar days.

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- A. *Engineer's Termination for Default:* Engineer may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to the Town, terminate this Contract in the event the Town fails to substantially perform its obligations hereunder and fails to cure such default, if curable, within fifteen (15) days after receiving written notice of such default. Upon such termination, the Town shall pay Engineer for all services performed up to and including the date of termination. Engineer shall not, however, be entitled to any damages from such termination including, but not limited to, loss of anticipated profits.

- B. *Town's Termination for Default:* The Town may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to Engineer, terminate this Contract without prejudice to any other remedy it may have, when Engineer fails to substantially perform its obligations hereunder and failures to cure such default, if curable, within fifteen (15) days after receiving written notice of such default. Upon such termination, the Town may take possession of all materials, products, documents and records necessary to complete pending projects in whatever way it deems expedient. If the expense of completing the project exceeds any unpaid balance due under this Contract to Engineer at the time of termination, Engineer shall be responsible to the Town for the difference.
- C. *Town's Termination without Default:* The Town may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to Engineer, without cause and without prejudice to any other right or remedy, elect to terminate this Contract. Upon such termination, the Town shall pay Engineer for all work executed and expenses incurred in accordance with the terms of this Contract up through the date of termination.

Section 14. Successors and Assigns:

The Town and Engineer each bind itself and its partners, successors, executors, administrators, and assigns to the other party of this Contract and to the partners, successors, executors, administrators and assigns of such other party, in respect to all covenants of this Contract. Neither the Town nor Engineer shall assign, sublet, convey or transfer its interest in this Contract without the written consent of the other.

Section 15. Governing Law, Venue and Remedies:

- A. This Contract shall be governed by the laws of the State of Florida. Any and all legal action necessary to enforce this Contract will be held in Palm Beach County.
- B. No remedy herein conferred upon any party is intended to be exclusive of any other remedy, and each and every such remedy shall be cumulative and shall be in addition to every other remedy given hereunder or now or hereafter existing at law or in equity or by statute or otherwise. No single or partial exercise by any party of any right, power, or remedy hereunder shall preclude any other or further exercise thereof.
- C. **The parties knowingly, voluntarily, and intentionally waiver any right they may have to trial by jury** with respect to any litigation arising out of this Contract.

Section 16. Access and Audits:

Engineer shall maintain adequate records to justify all charges, expenses, and costs incurred in estimating and performing services pursuant to this Contract for at least three (3) years after termination of this Contract. The Town shall have access to such books, records, and documents as required in this section for the purpose of inspection or audit during normal business hours, at Engineer's place of business. In no circumstances will Engineer be required to disclose any confidential or proprietary information regarding its products and service costs.

Section 17. Federal and State Taxes:

The Town is exempt from federal tax and state sales tax and use taxes. Upon request, the Town shall provide an exemption certificate to Engineer. Engineer is not exempt from paying sales tax to its suppliers for materials used to fulfill its obligations under this Contract, nor shall Engineer be authorized to use the Town's tax exemption number in securing such materials.

Section 18. Enforcement Costs:

If any legal action or other proceeding is brought for the enforcement of this Contract, or because of an alleged dispute, breach, default or misrepresentation in connection with any provisions of this Contract, the successful or prevailing party or parties shall be entitled to recover reasonable attorney's fees, court costs and all expenses (including taxes) even if not taxable as court awarded costs (including, without limitation, all such fees, costs and expenses incident to appeals), incurred in that action or proceeding, in addition to any other relief to which such party or parties may be entitled.

19. Severability:

If any term or provision of this Contract, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall, to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Contract, or the application of such terms or provisions, to persons or circumstances other than those as to whom or which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be affected, and every other term and provision of this Contract shall be deemed valid and enforceable to the extent permitted by law.

Section 20. Notice:

All notices required in this Contract shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, and if sent to the Town shall be mailed to:

Town of Juno Beach
Attn: Town Manager
340 Ocean Drive
Juno Beach, FL 33408

and if sent to the Engineer shall be mailed to:

WGI, Inc.
Attn: Brett Oldford, P.E., Vice President
2035 Vista Parkway
West Palm Beach, FL 33411

The foregoing names and addresses may be changed if such change is provided in writing to the other party.

Section 21. Entirety of Contract:

The Town and Engineer agree that this Contract sets forth the entire Contract between the parties, and that there are no promises or understandings other than those stated herein. None of the provisions, terms and conditions contained in this Contract may be added to, modified, superseded or otherwise altered, except by written instrument executed by the parties hereto.

Section 22. Terminology and Captions:

All pronouns, singular, plural, masculine, feminine or neuter, shall mean and include the person, entity, firm or corporation to which they relate as the context may require. Wherever the context may require, the singular shall mean and include the plural and the plural shall mean and include the singular. The term "Contract" as used herein, as well as the terms "herein", "hereof", "hereunder", "hereinafter" and the like mean this Contract in its entirety and all exhibits, amendments and addenda attached hereto and made a part hereof. The captions and paragraph headings are for reference and convenience only and do not enter into or become a part of the context of this Contract, nor shall such headings affect the meaning or interpretation of this Contract.

Section 23. Waiver:

Failure of a party to enforce or exercise any of its right(s) under this Contract shall not be deemed a waiver of that parties' right to enforce or exercise said right(s) at any time thereafter.

Section 24. Preparation:

This Contract shall not be construed more strongly against either party regardless of who was more responsible for its preparation.

Section 25. Exhibits and Contract Documents:

Each exhibit and each document referenced in this Contract form an essential part of this Contract. These exhibits and documents, even if not physically attached, should be treated as part of this Contract and are incorporated herein by reference.

Section 26. Survivability:

Any provision of this Contract which is of a continuing nature or imposes an obligation which extends beyond the term of this Contract shall survive its expiration or earlier termination.

Section 27. Representations and Binding Authority:

The persons executing this Contract represent that they have the full power, authority and legal right to execute and deliver this Contract and perform all of its obligations under this Contract.

Section 28. Inspector General.

Engineer is aware that the Inspector General of Palm Beach County has the authority to investigate and audit matters relating to the negotiation and performance of this Contract, and in furtherance thereof, may demand and obtain records and testimony from Engineer and its subcontractors. Engineer understands and agrees that in addition to all other remedies and consequences provided by law, the failure of Engineer or its subcontractors to fully cooperate with the Inspector General when requested may be deemed by the Town to be a material breach of the Contract justifying termination.

Section 29. Public Records.

IF ENGINEER HAS QUESTIONS REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF CHAPTER 119, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO THE ENGINEER'S DUTY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC RECORDS RELATING TO THIS CONTRACT, CONTACT THE CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS, TOWN CLERK CAITLIN COPELAND AT (561) 656-0316 OR CCOPELAND@JUNO-BEACH.FL.US, 340 OCEAN DRIVE, JUNO BEACH, FL 33408

ENGINEER shall comply with the provisions of Section 119.0701, Florida Statutes, and specifically agrees to:

- A. Keep and maintain public records required by the TOWN to perform the service.
- B. Upon request from the TOWN's custodian of public records, provide the TOWN with a copy of the requested records or allow the records to be inspected or copied within a reasonable time at a cost that does not exceed the cost provided in this chapter or as otherwise provided by law.
- C. Ensure that public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements are not disclosed except as authorized by law for the duration of the contract term and following

completion of the contract if ENGINEER does not transfer the records to the public agency.

- D. Upon completion of the contract, transfer, at no cost, to the TOWN all public records in possession of ENGINEER or keep and maintain public records required by the TOWN to perform the service. If ENGINEER transfers all public records to the TOWN upon completion of the contract, ENGINEER shall destroy any duplicate public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements. If ENGINEER keeps and maintains public records upon completion of the contract, ENGINEER shall meet all applicable requirements for retaining public records. All records stored electronically must be provided to the TOWN, upon request from the TOWN's custodian of public records, in a format that is compatible with the information technology systems of the TOWN.

Section 30. E-Verify:

ENGINEER warrants and represents that ENGINEER and all subcontractors are in compliance with Section 448.095, Florida Statutes, as may be amended. ENGINEER has registered to use, and shall continue to use, the E-Verify System (E-Verify.gov) to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly hired employees and has received an affidavit from each subcontractor stating that the subcontractor does not employ, contract with or subcontract with an unauthorized alien. If the TOWN has a good faith belief that ENGINEER has knowingly violated Section 448.09(1), Florida Statutes, the TOWN shall terminate this Contract pursuant to Section 448.095(2), Florida Statutes, as may be amended. If the TOWN has a good faith believe that a subcontractor has knowingly violated Section 448.09(1), Florida Statutes, but ENGINEER has otherwise complied, it shall notify ENGINEER, and ENGINEER shall immediately terminate its contract with the subcontractor.

Section 31. Effective Date:

The Effective Date of this Contract shall be the date on which it is executed by the last party to execute same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the TOWN and ENGINEER hereto have made and executed this Contract as of the day and year first above written.

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH

ENGINEER:

BY: _____
TOWN MANAGER

BY: _____
Name:
Title:

ATTEST:

BY: _____
TOWN CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

BY: _____
TOWN ATTORNEY

AFFIDAVIT

- 1. I am over 18 years of age and otherwise competent to affirm the matters set forth in this Affidavit, which are based on my personal knowledge.

- 2. I am an officer or authorized representative of **WGI, Inc.**

- 3. **WGI, Inc.** does not use coercion for labor or services as defined in Section 787.06, Florida Statutes.

Under the penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing affidavit and that the facts stated in it are true.

By: _____
Print Name:
Title:



Professional Engineering and Related Services

Town of Juno Beach

ENGINEERING SERVICES	Hourly Rate
Principal Engineer	\$290.00
Senior Project Manager	\$270.00
Project Manager	\$210.00
Senior Engineer 1	\$210.00
Engineer 1	\$180.00
Engineer Intern	\$130.00
Senior Designer	\$150.00
Designer	\$120.00
Field Engineer	\$180.00
Field Inspector	\$130.00
SURVEYING SERVICES	
Principal Surveyor	\$235.00
Project Manager	\$170.00
Senior Professional Surveyor	\$170.00
Professional Surveyor	\$150.00
Certified Photogrammetrist	\$180.00
Senior Survey Technician	\$150.00
Survey Technician	\$120.00
SUE Technician	\$120.00
Field Technician	\$90.00
Chief Utility Coordinator	\$250.00
Senior Utility Coordinator	\$190.00
Utility Coordinator	\$160.00
PLANNING SERVICES	
Principal Planner	\$250.00
Senior Project Manager	\$215.00
Project Manager	\$170.00
Senior Planner	\$150.00
Planner	\$110.00

SURVEY SERVICES (Cont'd)	Hourly Rate
1 Person Field Survey Crew	\$120.00
2 Person Field Survey Crew	\$160.00
3 Person Field Survey Crew	\$210.00
4 Person Field Survey Crew	\$250.00
2 Person SUE Crew	\$160.00
3 Person SUE Crew	\$215.00
4 Person SUE Crew	\$270.00
5 Person SUE Crew	\$300.00
Laser Scan Crew	\$230.00
Hydrographic/Bathymetric Crew	\$330.00
UAS Flight Crew	\$280.00
Fixed Wing Aerial Flight Crew	\$1,100.00
Geospatial Analyst	\$105.00
Geospatial Developer	\$145.00
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE SERVICES	
Principal Landscape Architect	\$260.00
Senior Project Manager	\$210.00
Project Manager	\$190.00
Senior Landscape Architect	\$215.00
Landscape Architect	\$190.00
Senior Designer	\$150.00
Designer	\$115.00
Entry Level Designer	\$105.00

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	Hourly Rate
Principal Environmental Scientist	\$240.00
Senior Project Manager	\$210.00
Project Manager	\$170.00
Senior Environmental Scientist	\$200.00
Environmental Scientist	\$135.00
Environmental Technician	\$105.00
ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES	
Principal Architect	\$290.00
Senior Project Manager	\$265.00
Project Manager	\$220.00
Senior Architect	\$250.00
Project Architect	\$205.00
Architect	\$170.00
Senior Graduate Architect	\$150.00
Graduate Architect	\$120.00
OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	
Expert Witness	\$420.00
GIS Technician	\$120.00
Administrative Assistant	\$125.00
Intern	\$85.00
REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES	
Copies, Black & White (each)	\$0.50
Copies, Color (each)	\$1.00
Plots, Black & White (each)	\$2.00
Plots, Color (each)	\$16.00
Mylars (each)	\$74.00
Foam Core Presentation Boards	\$8.00 ea
All Third-Party Expenses (cost +)	15%

Positions/Rates in **BOLD** denote staff anticipated to be frequently used for this contract.

**CONTINUING CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL
ENGINEERING SERVICES**

This Continuing Contract for Professional Engineering Services is made and entered into by the **Town of Juno Beach**, a Florida municipal corporation (“Town”) and **Engenuity Group, Inc.**, a Florida corporation (“Engineer”), in response to the Town’s Request for Qualifications for such services.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 287.055, Florida Statutes (“Consultants’ Competitive Negotiation Act” or “CCNA”), the Town issued a Request for Qualifications for Professional Engineering Services and solicited statements from qualified professional engineering firms for a continuing contract to provide municipal engineering services on an as needed basis; and

WHEREAS, the Town has selected Engineer to provide such professional engineering services and desires to enter a non-exclusive “continuing contract” within the purview of the CCNA; and

WHEREAS, Engineer has considerable expertise and experience in this area and wishes to provide professional engineering services to the Town in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual representations and obligations herein contained and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

Section 1. Recitals:

The foregoing recitals are ratified as true and incorporated herein.

Section 2. Representations by Engineer:

By executing this Contract, Engineer makes the followed express representations to the Town:

- A. Engineer is professionally qualified to provide the professional services outlined in the Request for Qualifications issued by the Town.
- B. Engineer shall maintain all necessary licenses, permits or other authorizations necessary to provide such services.
- C. Professional services performed by Engineer pursuant to this Contract shall comply with all applicable laws, codes and regulations and shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the level of care and skill ordinarily exercised by members of the profession currently practicing within the same locality.

Section 3. Scope of Services:

- A. This Agreement shall authorize Engineer to perform general professional engineering services to the Town on an as needed basis in a manner satisfactory to the Town Council and Town Manager.
- B. The general professional engineering services performed by Engineer may include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Civil, structural, geotechnical, and electrical engineering work;
 - (2) Architectural services, including landscape architecture;
 - (3) Transportation planning and analysis;
 - (4) Permitting;
 - (5) Land use planning, surveying, and geological services;
 - (6) Reviewing land development application and associated documents, including site plans and subdivision plats;
 - (7) Feasibility analysis and cost estimation;
 - (8) Contract and construction management;
 - (9) Stormwater infrastructure, including NPDES permitting;
 - (10) Testing and inspections; and
 - (11) Advising elected official and Town Staff on issues requiring professional engineering and evaluations and matters as may materially affect the Town's physical infrastructure and public assets, including attendance at public meeting.
- C. General engineering services shall be billed on an hourly basis as set forth in Section 7 below. At the option of the Town, authorizations for specific projects or additional services shall be in the form of a Work Authorization. Each Work Authorization shall be approved by the Town Manager and shall set forth the specific scope of services, the maximum amount of compensation, and a completion date.
- D. During the term of this Contract, the professional services provided by Engineer to the Town shall not include projects for which construction costs exceed seven and one-half million dollars (\$7,500,000), as adjusted pursuant to Section 287.055(2)(g)1, Florida Statutes, or any individual study activity

when the fee for such services exceeds five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

- E. This Contract is non-exclusive, and the Town specifically reserves the right to seek the services of other engineers or consultants for any matter, notwithstanding the fact that the project or task may fall within the scope of services of this Contract.

Section 4. Insurance:

- A. During the performance of professional services under this Contract, Engineer shall secure and maintain, at its own expense, the following insurance policies:
- (1) Professional liability insurance in an amount not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence or claim.
 - (2) Workers' compensation and employer's liability insurance for all employees engaged in work pursuant to this Contract in accordance with Florida law.
 - (3) Comprehensive general liability insurance with bodily injury limits of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000), combined single limit, per occurrence and with property damage limits of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) combined single limit, per occurrence.
 - (4). Comprehensive automobile liability insurance for all owned, non-owned and hired automobiles and other vehicles used by Engineer with a one million dollar (\$1,000,000) combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage liability per occurrence.
- B. All liability insurance, except professional liability insurance, shall specifically provide that the Town is an additional named insured with respect to the required coverages and the operations of Engineer pursuant to this Contract.
- C. All of the policies of insurance required to be purchased and maintained shall contain a provision or endorsement that coverage afforded shall not be canceled, materially changed or renewal refused until at least thirty (30) calendar days after written notice has been given to the Town by certified mail.
- D. All of Engineer's subcontractors and consultants shall be required to include the Town and Engineer as additional insureds on their general liability insurance policies.

- E. Engineer shall not commence work under this Contract until all insurance coverage required by this section has been obtained and certificates evidencing same are filed with the Town.

Section 5. Personnel:

- A. Engineer shall assign only qualified personnel to perform any of the requested professional services.
- B. At the time of execution of this Contract, the parties anticipate that the following named individual(s) will oversee the services provided by Engineer to the Town:

Adam Swaney, P.E.
- C. Should Engineer reassign this function to new or additional individuals, Engineer shall provide the Town with written notice of any such reassignment within ten (10) calendar days.

Section 6. Duties and Obligations of the Town:

The Town shall afford Engineer access to any project site as may be reasonably necessary for Engineer to properly perform its services under this Contract and shall provide Engineer with sufficient guidance and input to perform all services contemplated by this Contract in a timely manner.

Section 7. Payments:

- A. Town shall pay Engineer for services performed pursuant to this Contract in accordance with the Fee Schedule attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by reference or as otherwise agreed to between the Town and Engineer. Engineer shall not bill the Town for calls or communications of a routine basis that relate solely to the status of pending projects or matters.
- B. As a condition precedent for any payment due under this paragraph, Engineer shall submit monthly, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Town, an invoice to the Town requesting payment for services rendered and expenses incurred.
 - (1) Each invoice shall bear the signature of Engineer, which signature shall constitute Engineer's representation to the Town that the services indicated in the invoice have been properly and timely performed, that the expenses included in the invoice have been reasonably incurred, and that all obligations of Engineer covered by prior invoices have been paid in full (unless expressly indicated otherwise).

- (2) Engineer shall submit detailed time sheets for projects billed on a time and material basis and a written summary of completion for projects billed on a lump sum basis.
- C. All submittals for payment of per diem and travel expenses by Engineer shall comply with the provisions of Section 112.061, Florida Statutes, and all applicable Town policies. The Town shall not pay, nor shall Engineer incur, any per diem or travel expenses without the Town's prior written approval.

Section 8. Indemnification:

- A. Engineer shall indemnify and hold harmless the Town and its officers, agents, and employees, from all liabilities, damages, losses, and costs, including but not limited to reasonable attorney's fees (at the trial and appellate levels) to the extent caused by the negligence, recklessness or intentional conduct of Engineer, its consultants, subcontractors, or other persons employed or utilized by Engineer in the performance of services pursuant to this Contract.
- B. Nothing contained in this Contract shall create a contractual relationship with or a cause of action in favor of a third party against either the Town or Engineer, nor shall this Contract be construed as a waiver of sovereign immunity beyond the limited waiver provided in section 768.28, Florida Statutes.
- C. **PURSUANT TO SECTION 558.0035, FLORIDA STATUTES, EMPLOYEES OF ENGINEER MAY NOT BE HELD INDIVIDUALLY LIABLE FOR ECONOMIC DAMAGES RESULTING FROM NEGLIGENCE UNDER THIS AGREEMENT.**

Section 9. Independent Contractor:

Engineer is, and shall be, in the performance of services pursuant to this Contract, an independent contractor and not an employee, agent, or servant of the Town. All persons engaged in any services performed pursuant to this Contract shall at all times, and in all places, be subject to Engineer's sole discretion, supervision and control, and Engineer shall exercise sole control over the means and manner in which its employees, consultants and subcontractors perform such services.

Section 10. Project Records:

- A. All records reasonably related to the performance of professional services by Engineer or Engineer's consultants or subcontractors, which are not in possession of the Town, shall be made available to the Town or any state,

federal or other regulatory authority for inspection and copying upon written request of the Town. Such records include, but are not limited to, all plans, specifications, submittals, correspondences, minutes, memoranda, sound recordings, video recording and computer files. These records include those documents reflecting the time expended and expenses incurred by the personnel of Engineer and its consultants or subcontractors in performing its obligations pursuant to this Contract.

- B. Engineer shall maintain and protect such records for no less than seven (7) years after final completion of any project, or for any longer period of time as may be required by applicable or sound engineering practice.

Section 11. Ownership of Instruments:

- A. All instruments of professional services including, but not limited to, documents, records, disks, original drawings, plans and specifications and other information created or procured by Engineer for services performed pursuant to this Contract shall become the property of the Town upon completion of the work or project for which the instrument was utilized and upon payment by the Town.
- B. Engineer may maintain copies of all such instruments for its records, provided, however, that any material, products or patent paid for by the Town pursuant to this Contract shall be the property of the Town and shall not be used by Engineer for profit without the prior written consent of the Town.
- C. The Town acknowledges that any re-use of instruments of professional services by the Town, other than for the intended purpose without written verification and adaptation by Engineer for such specific purpose, shall be at the sole risk of the Town without recourse to Engineer.

Section 12. Term of Contract:

The term of this Contract shall be for five (5) years from the Effective Date.

Section 13. Termination of Contract:

- A. *Engineer's Termination for Default.* Engineer may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to the Town, terminate this Contract in the event the Town fails to substantially perform its obligations hereunder and fails to cure such default, if curable, within fifteen (15) days after receiving written notice of such default. Upon such termination, the Town shall pay Engineer for all services performed up to and including the date of termination. Engineer shall not, however, be entitled to any damages from such termination including, but not limited to, loss of anticipated profits.

- B. *Town's Termination for Default:* The Town may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to Engineer, terminate this Contract without prejudice to any other remedy it may have, when Engineer fails to substantially perform its obligations hereunder and failures to cure such default, if curable, within fifteen (15) days after receiving written notice of such default. Upon such termination, the Town may take possession of all materials, products, documents and records necessary to complete pending projects in whatever way it deems expedient. If the expense of completing the project exceeds any unpaid balance due under this Contract to Engineer at the time of termination, Engineer shall be responsible to the Town for the difference.
- C. *Town's Termination without Default:* The Town may, on thirty (30) days' written notice to Engineer, without cause and without prejudice to any other right or remedy, elect to terminate this Contract. Upon such termination, the Town shall pay Engineer for all work executed and expenses incurred in accordance with the terms of this Contract up through the date of termination.

Section 14. Successors and Assigns:

The Town and Engineer each bind itself and its partners, successors, executors, administrators, and assigns to the other party of this Contract and to the partners, successors, executors, administrators and assigns of such other party, in respect to all covenants of this Contract. Neither the Town nor Engineer shall assign, sublet, convey or transfer its interest in this Contract without the written consent of the other.

Section 15. Governing Law, Venue and Remedies:

- A. This Contract shall be governed by the laws of the State of Florida. Any and all legal action necessary to enforce this Contract will be held in Palm Beach County.
- B. No remedy herein conferred upon any party is intended to be exclusive of any other remedy, and each and every such remedy shall be cumulative and shall be in addition to every other remedy given hereunder or now or hereafter existing at law or in equity or by statute or otherwise. No single or partial exercise by any party of any right, power, or remedy hereunder shall preclude any other or further exercise thereof.
- C. **The parties knowingly, voluntarily, and intentionally waiver any right they may have to trial by jury** with respect to any litigation arising out of this Contract.

Section 16. Access and Audits:

Engineer shall maintain adequate records to justify all charges, expenses, and costs incurred in estimating and performing services pursuant to this Contract for at least three (3) years after termination of this Contract. The Town shall have access to such books, records, and documents as required in this section for the purpose of inspection or audit during normal business hours, at Engineer's place of business. In no circumstances will Engineer be required to disclose any confidential or proprietary information regarding its products and service costs.

Section 17. Federal and State Taxes:

The Town is exempt from federal tax and state sales tax and use taxes. Upon request, the Town shall provide an exemption certificate to Engineer. Engineer is not exempt from paying sales tax to its suppliers for materials used to fulfill its obligations under this Contract, nor shall Engineer be authorized to use the Town's tax exemption number in securing such materials.

Section 18. Enforcement Costs:

If any legal action or other proceeding is brought for the enforcement of this Contract, or because of an alleged dispute, breach, default or misrepresentation in connection with any provisions of this Contract, the successful or prevailing party or parties shall be entitled to recover reasonable attorney's fees, court costs and all expenses (including taxes) even if not taxable as court awarded costs (including, without limitation, all such fees, costs and expenses incident to appeals), incurred in that action or proceeding, in addition to any other relief to which such party or parties may be entitled.

19. Severability:

If any term or provision of this Contract, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall, to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Contract, or the application of such terms or provisions, to persons or circumstances other than those as to whom or which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be affected, and every other term and provision of this Contract shall be deemed valid and enforceable to the extent permitted by law.

Section 20. Notice:

All notices required in this Contract shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, and if sent to the Town shall be mailed to:

Town of Juno Beach
 Attn: Town Manager
 340 Ocean Drive
 Juno Beach, FL 33408

and if sent to the Engineer shall be mailed to:

Engenuity Group, Inc.
Attn: Adam Swaney, P.E., Vice President
1280 North Congress Avenue, Suite 101
West Palm Beach, FL 33409

The foregoing names and addresses may be changed if such change is provided in writing to the other party.

Section 21. Entirety of Contract:

The Town and Engineer agree that this Contract sets forth the entire Contract between the parties, and that there are no promises or understandings other than those stated herein. None of the provisions, terms and conditions contained in this Contract may be added to, modified, superseded or otherwise altered, except by written instrument executed by the parties hereto.

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All pronouns, singular, plural, masculine, feminine or neuter, shall mean and include the person, entity, firm or corporation to which they relate as the context may require. Wherever the context may require, the singular shall mean and include the plural and the plural shall mean and include the singular. The term "Contract" as used herein, as well as the terms "herein", "hereof", "hereunder", "hereinafter" and the like mean this Contract in its entirety and all exhibits, amendments and addenda attached hereto and made a part hereof. The captions and paragraph headings are for reference and convenience only and do not enter into or become a part of the context of this Contract, nor shall such headings affect the meaning or interpretation of this Contract.

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Failure of a party to enforce or exercise any of its right(s) under this Contract shall not be deemed a waiver of that parties' right to enforce or exercise said right(s) at any time thereafter.

Section 24. Preparation:

This Contract shall not be construed more strongly against either party regardless of who was more responsible for its preparation.

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Each exhibit and each document referenced in this Contract form an essential part of this Contract. These exhibits and documents, even if not physically attached, should be treated as part of this Contract and are incorporated herein by reference.

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Any provision of this Contract which is of a continuing nature or imposes an obligation which extends beyond the term of this Contract shall survive its expiration or earlier termination.

Section 27. Representations and Binding Authority:

The persons executing this Contract represent that they have the full power, authority and legal right to execute and deliver this Contract and perform all of its obligations under this Contract.

Section 28. Inspector General.

Engineer is aware that the Inspector General of Palm Beach County has the authority to investigate and audit matters relating to the negotiation and performance of this Contract, and in furtherance thereof, may demand and obtain records and testimony from Engineer and its subcontractors. Engineer understands and agrees that in addition to all other remedies and consequences provided by law, the failure of Engineer or its subcontractors to fully cooperate with the Inspector General when requested may be deemed by the Town to be a material breach of the Contract justifying termination.

Section 29. Public Records.

IF ENGINEER HAS QUESTIONS REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF CHAPTER 119, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO THE ENGINEER'S DUTY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC RECORDS RELATING TO THIS CONTRACT, CONTACT THE CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS, TOWN CLERK CAITLIN COPELAND AT (561) 656-0316 OR CCOPELAND@JUNO-BEACH.FL.US, 340 OCEAN DRIVE, JUNO BEACH, FL 33408

ENGINEER shall comply with the provisions of Section 119.0701, Florida Statutes, and specifically agrees to:

- A. Keep and maintain public records required by the TOWN to perform the service.
- B. Upon request from the TOWN's custodian of public records, provide the TOWN with a copy of the requested records or allow the records to be inspected or copied within a reasonable time at a cost that does not exceed the cost provided in this chapter or as otherwise provided by law.
- C. Ensure that public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements are not disclosed except as authorized by law for the duration of the contract term and following

completion of the contract if ENGINEER does not transfer the records to the public agency.

- D. Upon completion of the contract, transfer, at no cost, to the TOWN all public records in possession of ENGINEER or keep and maintain public records required by the TOWN to perform the service. If ENGINEER transfers all public records to the TOWN upon completion of the contract, ENGINEER shall destroy any duplicate public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements. If ENGINEER keeps and maintains public records upon completion of the contract, ENGINEER shall meet all applicable requirements for retaining public records. All records stored electronically must be provided to the TOWN, upon request from the TOWN's custodian of public records, in a format that is compatible with the information technology systems of the TOWN.

Section 30. E-Verify:

ENGINEER warrants and represents that ENGINEER and all subcontractors are in compliance with Section 448.095, Florida Statutes, as may be amended. ENGINEER has registered to use, and shall continue to use, the E-Verify System (E-Verify.gov) to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly hired employees and has received an affidavit from each subcontractor stating that the subcontractor does not employ, contract with or subcontract with an unauthorized alien. If the TOWN has a good faith belief that ENGINEER has knowingly violated Section 448.09(1), Florida Statutes, the TOWN shall terminate this Contract pursuant to Section 448.095(2), Florida Statutes, as may be amended. If the TOWN has a good faith believe that a subcontractor has knowingly violated Section 448.09(1), Florida Statutes, but ENGINEER has otherwise complied, it shall notify ENGINEER, and ENGINEER shall immediately terminate its contract with the subcontractor.

Section 31. Effective Date:

The Effective Date of this Contract shall be the date on which it is executed by the last party to execute same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the TOWN and ENGINEER hereto have made and executed this Contract as of the day and year first above written.

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH

ENGINEER:

BY: _____
TOWN MANAGER

BY: _____
Name:
Title:

ATTEST:

BY: _____
TOWN CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

BY: _____
TOWN ATTORNEY

AFFIDAVIT

- 1. I am over 18 years of age and otherwise competent to affirm the matters set forth in this Affidavit, which are based on my personal knowledge.
- 2. I am an officer or authorized representative of **Engenuity Group, Inc.**
- 3. **Engenuity Group, Inc.** does not use coercion for labor or services as defined in Section 787.06, Florida Statutes.

Under the penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing affidavit and that the facts stated in it are true.

By: _____
Print Name:
Title:

REVISED

2025-2026 TOWN OF JUNO BEACH FEE SCHEDULE	
EMPLOYEE TITLE	HOURLY FEES
EXPERT WITNESS	\$300.00
SENIOR ENGINEER	\$200.00
PROJECT ENGINEER	\$170.00
ASSOCIATE ENGINEER	\$130.00
SR. PROJECT LAND SURVEYOR	\$153.00
PROJECT LAND SURVEYOR	\$130.00
SR. CONSTRUCTION SPECIALIST	\$140.00
CONSTRUCTION SPECIALIST	\$100.00
SR. DESIGNER	\$145.00
DESIGNER	\$120.00
3 PERSON SURVEY CREW	\$188.00
2 PERSON SURVEY CREW	\$150.00
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	\$ 85.00



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 18, 2025
Prepared By: Leonard G. Rubin, Town Attorney
Item Title: Revised Code of Conduct and Enforcement Options

DISCUSSION:

At the November 13, 2024 Town Council meeting, this office presented the Town Council with a revised Code of Conduct for members of the Town Council. The Council, by consensus, agreed to additional revisions, which are highlighted in yellow on the attached document. These revisions include:

- A revised preamble as proposed by former Councilmember Rosengarten. If the Council adopts the enforcement language, the italicized language would need to be removed.
- A revision to Section B.2 to include members of Town Staff.
- An additional revision to the end of Section B.2 regarding newsletters also proposed by former Councilmember Rosengarten.
- The deletion of “without the use of the Councilmember’s official title” from Section B.3.

The Council, by consensus, also indicated that it wished to include enforcement provisions (although former Councilmember Rosengarten was part of that consensus). However, as explained below, the Town Council’s authority is limited with respect to the methods available for enforcement.

The Town Charter currently provides for removal of a Councilmember “by the remaining members of the Town Council” if the member no longer meets the requirements for candidacy set forth in Article III, Section 1(b) of the Town Charter. Thus, a Councilmember may only be removed if the member is no longer a resident of the Town or the member has been convicted or pled nolo contendere to any felony or any crime of fraud or dishonesty including, by way of example, larceny, theft, burglary, forgery, perjury, or embezzlement.

In addition to the Town Charter, Section 112.51, Florida Statutes, authorizes the Governor to suspend (and ultimately remove) a municipal official for “malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, habitual drunkenness, incompetence, or permanent inability to perform official duties” or when arrested for a felony or for a misdemeanor related to the duties of office. Additionally, Section 100.361, Florida Statutes, provides a procedure whereby the electors of a municipality may initiate a petition remove a member of the governing body for “malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, drunkenness, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, or conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude.”

Based on the foregoing, the Council cannot, absent an amendment to the Town Charter, suspend or remove a Councilmember for violation of the Code of Conduct. Consequently, the enforcement provisions previously provided to the Council have been included within the Code of Conduct. At the suggestion of Councilmember Davis, these provisions have been revised to require that the Town Council determine whether to pursue the violation once a complaint is received. While Councilmember Davis suggested that such a decision require a supermajority vote, there is no supermajority of four (assuming one Councilmember has been named in the complaint and that there is a full Council with four other members). Consequently, the language has been revised to require a unanimous vote of the non-named Councilmembers to proceed. The potential consequences remain the same, listed from least consequential to most consequential: (1) admonishment; (2) written warning; and (3) censure.

Once the Council agrees on the revisions to the Code of Conduct and/or the enforcement options, a Resolution adopting the final version will be placed on the Town Council's consent agenda.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consideration of revisions to the Town Council Code of Conduct and enforcement options.

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH

TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

Goal Statement: Members of the Town Council shall serve as a model of leadership and civility in the community, inspire confidence in Town government, and demonstrate honesty and integrity in every action and statement both during public meetings and when engaging with members of the community.

The Code of Conduct describes the way members of the Town Council should treat each other, members of Town staff, constituents, and others when representing the Town of Juno Beach. The objective of the Code of Conduct is to engender more trust in government, thereby promoting its effectiveness while advancing harmony within the community. The Code aims to establish norms of behavior for Council by which legitimate disagreements and different points of view that may arise are handled in a professional manner – one that promotes the public’s confidence in government and enhances the reputation of the Council and the Town.

The Code of Conduct represents aspirational goals that guide Councilmembers toward the highest principles of governance. Although this Code does not represent a body of enforceable rules, the Code should be considered by Councilmembers when arriving at an ethical course of action and course of behavior – each of which should be worthy of the public’s trust in government and the high office to which each Councilmember has been entrusted.

The consistent theme through this Code of Conduct is respect. Elected officials are called upon to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Demonstrating respect for each Councilmember and the Town’s constituents through words and actions is the “North Star” that guides Councilmembers to do the right thing, even in difficult situations.

A. **Conduct** During Public Meetings:

1. Members of the Town Council shall fully participate in all Town Council meetings and practice civility, professionalism, and respect in all discussions and debate.
2. Members of the Town Council shall prepare in advance of all Town Council meetings by reviewing agenda materials, speaking with the Town Manager and other members of Town Staff, speaking with constituents, and becoming familiar with issues.
 - a. When preparing for Town Council meetings, members of the Town Council should direct questions ahead of time to the Town Manager or Town Staff so that Staff can provide the desired information at the Council meeting.

- b. Members of Town Council should avoid asking questions that Town Staff will be unable answer on the spot or recognize that such questions may require additional time or research to formulate an answer.
- 3. Members of the Town Council shall be respectful of other people's time, stay focused, and act efficiently during public meetings.
- 4. Members of the Town Council shall honor and respect the role of the Mayor (or presiding officer) in maintaining order.
- 5. Members of the Town Council shall make the public feel welcome and shall not demonstrate any signs of partiality, prejudice, discrimination, or disrespect toward an individual participating in a public meeting. To that end, members of the Town Council shall:
 - a. Actively listen to speakers;
 - b. Ask for clarification with the consent of the Mayor, but avoid debate and argument with members of the public; and
 - c. Be mindful of their tone and body language.
- 6. Members of the Town Council shall refrain from personal comments, attacks, or innuendo directed toward other members of the Council or members of the public.
- 7. Members of the Town Council shall ensure that all comments pertain to the topic under discussion.
- 8. Members of the Town Council shall refrain from using cellular phones or any other type of audible device in a manner that would be disruptive to other members of the Council or members of the public.
- 9. When attending meetings of other Boards, members of the Town Council shall refrain from commenting on quasi-judicial matters that will come before the Town Council for consideration. Furthermore, members of the Town Council shall clearly indicate on the record that any comments or questions are made in their capacity as a Town resident and not as a member of the Town Council.
- B. **Conduct** Outside of Public Meetings:
 - 1. Members of the Town Council shall not make any promise or representation on behalf of the Town Council or Town Staff.
 - 2. Members of the Town Council shall not make derogatory personal comments about other members of the Council, **members of Town Staff**, members of the public, or members of any Town board, either orally or through the dissemination

of written materials, including newsletters. Newsletters issued by sitting members of the Town Council should take care not to insult or make demeaning, sarcastic, or disparaging statements about any Town resident because such conduct degrades the Council's reputation in the community, reduces the willingness of the public to engage with their government, and harms the trust that the residents have in government.

3. Members of the Town Council shall not make any representation or inquiry on behalf of the Council to any other public or private agency unless specifically authorized to do so by the Council. Any such representation or inquiry shall be made solely in the Councilmember's personal capacity without the use of the Councilmember's official title.
4. Members of the Town Council shall not publicly undermine the official Town Council position on any issue through the dissemination of written materials, including newsletters, unless such statement is included in official campaign materials relating to an upcoming Town Council election.
5. Members of the Town Council shall direct all questions or requests for additional information from Town Staff through the Town Manager, Department Heads, or the Town Attorney. Members of the Town Council shall be professional and courteous in their interactions with members of Town Staff and refrain from any public criticism.
6. Members of the Town Council shall comply with the following prohibitions set forth in Article IV, Section 6 of the Town Charter:
 - a. *Appointment and removals.* Neither the council nor any of its members shall in any manner dictate the appointment or removal of any town administrative officers or employees whom the manager or any subordinates are empowered to appoint, but the council may express its views and fully and freely discuss with the manager anything pertaining to appointment and removal of such officers and employees.
 - b. *Interference with administration.* Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations, the council or its members shall deal with town officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the manager solely through the manager, and neither the council nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee either publicly or privately. Nothing in the foregoing is to be construed to prohibit individual members of the council from closely scrutinizing all aspects of town government operations so as to obtain independent information. It is the express intent of this charter, however, that recommendations for improvement in town government operations by individual council members be made to and through the town manager, so that the manager may coordinate efforts of

all town departments to achieve the greatest possible savings through the most efficient and sound means available.

7. Members of the Town Council recognize that their Town e-mail is the appropriate mechanism for communicating with members of the public and further understand that they are personally responsible for maintaining records of all communications that are conducted on a platform other than their Town e-mail, including all text messages.
8. Members of the Town Council are free to take public positions on local, county, state, and federal political issues. Similarly, members of the Town Council are free to endorse candidates for local, county, state, and federal office.

Proposed language:

C. Enforcement:

1. Complaints for violations of the Code of Conduct may be filed with Mayor, the Town Manager, the Town Attorney, or the Town's Human Resources Department.
2. The Complaint shall be forwarded to the Town Council, and the members of the Town Council not named in the complaint shall determine whether to pursue the violation. A decision to pursue a violation requires a unanimous vote by the non-named members. If the Council votes to pursue the violation, the named Councilmember or Councilmembers shall be afforded an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
3. If warranted under the circumstances, the Town Council may direct the Town Attorney to initiate an investigation.
4. The Town Council reviews the complaint and response, as well as the results of the investigation, if any.
5. After reviewing the complaint and response, or the results of the investigation, the Council may take one of the following actions:
 - a. Admonishment: A reminder that a particular type of behavior is a violation of the Code of Conduct.
 - b. Written Warning: Formal Council action determining that a violation occurred.
 - c. Censure: Formal Council statement of official reprimand in the case of a serious violation of the Code of Conduct.



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 18, 2025
Prepared By: Leonard G. Rubin, Town Attorney
Item Title: Resolution No. 2025-01 (Amending the Town’s Quasi-Judicial Procedures)

DISCUSSION:

At the Town Council’s October 23, 2024 meeting, I presented four revisions to the Town’s quasi-judicial procedures for the Council’s consideration: (1) prohibiting members of the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board from engaging in private oral or written communications with the Applicant or the Applicant’s agent prior to the completion of the quasi-judicial hearing; (2) adding site visits to the definition of ex parte communications; (3) changing the order of the hearing to comply with current practice by requiring the disclosure of ex parte communications prior to Town Staff’s presentation; and (4) adding a provision stating the Council and the Board shall not entertain any requests for rehearing or reconsideration of a quasi-judicial order.

The Town Council expressed no issues with revisions number 2 and 3; however, at the conclusion of the discussion, the Town Council, by consensus directed the following revisions:

- A. Allow members of the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board to privately meet with the Applicant or the Applicant’s agents when accompanied by a member of Town Staff (incorporated into Section 2.A);
- B. Require two public workshops for all major projects (new commercial, multi-family residential, mixed use, and planned unit developments) prior to any quasi-judicial proceeding (incorporated into Section 8); and
- C. Allow the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board to rehear or reconsider a quasi-judicial order prior to the expiration of the 30-day appeal period or the filing of a petition for writ of certiorari, whichever is earlier (incorporated into Section 15).

In addition to the foregoing, Councilmember Davis proposed numerous additional revisions to the quasi-judicial procedures (a copy of Councilmember Davis’s October 17, 2024 e-mail is included as additional back up). Because there was no Council consensus on these recommendations, they have not been included in the revised procedures. These additional revisions are summarized as follows, along with my comments on each):

- Add a provision allowing public participation so long as comments are on topic and not repetitive.
Comment: Under the current provisions, members of the public are considered “participants” and have the full right to participate in the hearing.
- Add a provision that members of the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board may not testify for or against a project unless they have recused themselves from the vote.
Comment: I agree that members of the Town Council should not testify at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting on quasi-judicial matters that will come before the Council for a final determination. However, there is nothing to prevent a member of the Planning and Zoning Board from testifying at the Council level in his or her capacity as a Town resident because the Board has already provided its recommendation to the Council.
- Require the Town Clerk to provide an ex parte communication list to be included within the record of the proceeding, with all or part of these comments being read into the record or summarized. Additionally, have the Town adopt an ex parte communication form that must be completed by each member of the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board, which will be made part of the record.
Comment: No issue with either recommendation – Council decision.
- If a mailing was received by the Town Council or received by one member of the Town Council and forward to the remaining members, the Town Clerk will include this information as part of the record.
Comment: No issue with the recommendation – Council decision.
- Require Town Staff to act as a neutral fact-finder in its presentation and “the cadence of speech, tone, and vocabulary must be objective as to discerning competent substantial evidence that the projects either meets the Town Code requirements or does not,” and allow the Mayor or Councilmembers to move to cancel or reschedule the hearing if the Staff presentation is perceived as advocating on behalf of the project.
Comment: The role of Town planning staff is to give its professional opinion as to whether the proposed project either meets or does not meet the applicable Code requirements. Determining that a project meets the Code requirements is not advocating on behalf of a project. Courts have determined that testimony given by professional planning staff constitutes competent, substantial evidence to support the legislative body’s decision on a quasi-judicial application. Mere opinion expressed by residents, on the other hand, is not competent, substantial evidence. Therefore, the findings of the Town’s planning staff play an important role in the quasi-judicial process and staff’s ability to provide their professional opinions and recommendations should not be hampered or restricted. Additionally, staff’s role goes beyond “fact finding” in determining whether more subjective criteria, such as determining whether a proposed project is in harmony with the surrounding area. Finally, neither the Town Council nor the Planning and Zoning Board is required to accept Staff’s recommendation and the Council or Board may base its decision on other competent, substantial evidence presented at the hearing and made part of the record.
- Allow the Applicant sufficient time to present based on the complexity of the project (with special permission for more than one hour), and give the participants (or members of the public) the same amount of time as given to the Applicant.
Comment: The thirty minutes currently granted to the Applicant is likely too restrictive. Realistically, the Town has given the Applicant whatever amount of time required to make a full presentation. Members of the public should be limited to the standard three minutes (or whatever

amount of time the Council deems sufficient). As referenced above, comments from members of the public are generally more opinion-based than fact-based. Nevertheless, the Council may wish to consider granting persons with a special interest (such as those residing in close proximity to the project) elevated status as a party to the proceeding, which would allow them to actually present their case and even provide expert testimony. Many municipalities do have such a provision, and I have included North Palm Beach's procedures as additional back up (referenced language is highlighted).

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Staff requests Town Council consideration of Resolution 2025-01 amending the Town's quasi-judicial procedures.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE TOWN'S QUASI-JUDICIAL PROCEDURES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, through the adoption of Resolution No. 95-96, the Town Council established procedures for quasi-judicial proceedings before the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council wishes to modify the Town's quasi-judicial procedures to limit communications between members of the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board and the Applicant or the Applicant's agents prior to the completion of the quasi-judicial hearing, require public workshops, allow a limited time for rehearing or reconsideration, and make other substantive revisions; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council determines that the adoption of this Resolution is in the best interests of the Town and its residents.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA, as follows:

Section 1. The foregoing recitals are hereby ratified as true and correct and are incorporated herein.

Section 2. The Town Council hereby amends the Town's quasi-judicial procedures as set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein (additional language is underlined and deleted language is stricken through).

Section 3. All resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict with this Resolution are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Section 4. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Peggy Wheeler, Mayor

ATTEST:

Caitlin Copeland-Rodriguez, MMC
Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Leonard G. Rubin, Town Attorney

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCT OF QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARINGS

1. Definitions:

- A. *Applicant* - the owner of record, or owner's agent, or any person with a legal or equitable interest in the property that is the subject of the proceeding.
- B. *Council* - The Town Council, Planning and Zoning Board, or any other Board to which this policy is made applicable.
- C. *Ex parte Communications* - any written or oral communication with the Council members other than those made on the record at the time of the hearing and site visits to the property as set forth in Section 4(C) below.
- D. *Participants* - those members of the general public other than applicant who attends a public hearing for the purpose of being heard on a particular application.
- E. *Relevancy* - In order to be relevant, the evidence submitted must strengthen or weaken the application by supporting or disproving factual assertions contained in the application or be directly related to the application. The Council shall determine the relevancy of the evidence.

2. General Standards:

- A. Ex Parte Communications Between Council Members and Public. ~~Applicants, participants, and other members of the general public may communicate freely with the Council members regarding any issue which may be heard by the Council.~~ Members of the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board shall not engage in private oral or written communications with the Applicant or the Applicant's agents prior to the completion of the quasi-judicial hearing. Notwithstanding the foregoing, members of the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board may privately meet with the Applicant prior to the completion of the quasi-judicial hearing when accompanied by a member of Town Staff.
- B. Town Staff Report. The staff report on the case shall be sent to the Council members and be available to the general public at least three (3) days prior to the hearing on the case.
- C. Appearances and Evidence.
 - (l) Persons claiming to represent a group or organization must demonstrate proof of membership of that group and proof that the person representing the group has actual authority to do so.

- (2) All participants must state their name, address, and the party they represent at the time they wish to speak.

3. Communications Between Council and Town Staff

- A. Councilpersons may communicate with Town staff including discussions relative to the staff report and recommendations. Staff may answer questions and render opinions.
- B. The Town Attorney may render legal opinions when requested by the Council members, but shall not advocate one party's position over another, except to the extent necessary to respond fully to a legal question.

4. Ex-Parte Communications.

- A. Written Communications. All written communications received by the Council members concerning an application or pending case shall be deemed public information if made a part of the record prior to final action on the matter.
- B. Oral Communications. Except as prohibited by Section 2(A) above, oral ~~Oral~~ communication may be permitted and shall be deemed public information provided the substance of the communication and with whom the communication took place is divulged and made part of the record prior to final action in the matter.
- C. View of Property. Members of the Council may drive by and physically inspect the property. Such investigation or site visits shall be disclosed and made a part of the record prior to final action on the matter.

5. Town Staff File. All written communications shall be included in the file maintained by staff and available for public inspection. Any written communication received by staff shall be reported as part of the oral staff report. The staff report, any petitions or other submissions from the public, and all other documents pertaining to the case shall also be kept in the file and available for public inspection. During its presentation, staff shall offer all such written communications into evidence, subject to any objections imposed by participants.

6. Disclosure. At the public hearing at which a vote is to be taken on the matter, a Council person who has received an ex parte communication, conducted an investigation, received expert opinions, or has physically inspected the property, shall summarize for the record the substance of the communication, the person making the same, the nature of the investigation, substance of the expert opinion or the date of the inspection.

7. Basis of Decision. All decisions by the Council shall be based on the record of the evidence presented to the Council at the hearing on the case, which shall include staff testimony of all witnesses, and other evidence presented. Strict rules of evidence shall not apply, but evidence must be relevant to the issues before the Council.

8. Public Workshops. Prior to any quasi-judicial proceeding before the Planning and Zoning Board or Town Council, the Applicant shall conduct two public workshops for all major projects. For the purposes of this section, a major project includes all new commercial developments, multi-family residential developments, mixed-use developments, and planned unit developments.
9. Conduct of Hearing. The order of appearance at the hearing shall be as follows:
- ~~A. The Town Staff shall present its reports and offer its file into evidence;~~
 - ~~B.~~ A. Council members shall summarize the substance of any ex parte communication; including the identity of the person, group, or entity with whom the communication took place;
 - B. The Town Staff shall present its reports and offer its file into evidence.
 - C. The applicant shall present its case and/or respond to or refute any ex parte communication;
 - D. Participants shall present their case and/or respond to or refute any ex parte communications.
 - E. Cross-examination of the witnesses;
 - F. Council discussion and decision.

Testimony may be subject to cross-examination, upon request, by the applicant, the designated representative of the participants and the Town staff. The applicant or its representative, and the designated representative of the participants wishing to cross-examine witnesses must reserve that right at the beginning of their presentation. Council members may interpose questions at any time during the conduct of the hearing.

10. Testimony Under Oath or Affirmation.

The applicant, witnesses and all participants asking to speak shall be sworn collectively at the beginning of the hearing.

11. Cross Examination

- A. The applicant, participants and all witnesses are subject to cross-examination during the hearing.
- B. The cross-examination of the applicant, witnesses and participants shall be limited to five (5) minutes by the individual conducting the cross-examination for the adverse party.

- C. The scope of the cross-examination shall be limited to the facts alleged by the participant, witness, or applicant in relation to the application.
- D. The cross-examination cannot be designed to merely harass, intimidate, or embarrass the participants, applicant, or witnesses.
- E. The Mayor will determine the scope of the cross-examination on his or her own initiative, or when the individual being questioned objects to the cross examination for going beyond the scope of the facts alleged by the individual.
- F. The Mayor may defer to the Town Attorney to determine the scope of the cross-examination.
- G. The Mayor may direct the party conducting the cross-examination to stop a particular line of questioning that is not relevant and beyond the scope of the facts alleged by the individual being cross-examined.
- H. If the party conducting the cross-examination continuously violates directions from the Mayor to end a line of questioning deemed irrelevant and merely designed to harass, intimidate, or embarrass the individual, the Mayor may terminate the cross-examination.
- I. The purpose of cross-examination is not to debate a particular matter or issue but is permitted for the sole purpose of testing the credibility of a witness or the particular weight a particular piece of evidence should be given.

12. Time Limits.

- A. Applicant - Up to thirty (30) minutes.
- B. Participants –
 - i. members of the public - three (3) minutes each.
 - ii. speakers representing a group of six (6) or more in attendance at the meeting - five (5) minutes each.
 - iii. speakers representing an organization - five (5) minutes each.
- C. Participants shall be given one opportunity to present their evidence and/or comments and must present their testimony at that time. Multiple opportunities for the same participant to speak and a debate style format are not permitted.
- D. Expert Witnesses - ten (10) minutes.
- E. At the discretion of the Mayor the time allowed for any testimony may be extended.

13. Record of the Case. All evidence admitted at the hearing, Town staff reports, and the adopted resolution, ordinance or minutes setting forth the decision of the Council shall be maintained in a file constituting the record of the case. The record shall be kept in custody of the appropriate staff at all times during the pendency of the case, except that any member of the public may examine the file in the appropriate Town Staff Office.
14. Applicability. These rules shall apply to all site specific rezonings, special exception and variance proceedings and at any time the Town Council or Planning and Zoning Board sits in a quasi-judicial or an appellate capacity, including administrative appeals.
15. Rehearing/Reconsideration and Appeal. A final determination of the Town Council or the Planning and Zoning Board acting in its quasi-judicial capacity is subject to judicial review in a court of competent jurisdiction within thirty (30) days of the Council or Commission's rendition of its written determination. The Council or Board may only entertain a request for rehearing or reconsideration of a previously entered quasi-judicial order prior to the filing of a petition for writ of certiorari challenging the order or prior to the expiration of the thirty (30) day appeal period, whichever first occurs.

Len Rubin

From: ddavis@juno-beach.fl.us
Sent: Thursday, October 17, 2024 7:36 AM
To: Len Rubin; ddyess@juno-beach.fl.us
Cc: 'Frank Davila'
Subject: Item 12 - Quasi Judicial Proceeding - initial thoughts Town Council Meeting Agenda Packet - October 23, 2024 at 5:30PM

The proposal is very good. Enclosed are thoughts from my initial review. I have asked folks who have experience in other jurisdictions to provide additional insights, so please consider these as preliminary thoughts only. The thoughts here are intended to address allowing equal time for those who are opposed to a project to provide their insights. It is also to avoid any perceived bias by staff in their presentation. Preferably, we would have several open public forum workshops and all conditions of approval would be captured in the final site plan approval, we need language to make this preferred path happen. Thank you for your consideration.

Suggestions to consider :

Add page 191, line 12-14, “prohibit private oral and written communications between members of the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board and the Applicant or the Applicant’s agents, prior to the completion of the quasi-judicial hearing, in favor of open public forum workshops regarding the development projects proposed; for a developer engaging citizen groups to advocate on their behalf, the general public in open public forum workshops must be given equal opportunity to comment on the project to prevent perceived project bias; and make other minor revisions; and

Add page 192, 2.c.(3). The public may participate so long as comments are on topic and not repetitive., 2.c.(4) Council or Board Members may not testify either for or against a project unless they have recused themselves from the vote.

Add page 193, 4. Ex-Parte Communications A. Written Communications. For comments submitted to all of Town Council, the Town Clerk provides the ex parte communication list to be included within the record of the proceeding, and all or part of these comments will either be read into the record or a summary will be provided, and the comments become part of the record of the proceeding. The Town adopts the ex parte form that must be completed by each board member and council member to be turned in as part of the record of the proceeding.

Add, page 194, Conduct of the Hearing 8.A. If there is a mailing that was received by all TC members or by one TC member that was then forwarded to the Town Clerk to share with all of Town Council members, then the clerk will summarize and put this information into the record of the proceeding.

Conduct of the Hearing 8.B. The Town Staff shall act as neutral fact finder in its presentation. The cadence of speech, tone and vocabulary used must be objective as to discerning competent substantial evidence that the project either meets code requirements or does not. The Mayor or Council members may move to cancel or reschedule a hearing if the staff presentation is perceived as advocating on behalf of a project rather than presented as neutral fact finder.

Add Page 195, 11. Time Limits – delete and substitute

- A. Applicant – the number of presenters and the time of the presentation be limited based on the complexity of the project. No matter how many presenters’ special permission must be received to spend more than one hour on the presentation. Whatever time is given to the applicant, to speak in favor of a project, then

an equal amount of time shall be given to members of the public who oppose the project to prevent perceived bias.

- B. Participants – allowed to speak so long as relevant on topic and not repetitive. The purpose of public participation is to give the decisionmakers on the project an opportunity to hear public opinion both for and against a project. The Town Staff in their P&Z review capacity will have spent many hours with the applicant reviewing the project. The open public forum workshops held prior to the quasi-judicial hearing and the public input at the quasi-judicial hearing is intended to level the playing field so that residents who are opposed to the project have an opportunity to express their opinions, to be heard, and for their evidence to be considered in the Town decision making. The preference is to have more than one open public forum workshop so that the public is involved in the process.
- i. Members of the Public Opposed to the Project or with ideas to improve the project – given same amount of time as the applicant.
 - ii. Members of the Public in Favor of a Project are given a time less than the applicant and cannot repeat evidence already presented.
- C. Participants shall be given the opportunity to speak and rebut evidence submitted as fact.
- D. Expert Witnesses – as much time as necessary so long as relevant and not repetitive.

Page 196, item 14. **DELETE ALL.** *Discussion - I do not believe that we should remove our right to reconsider. Especially, if facts are presented that are later refuted as not true or if there was a misunderstanding of the law on an issue that is later clarified. We do not do great job on our Staff memos and applicant presentations are sometimes misleading so I believe that we should allow reconsideration. Often there are project changes that are not committed to the site plan but are oral at the hearing, if later it is determined that there was not a meeting of the minds on an oral promise by a developer, the Town Council should have the opportunity to object at a later date. [recent examples, Caretta approvals given based on a power point presentation for site plan amendments; also Pulte Project conditions of approval were not committed to a site plan to show what the work would entail.]*

From: Caitlin Copeland <ccopeland@juno-beach.fl.us>

Sent: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 2:48 PM

To: Town Council <town_council@juno-beach.fl.us>; Len Rubin <len@torcivialaw.com>

Cc: Leadership Team <leadership@juno-beach.fl.us>; Fiorella Verdecia <fverdecia@juno-beach.fl.us>

Subject: Town Council Meeting Agenda Packet - October 23, 2024 at 5:30PM

Good Afternoon:

Please see the links below to the Agenda Packet for the Town Council Meeting on Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at 5:30PM:

[Town Council Meeting - October 23, 2024 \(PDF\)](#)

[Town Council Meeting - October 23, 2024 \(HTML\)](#)

Do Not Reply to All.

Caitlin E. Copeland-Rodriguez, MMC

Town Clerk

Town of Juno Beach

340 Ocean Drive

Juno Beach, FL 33408
ccopeland@juno-beach.fl.us
Phone: (561)656-0316

Item #11.

Please note: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from local officials regarding town business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your e-mail communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure.

VILLAGE OF NORTH PALM BEACH
QUASI-JUDICIAL PROCEDURES

Intent

These procedures are intended to provide an equitable and efficient method for the Village Council and the Planning Commission to hear matters that are considered quasi-judicial in nature. These procedures shall apply to all quasi-judicial matters, except as otherwise set forth herein.

Definitions

For the purpose of these procedures, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning:

Interested person means any person, natural or corporate, who owns property, owns a business or resides within five hundred (500) feet of the property that is the subject of the application or any person, natural or corporate, who will suffer a negative effect to a protected interest as a result of the quasi-judicial application, where such interest exceeds in degree the general interest of the community or public at large.

Applicant means any person, corporation or other legal entity who files an application with the Community Development Department determined by Village Staff to be quasi-judicial in nature.

Party or *parties* means the Applicant, the Village, and any Interested Person who has complied with the notice provisions set forth below and meets the applicable criteria.

Quasi-judicial body means the Village Council or the Planning Commission acting in its quasi-judicial capacity.

Quasi-judicial in nature means the application of a general rule or policy to specific individuals, interests, or activities by the quasi-judicial body, as more specifically set forth below.

Quasi-judicial matters

(a) Matters that are quasi-judicial in nature involve the actions of public officials who are required to investigate facts, or ascertain the existence of facts, hold hearings, weigh evidence and draw conclusions from such facts, as a basis for their official action, and to exercise discretion of a judicial nature and any other decision involving the implementation, rather than formation, of Village policy. Quasi-judicial matters include, but may not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- (1) Applications for the site-specific rezoning of real property;
- (2) Applications for site plan and appearance approval;
- (3) Applications for special exception uses;
- (4) Applications for Planned Unit Developments;
- (5) Applications for variances;
- (6) Administrative appeals; and
- (7) Applications for plat approval

(b) For all quasi-judicial matters which require more than one reading, the first reading shall constitute the quasi-judicial proceeding. Once a decision is rendered to grant or grant with conditions the relief sought by the applicant, then the second reading shall be procedural in nature with the Village Council ratifying and affirming its prior decision. If new evidence is introduced which, if brought to the attention

of the Village Council at the first reading, would have had a material impact on its decision, the Village Council may reopen the quasi-judicial hearing.

(c) The formal procedures set forth herein may be waived by the Village for applications seeking only appearance review and approval, such as sign face and color changes, or applications that are essentially ministerial nature, such as plat approval.

Notice procedures for Interested Persons

(a) Interested persons are entitled to a fair and impartial hearing, notice of the hearing, and an opportunity to be heard.

(b) Any Interested Person desiring to become a party in a quasi-judicial proceeding shall provide written notice to the Community Development Department which notice shall, at a minimum, set forth the Interested Person's name, address, e-mail address (if applicable) and telephone number, and indicate how the person qualifies as an Interested Person for the proceeding at issue. The filing of notice with the Community Development Department shall serve as notice of the Interested Person's request to appear at the applicable quasi-judicial proceeding to testify, present evidence, bring forth witnesses, and cross-examine witnesses. The required notice must be received by the Community Development Department no later than the close of business (5:00 p.m.) five (5) business days prior to the hearing. The Department, in consultation with the Village Attorney, shall verify that the person seeking designation as an Interested Person satisfies the requirements for such status and shall provide written confirmation. In the event multiple Interested Persons seeking to become a party in a quasi-judicial proceeding share the same protected interest and are members of the same community association, the Village shall recognize the community association as the Interested Person absent a compelling reason for each Interested Person to be recognized as a separate party.

(c) The written confirmation from the Community Development Department in subsection (b) above shall serve as the notice for the Interested Person to appear at the quasi-judicial proceeding, where he/she will be afforded party status. A copy shall also be provided to the Applicant.

Procedures for quasi-judicial proceedings

- (a) The following is a guideline for conducting quasi-judicial hearings:
- (1) *Introduction.* The presiding officer will introduce the case and, if appropriate, defer to the Village Attorney for the reading of the ordinance or resolution caption.
 - (2) *Swearing in.* All persons wishing to speak on a quasi-judicial matter shall take an oath to tell the truth. This includes attorneys representing parties, as well as members of the public providing comment.
 - (3) *Presentation of evidence.* The presiding officer shall have the option of determining the order to expedite the proceedings. However, all parties shall be provided the opportunity to present their case. The general order of the presentation of evidence shall be as follows:
 - a. *Presentations.* The Applicant, Village staff, and any Interested Person, in that order, shall each have twenty (20) minutes to make an initial presentation.
 - b. *Rebuttal.* The Applicant, Village staff, and any Interested Person, in that order, shall each have five (5) minutes for rebuttal. During this time, the parties may

present rebuttal testimony, cross-examine opposing witnesses, impeach witnesses, and rebut evidence.

- c. *Public comment.* Any person who did not speak during presentations and rebuttals may speak for not more than three (3) minutes. Prior to being heard, each speaker must state his/her name and address for the record.
- d. *Questions.* The presiding officer and any member of the Village Council or Planning Commission, as applicable, may ask questions of any party, witness, or person providing public comment.
- e. *Closing argument.* Any Interested Person, Village staff, and the Applicant, in that order, shall each have five minutes for closing argument.

(5) *Action by the quasi-judicial body.*

- a. At the conclusion of the presentation of the evidence and testimony, the quasi-judicial body shall close the public hearing. The presiding officer shall entertain any motions, and the quasi-judicial body shall proceed to deliberate and vote on the motion(s).
- b. If after notice of hearing, a party does not appear, the hearing may be conducted and an order entered in the absence of the party.
- c. If during the deliberations a question arises which the quasi-judicial body desires to ask, it shall reopen the public hearing, pose the question and allow each party the opportunity to respond to the question posed prior to closing the public hearing again and resuming deliberations.

(b) *Representation of parties*

(1) *Attorney.* Any natural person or party may represent himself/herself or may be represented by an attorney. If the party chooses to be represented by an attorney, a notice of representation, signed by the attorney, shall be filed with the Community Development Department prior to the hearing.

(2) *Non-attorney.* In the event any party (other than a corporation or the Village) chooses to be represented by a non-attorney, such party shall file a written, notarized power of attorney with the Community Development Department prior to the hearing stating that the person appearing has the full power and authority to act on behalf of the party in the matter.

(3) *Business representative.* A corporation or limited liability company may appear through a representative who is listed with the Florida Department of State as a current officer or manager of an active corporation or limited liability company entity. The representative must identify himself/herself in that business capacity.

(c) *Evidence.*

(1) All relevant evidence shall be admitted. The quasi-judicial body may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence.

(2) Except as provided herein, neither the Federal Rules of Evidence nor the Florida Evidence Code shall apply, but fundamental due process shall be observed and shall govern said proceedings at all times.

(d) *Orders.*

(1) If the quasi-judicial body denies relief to the Applicant, the village shall issue a subsequent written order setting forth the reasons therefor.

(2) The quasi-judicial body shall have the authority to issue any and all orders to afford the proper relief, and this authority shall include the authority to grant continuances to a date certain.

(e) *Hearing record.* The Village Clerk shall maintain custody of all recordings of testimony, evidence, and documents submitted into evidence at the hearing. This shall include all back up documentation, as well as any document presented at the hearing or demonstrative exhibit seen by the Village Council or Planning Commission while making its decision. Nothing herein shall be deemed to prohibit any party from providing a court reporter for the proceedings. Any party wishing to appeal the decision of a quasi-judicial body shall have the responsibility to ensure compliance with F.S. §286.0105.

(f) *Continuances.* At the request of the Applicant, Village staff or an Interested Person who is a party to the proceeding or on its own volition, the Village Council or the Planning Commission may continue a quasi-judicial proceeding to a time and date certain. The decision to grant a continuance shall be in the sole discretion of the quasi-judicial body.

(g) *Rehearing/Reconsideration and Appeal.* While there is no specific rule or statutory authority for the rehearing or reconsideration of a quasi-judicial decision, a local government body or board has the inherent power and authority to rehear and reconsider a previously entered order. Notwithstanding this inherent power and authority, the Village determines that neither the Village Council nor the Planning Commission shall entertain any request for rehearing or reconsideration of a previously entered quasi-judicial order. A final determination of the Village Council or Planning Commission acting in its quasi-judicial capacity is subject to judicial review in a court of competent jurisdiction within thirty (30) days of the Council or Commission's rendition of its written determination.



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 18, 2025
Prepared By: C. Copeland, MMC, Town Clerk
Item Title: Discussion on Filling Vacant Seat on Audit Oversight Review Committee

DISCUSSION:

On November 20, 2024, the Chair of the Audit Oversight Committee, Nancy Wolf, resigned from the Committee.

The Audit Oversight Committee shall consist of five (5) members to serve at the pleasure of the Town Council for a term of two years (2024-2026). Each of the members shall be town residents with educational and/or practice experience in the fields of accounting, finance, auditing, or in related fields involving operational compliance or oversight.

On March 20 and March 26, 2024, the Council had received two late application submissions for the Audit Oversight Committee from Anita Bloom and Larry Sorsby. The following motion was made by the Town Council at the April 1, 2024, Special Town Council Meeting for selection of the Audit Oversight Committee Members:

MOTION: Halpern/Davis made a motion to appoint Anthony Pace, Nancy Wolf, Andrew Spilos, William Viggiano, and Anita Bloom to the Audit Oversight Committee.

ACTION: The motion passed 3-2 with Mayor Wheeler and Vice Mayor Pro Tem Hosta opposed.

RECOMMENDATION:

Appoint a member to the Audit Oversight Committee to fulfill the remainder of the term for the vacant seat (2024-2026).



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: C. Copeland-Rodriguez, MMC, Town Clerk
Item Title: Selection of Town Manager Finalists

DISCUSSION:

Colin Baenziger & Associates, an executive search firm hired by the Town Council, are recommending candidates for the position of Town Manager (see attached memorandum and backup material from the firm).

RECOMMENDATION:

Colin Baenziger & Associates recommend that the Town Council consider selecting finalists to conduct interviews on March 5th.

MEMORANDUM

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

TO: Mayor and Town Council
Juno Beach, FL

FROM: Colin Baenziger and Ron Williams **DATE:** February 20, 2025

RE: Town Manager Search Update: Recommended Candidates

We are recommending the Town consider nine candidates (of the 61 who applied) to be its next Town Manager. We believe all the candidates are very strong and would do an excellent job for Juno Beach if hired. Brief summaries of their credentials follow as well as a summary of the next steps.

The Recommended Candidates

- Sonia Alves-Viveiros:** Ms. Alves-Viveiros has been the Business Administrator of Edison Township, NJ (population 106,836) since 2022. There she oversees all the typical functions of a city as well as a health department, a department of senior citizen service, a municipal court and an animal shelter. Previously, she was the City Manager for Englewood, NJ (population 29,034) for two years, and the Business Administrator for the Maplewood Township, NJ (population 25,684) for four years. Her management style is to be communicative and collaborative. She creates a participatory environment where department heads and subordinates feel valued. Having regular meetings with elected officials and staff ensures a constant flow of communication and avoids misunderstandings. Her greatest achievement has been overcoming and rising through challenging moments as she worked her way from an internship to City Manager. It has been a labor of love, and she is truly appreciative of the challenges she has faced. Each has taught her something and made her a better municipal manager. As she has progressed through local government, she has learned the importance of communication, building strong relationships, and developing more effective teams. Each of her roles was an opportunity, and she constantly strived to grow and improve. Through her experience, she inspires other public servants to be proud of the work they do, no matter what role they play. Ms. Alves-Viveiros has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from Seton Hall University.
- Darren Coldwell:** Mr. Coldwell has been the City Manager for Page, AZ (population 7,287) since 2019. Prior to his current employment, he was the County Manager for Lincoln County, MT (population 19,677) for two years. Before that, he built and owned a successful small business that he sold after 25 years of operation. Among his other notable achievements, he served as (strong) Mayor of Troy, MT, (population then of about 938) for four years. In that position, he managed the day-to-day operations of the city. His management style is to mentor, empower, and respect. He listens to the staff and emphasizes customer service. He is an expert in conflict resolution and a consensus builder who knows how to help get everyone to a yes answer. His greatest achievement was remedying the

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problematic intersection of HWY 89 and North Lake Powell Boulevard in Page. It was poorly designed and characterized by numerous accidents and fatalities. They decided the solution was a roundabout, but then had difficulty funding the project. Finally, he decided to pursue a state appropriation. It took three years of regular trips to the capital and innumerable phone calls to their senators and representatives, but in the end, he was successful. Page was the first city in the state to receive a city appropriation for an ADOT project. The \$8 million project is currently under construction and will prevent accidents and save lives. Mr. Coldwell has a bachelor's degree in interpersonal communication and organizational communication from the University of Montana. He has received the FEMA 101 certification.

- **Rob Cole:** Mr. Cole was most recently the Village Manager for Islamorada, FL (population 6,943) for one year. Previously he worked for the Village of Scarsdale, NY (population 17,557) for a total of eight years and was the Village Manager for the last two years of his tenure. Before that he was with the Village of Oak Park, IL (population 52,398) for nineteen years, most recently serving as Assistant Village Manager. With approximately 30 years of progressively responsible local government experience, supplemented by private sector quality assurance and financial services management experience, Mr. Cole feels he has a well-rounded understanding of what it takes for local government organizations to excel, as well as the exceptional ability to collaborate with others to execute accordingly. Recognizing the multi-jurisdictional context within which local governments operate, it is noteworthy that his professional background includes substantial responsibility for building and maintaining relationships at the regional and sub-regional levels. To illustrate, he served in appointed capacities on several regional and sub-regional entities including the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Land Use Committee (responsible for supporting development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan for a six-county area comprised of over 6M residents), and the West Central Municipal Conference's Legislative and Intergovernmental Committees (each representing approximately 50 governmental entities accountable to over 500,000 residents). In recognition of his intergovernmental, legislative, and project management skills, he was appointed as the staff lead for the Village of Oak's participation in a proposed expansion of I-290, an exceptionally controversial \$2B federal highway project traversing the southern quarter of the Village. In Islamorada, his team collaborated with Monroe County, other Florida Keys local governments, and state and federal agencies on critical multi-jurisdictional issues as emergency preparedness and response, land development and environmental protection, climate adaptation and resilience, and other shared opportunities and challenges. Mr. Cole has a bachelor's degree in liberal arts with concentrations in writing and ethics and a master's degree in public service management with concentration in metropolitan planning and urban affairs from DePaul University.
- **Bob Daniels:** Mr. Daniels has been the Town Manager for Sewall's Point, FL (population 2,064) since 2022. Prior to this he was the City Manager for Maderia Beach, FL (population 3,945) for three years, the Town Manager for Melbourne Beach, FL (population 3,292) for two years, and the Interim Town Manager for North Bay Village, FL (population 8,198) for five years while also serving as the Police Chief. Before that, he served in numerous

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positions in law enforcement in Florida and Arizona. Notably, he served as Assistant Police Chief in Juno Beach for three years. Mr. Daniels has a participatory management style, which facilitates an exchange of knowledge. He always takes time to speak with staff and is concerned about the challenges they have. Some think of legacies as the names on a building or accolades they obtain, but he believes in legacies left in his teammates. He is in his second year as Chairperson of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a member of the Treasure Coast League of Cities and the Martin County Local Mitigation Strategies Committee, all of which have assisted him in moving the Town's agenda forward. These interactions have also been helpful with both current and future projects. He has been fortunate to represent the Town of Sewall's Point at the Local Delegation Meeting and has successfully received legislative appropriations. Mr. Daniels has a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in public administration from Florida Atlantic University.

- **Glenn Irby:** Mr. Irby was most recently the City Manager for Edgewater, FL (population 23,754) for five years. Previously he was the City Administrator for Apopka, FL (population 49,458) for three years, and the City Manager for Umatilla, FL (population 3,699) for nine years. Among his other notable achievements, he served as Mayor of Minneola, FL, (population then of about 6,000) for a short period. Mr. Irby has found that participatory management is his niche. Even as an elected official, he was known to roll up his sleeves and assist with utility line breaks and clearing of streets after major storm events. He wants to be fully informed on the progress of ongoing projects so he can provide up-to-date information to citizens and the City Council. This management style assists in "growing" employees. When appointed in Apopka, a new Florida Hospital was breaking ground near a major collection of new state highways. The hospital was greatly needed but no access to any of the highways had been considered. Mr. Irby met with a developer who owned land in the same area and successfully formed a public-private partnership. The developer negotiated with the Central Florida Expressway Authority to develop and construct an interchange. That provide access to the hospital as well as opening this relatively desolate area to both residential and sorely needed commercial development. Mr. Irby has a bachelor's degree in business administration and accounting from the University of Central Florida and a master's degree in public administration from Troy State University.
- **Lynne Ladner:** Ms. Ladner has been the Town Manager for Ocean Ridge, FL (population 1,831) since 2023. Previously she was the Interim Finance and HR Director for Pahokee, FL (population 6,866), the Interim Town Manager for Kenneth City, FL (population 4,994), the City Manager for Hart, MI (population 1,984) for three years, the City Manager for South Lyon, MI (population 11,811) for four years, and the City Administrator for Hiawatha, KS (population 3,375) for seven years. Ms. Ladner's management philosophy is rooted in servant leadership. She adapts to the unique needs of each team member which fosters a culture of accountability and growth in the organization. One of her proudest achievements is mentoring employees who have advanced to leadership roles. For instance, she hired a water system operator in Hiawatha, KS, who, under her guidance, rose to become the City Administrator. While general accounting is a less enjoyable aspect of her role, she has strengthened her skills through collaboration with financial experts, ensuring accuracy and

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effective budget management. Ms. Ladner has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from the Grand Valley State University. She is an ICMA credentialed manager.

- **Bill Lawrence:** Mr. Lawrence has been the Town Manager for Lady Lake, FL (population 17,311) since 2021. Previously Mr. Lawrence was the City Manager for Bowling Green, FL (population 2,902) for two years, the Town Manager for Warren, ME (population 4,718) for three years, for Howland, ME (population 1,201) for one year, White Springs, FL (population 764) for one year, and for Lincoln, ME (population 5,300) for three years. Mr. Lawrence's career movement was caused by commitments to aging family members. He has a coaching management style and leads by example. He believes in building teams and surrounding himself with those who are better than he is. His greatest achievement occurred in Lincoln. The paper mill there was the town's largest employer and taxpayer. In 2013 a significant boiler explosion shut down the mill, and it never recovered. Mr. Lawrence contacted county, state, and federal authorities for assistance for the laid off and then workers. He brought the team together to work on a budget reduction to offset the tax base loss. The Council adopted a new budget to fit their new situation. They then rebranded the town as an outdoor destination instead of a mill town. They used traditional and social media to market their region. This effort brought four retail shops that created 90 jobs during an 18-month period. Further, the population has remained constant at 5,300. Mr. Lawrence has an associate degree in criminal justice and has completed 90 credits towards a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Maine.
- **Christopher Russo:** Mr. Russo was most recently the City Manager for Sunny Isles Beach, FL (population 22,064) for a total of fourteen years (from 2000 to 2005 and 2012 to 2021). He also served as the Village Manager of Port Chester, NY (population 30,000) from 2008 to 2012 and was the Village Administrator for Rye Brook, NY (population 8,616) from 1987 to 2000. Mr. Russo's management style is management by objective. It is a straightforward process of setting goals and objectives, and then working together to achieve them. His most significant accomplishment was assisting in instituting the city manager/council form of government in two new municipal incorporations. He was the first village manager in Rye Brook, NY, after it changed its form of government in 1987. Then in 1996/1997, he worked as a consultant to Sunny Isles Beach FL, in establishing the government, becoming its city Manager in 2000. As Sunny Isles' manager, he worked with the City Commission to turn a small seaside town composed of a nice residential area but also containing a series of dilapidated motels along its north south arterial into an attractive and fully functional city that provides excellent services for its residents. Creating the new city's foundation, hiring the staff, improving aging infrastructure, planning and leading the construction of government centers, community centers and parks in both communities has been the highlight of his career. Mr. Russo has a bachelor's and master's degree in public administration from Pace University.
- **William "Lee" Smith:** Mr. Smith was most recently the County Manager for Chatham County, GA (population 296,329 and its county seat is Savannah) and he served in that role for eight years. Previously he was the County Manager for Wayne County, NC (population

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124,634) for thirteen years, and the County Manager for Washington County, NC (population 13,589) for eight years. His management style is inclusive and dependent on communication. One of his numerous achievements occurred while in Chatham County. There he was successful in moving the county to self-insured health and workers compensation programs. The County's insurance rates had skyrocketed over the last 20 years, particularly as they pertained to law enforcement, emergency medical services, and fire department employees. Through health and wellness programs (such as weight loss and smoking cessation), they were able to reduce the costs of emergency room visits and days out of work. His administration also created an employee health clinic with Marathon Health. Employees now have a primary care facility to diagnose potential health issues, treat present issues, and provide advice on how to avoid future health problems through diet, regular monitoring, and exercise. This initiative reduced health costs in the County by almost 40% in five years. Mr. Smith has a bachelor's degree in business management and a master's degree in public administration from the University of North Carolina.

Next Steps

I plan to reach out to you tomorrow to discuss the candidates. We will select finalists on February 26th, and they will come to Juno Beach for a tour, public reception, and formal interviews on March 4th and 5th. You are scheduled to make your final decision on March 7th. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Town of Juno Beach, FL

*Town Manager
Semi-Finalists*

Colin Baenziger & Associates
2055 South Atlantic Avenue
Suite 504
Daytona Beach Shores, FL
32118
Cell: (561) 707-3537

Juno Beach: Town Manager Semi-Finalists

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Candidate Materials: Reviewing and Interpreting Them

Suggestions for Reviewing Candidate Materials

The materials contained herein are prepared to provide you with information concerning the candidates we are recommending you consider. The materials we and the candidates prepare are designed to provide you with information first and foremost concerning the candidate's ability to do the job. You can then review the materials and determine which candidates you wish to interview.

As you can see, what we have for each candidate is often fairly extensive. When you review the materials, we recommend you begin with:

- The Candidate's Resume. This document provides a brief history of the candidate's employment and possibly some personal information.
- The Candidate's Cover Letter and Introduction. These have been prepared by the candidate and offer insight into what the individual feels is important and his/her ability to communicate.
- The References. These materials provide information concerning what people who know the candidate think about the individual. It is important to note that people are often reluctant to say anything negative about a candidate so even though we push fairly hard to get them to identify weaknesses, the weaknesses and negatives are often limited. Further, if a candidate's references are poor or if we see significant red flags, we generally do not present that individual. We also attempt to reach references who know the candidate but were not provided.

The other materials for each candidate are important as well but probably do not need the same level of attention. They are:

- The Internet / Newspaper Archives Materials. These materials provide information concerning the issues the candidate has dealt with and what he/she has done well and not so well. We do not recommend that you read these materials word for word but rather you scan them and carefully read the sections you feel are the most important. Please also see the following pages for comments concerning the Internet's limitations.
- The Background Checks. For the most part, the Candidates we present tend to have very few if any items of note on their records.

It is important to understand what is provided in the background checks and what it not. First, National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) is the gold standard for reviewing someone's criminal past. Its use, however, is limited to law enforcement agencies for specific purposes. It is not something we have access to. Our nationwide criminal checks are run through a database assembled from data from a wide range of state and local agencies and is not as complete as the NCIC database. Nonetheless, we have confidence in it and have used it successfully for years. Further, we supplement it with checks of the databases of the county and state of residence.

You also need to be aware the criminal databases we use contain convictions and not allegations, complaints, or arrests (unless these lead to a conviction). We also do not check records in family court. The reason is cases are often emotional and parties are not always truthful in attempting to achieve their desired goal. If the allegations are serious and substantiated, they are generally found in the criminal records or covered in the newspaper, at least for people with significant positions in the public sector. Further, a substantial body of law exists concerning what can and cannot be considered in government employment. For example, it is illegal to use a bankruptcy as the basis for not considering a candidate.

Overall, we try to focus on someone's ability to perform the duties of their job. We do not delve into their personal lives which can be murky. It should also be noted that a large body of law exists concerning what can and cannot be considered and it varies from state to state. We try to stay safely on the right side of the line, both for our own sake and that of our clients.

The other thing to consider is we do not want you to be surprised. Even if you cannot legally use a matter in your decision making, if it has been reported, we want you to hear about it from us rather than a third party. That way we can present you with a fair and unbiased analysis of the situation and you can determine what weight is appropriate to give the matter in your decision making.

Interpreting the Internet

When considering material gathered from the Internet, it is important to read carefully and to understand the Internet's limitations.

In part of each candidate's materials is what CB&A's staff gleaned from the Internet and from newspaper archives concerning the semi-finalists. While we would like to think everything published is accurate, we know it is not. For example:

- 1) Some news sources have biases concerning particular individuals or write with incomplete information. Further, reporters have different capabilities and some do not understand the matters they are reporting on. Hence the story may not be accurate.
- 2) Occasionally, governments purposely provide information to the media that is not accurate or the full story, particularly when someone is leaving their employment.
- 3) Some elected officials occasionally make allegations concerning managers or staff members for political reasons whether or not the allegations are based in fact. Further, officials sometimes shoot from the hip without a complete understanding of the real issue and/or all the facts.
- 4) Some residents make allegations that are inaccurate or untrue and which are repeated in the media.
- 5) An employee may be blamed for issues and problems that come to the surface during his/her tenure but existed long before the individual took office. In fact, occasionally an employee uncovers a problem and is dealing with it. That very action can bring problems to light and result in a news story that reflects badly on the person who is actually trying to fix the problem rather than the person who let it fester for years and did nothing.
- 6) Managers/Directors may have more articles than, say, assistants because of the nature of their work. Assistants tend to be much lower profile and hence, less is written about them. Further when assistants make mistakes, the manager/director tends to get blamed.

Further, the Internet changes daily. Articles are added and removed. What is provided here is a snapshot in time concerning what was available on the Internet the day(s) we did the research. If someone were to search the internet tomorrow concerning information on these candidates, additional information or less information might be found. Search engines take up to six weeks

to “find” stories after they are posted on websites. By the same token, a story appearing on a website yesterday may be deleted and may not be there tomorrow.

We should also note we have not included everything we found. Many articles mentioning the candidate’s name have little if any relevance to the candidate’s qualifications. Hence these are often been excluded. Further, if multiple articles exist concerning the same issue, we often select the most relevant and complete articles and do not include the rest.

Where issues of concern were found in the following articles, we have attempted to research them and determine their true nature. Where we found information that we believed was serious in nature and the result of the candidate’s actions or that would could potentially embarrass you, our client, we would have dropped the candidate from consideration and his/her information would not be in this notebook.

One final note is that we generally do not include information from blogs as they are notoriously slanted and unreliable.

Section 2

Interview Procedures / Questions

Section 2

Interviewing Candidates

The interview is generally the final step in the selection process. At this point, the executive recruiter has screened the candidates and is satisfied that all finalists are capable of doing an outstanding job. Reference checks and more extensive background checks have been conducted, including discussions with individuals of our choosing and not on the candidate's list of references. Internet searches have been completed, along with a review of newspaper archives. Credit history, educational verification, and criminal background checks have also been run so there should be no surprises once a candidate is selected.

The interview is an opportunity for both the elected officials and the candidate to learn about each other and to determine how well they will work together. It is also an opportunity for the elected officials to evaluate each candidate's management abilities and to decide if he/she would be a good leader for the community. It is important for both the elected officials and the candidate to act professionally and in a manner that will impress the other party, all the while learning what they can about the other.

Since all the candidates are capable of performing the job, the focus of the interview should be on determining who fits best with the elected officials, the staff and the community. Some candidates will have more experience than others. Some have special areas of expertise that others do not. Some have better instincts, and some are simply more capable than others. While those with less experience may make more mistakes than others, they may also hit more home runs. The key is to determine which candidate will have the best chemistry with the elected officials, but also who can best lead the staff. No matter how technically sound a candidate may be, if he or she cannot build and maintain strong working relationships with the elected officials and staff, he/she will not last long as the community's appointed leader. Of course, experience and expertise are critical and should not be overlooked.

The Internal Candidate / Local Candidate

If an internal candidate / local candidate is among the finalists, elected officials occasionally will assume they already know the individual and just chit-chat instead of actually conducting an interview. Doing so is neither fair to the candidate nor the organization. Internal / local candidates may have ideas about what they would do differently as the City Manager, but have not been willing or able to convey these thoughts to the elected officials, much less act upon them. Unless the same hard questions are asked of the candidate as the external candidates, meaningful comparisons cannot be drawn.

It should also be recognized that a competent, likable, internal / local candidate will have a natural advantage in any job competition. To select the known quantity is a natural, human tendency, particularly in public sector recruitments. It feels comfortable and is viewed as safe. It may also be exactly the wrong thing to do. For example, we have seen governing bodies select

Section 2

individuals with whom they were comfortable and assume the individual will grow into the position. In our experience, they generally do not. Once someone has the top position, he/she has no mentors and it is difficult for them to improve in areas where they are weak. There simply is no one to teach them so they to focus on the areas where they are strong rather than improving in areas where they are weak.

Further, if the candidate does not do well in the position, then a year or so later the same governing body is struggling with a difficult decision. What should it do with someone who was a valuable employee or friend but who is not providing the necessary leadership? The choices become to continue with the employee even though he/she is not performing up to standards, demote the employee, or terminate his/her employment altogether. None of these choices is attractive, but one must be selected. Someone who was a perfectly good employee in his/her previous position may be lost. Of course, this same candidate, with a few more years of experience and mentoring, might make an excellent City Manager.

Please understand that we are not trying to discourage the hiring of an internal / local candidate. We do believe, however, that the internal / local candidate must be examined just as critically as the other candidates. We have found it helpful to ask the internal / local candidate what problems he/she sees in the organization and what he/she would propose to resolve them. If the individual does not have a good, specific answer to that question, then he/she is not ready to be the community's City Manager. External candidates will not have the same depth of experience or knowledge about the government, so it would not be fair to expect the same response to this question as you would from the internal / local candidate.

Another thing to keep in mind is that, if an internal candidate is hired as the City Manager, then a search must begin to fill his/her position. If an outside candidate is hired as the manager, in most cases the internal candidate stays, but is somewhat disappointed. Of course there is also the risk that the internal candidate may be so disappointed that he/she decides to seek employment elsewhere.

Possible Interview Questions

The questions on the next few pages may be useful in determining the information that you need. There are undoubtedly others. The point is to ask the questions that you feel will give you the best idea of what the candidate believes, how he/she will work with you and with the staff, and whether or not he/she is good match for the community.

The following topics and questions are divided into four groups. The first set contains standard introductory questions covering an individual's background, management style, and experience. The second set is designed to provide information about how the candidate will interact with the elected officials and staff, and to focus on particular issues that may be of concern to the community. Set III should always be asked at the end of the interview. The fourth section outlines what questions should not asked as they could provoke a law suit.

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

Since time will not permit asking all the questions, you should select the ones that are most important to you.

Topics / Question Set I:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in our community?
3. What is your management style?
4. What would your staff say about you as a manager?
5. What would your elected officials say about you?
6. Have you fired people? How did you handle it? How did you feel about it?
7. What do you think your strengths are?
8. What do you think your weaknesses are?
9. What has been your biggest success? Tell us about it.
10. What has been your biggest failure (or mistake) in your career? What did you learn from it?
11. If you were asked to cite one particular situation or event in your career that gave you the greatest satisfaction, what would it be?
12. What would you do during the first six months in our community?
13. What do you hope to learn in the first six months in our community? What do you expect to teach us?
14. What do you believe to be the challenges and opportunities facing our community? How are these likely to change in the future?
15. The City wants a City Manager with new ideas and lots of energy. How do you meet those requirements?

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

16. What is your value system? How will your values determine how you manage our City?
17. Why should we select you to be our next City Manager?
18. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Topics / Question Set II:

1. Explain what you believe the role of our City Manager should be.
2. What are the three most important commandments for a City Manager?
3. Can you give me a breakdown of your typical day as a City Manager?
4. How would you view your relationship with the elected officials?
5. How will you go about building a strong relationship with elected officials? How will you maintain it?
6. How do you build consensus on an elected body when it is deeply divided?
7. What information do you think the governing body needs to have concerning day-to-day operations and on-going projects?
8. How will you keep the elected officials informed?
9. What kind of direction do you expect to get from the elected officials? What will you do if you do not feel they have made it clear how they want the staff to precede on a particular issue?
10. There is an expression, "A good City Manager only needs to be able count to three." Of course in our case, that would be five. Could you please comment on that statement?
11. What do you do when your views on handling a situation differ from those of the governing body as a whole?
12. What will you do if a particular elected official disagrees with how you believe a situation should be handled?

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

13. What will you do when an elected official contacts a department head directly and tells him/her to do something?
14. What would you do if an elected official walked into your office and told you that you needed to repaint it navy blue?
15. Can you tell your elected officials what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear?
16. How well do you accept criticism? Please give me an example of a case where an elected official suggested you could improve your performance. How did you respond and what did you do?
17. What are your core values and which one is most important to you?
18. Tell us something unique about yourself.
19. Can you describe an ethical issue that you have had to deal with in your career and how you handled it?
20. As a manager, how do you evaluate your own performance?
21. What do you believe to be the highlights of your career over the past three years?
22. How will you build a strong relationship with our existing staff?
23. What kind of relationship do you want to have with the senior managers and the rest of the staff, and how will you establish it?
24. How many people reported to you in your last job? How did you keep them informed of the community's priorities? What do you intend to do differently if you are appointed here?
25. How will you keep the general employees informed of the elected officials' priorities?
26. To what extent do you believe contact with citizens and citizen's groups is important? How do you typically handle this responsibility? How will you build relationships with the community?
27. How do you plan to communicate with our residents?

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

28. How many community meetings have you attended in the last six months? What was the last one you attended and why did you go?
29. Sensitivity to different genders, races and ethnic groups is a priority for us. Can you provide us with some specific examples of how you have demonstrated your commitment to these principles in the past?
30. People are: _____. Please fill in the blank and explain your choice of that word or words.
31. How will you go about identifying the organization's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement? Once you have identified them, how will you go about making changes?
32. How will you approach the short and long range planning processes? What system do you use to set goals and objectives? How do you monitor progress against these goals and objectives?
33. Please describe your experience with strategic planning.
34. Please outline the similarities between our community and the previous communities you have served.
35. History defines the future. Can you please define the character of our community based on what you have seen and then tell what you would like it to look like in 25 years?
36. What will you do if you feel an employee is not doing his/her job in a manner you feel is satisfactory?
37. What do you do when you observe an employee - who works for a department director - who is not doing his/her job the way you think it should be done?
38. Describe the steps you would take if you needed to recruit, say, a new Planning Director.
39. Please describe a situation where you have had to "step up and lead" relative to a controversial issue.
40. Describe a situation where you had to build a team to solve a problem.

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

41. Please give an example of organizational restructuring you initiated. What was the reason for the restructuring and was it successful? Would you do anything differently if the situation presented itself again?
42. How would you go about raising morale in our organization?
43. Please describe your general experience in human resources administration including the development of personnel policies and performance appraisal systems.
44. Please describe your experience with and philosophy of labor/management relations.
45. What qualities make someone successful as a negotiator in labor contract discussions?
46. Have you sat at the bargaining table in contract negotiations? Tell us about the experience and what you learned from it.
47. Please identify the most difficult situation you have encountered with a labor union and how it was resolved.
48. What would labor unions you have dealt with say about you?
49. Describe an incident in which you played a role that embarrassed your government or caused it difficulty. What did you learn from it?
50. Are there any events in your professional or personal life that may reflect negatively upon your performance or which would be awkward or embarrassing to us if reported upon by our local/regional news media?
51. What are your long term career goals?
52. What areas of your skills/professional development do you want to work on at this point in your career?
53. How do you insure that your staff continues to develop professionally?
54. Are you willing to take calculated risks?
55. What kind of decisions did you make in your last job?

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

56. What kinds of decisions are difficult for you to make?
57. What personal skills do you feel are necessary for someone to be successful in this position?
58. What particular personal characteristic do you have that will most benefit our residents if you are hired?
59. What is your average workweek now, and what would you expect it to be if you came to work here?
60. Why did you leave your last job? (Ask if the candidate is in transition.)
61. Why do you want to leave your current job? (Ask if the candidate is currently employed.)
62. From what you know about our community, what is the most burning issue that we face, and how would you address it?
63. Strong fiscal management skills are central to this position. Please describe the most challenging budgeting situation you have encountered and how you reacted.
64. What innovative, cost saving programs and projects have you initiated and how successful were they?
65. What is your philosophy for developing and implementing a budget for our City?
66. Would you consider implementing a Zero Based Budget?
67. What techniques would you employ to develop and implement a balanced budget in these difficult economic times?
68. What techniques have you employed to reduce payroll expenses without layoffs and without reducing the level of service we provide?
69. How do you encourage staff to stay in your organization?
70. Give me some examples of cases where you have introduced new technologies to improve productivity or service delivery in a local government organization?

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

71. Like many communities, we are experiencing rapid growth and development. What would you do to protect the character of the community while permitting acceptable growth?
72. Do you view growth as a positive?
73. Tell us about your experience closing the gap between what is the ideal amount of infrastructure (roads, drainage, facilities, etc.) and what is actually present.
74. What experience do you have with economic development?
75. Please describe your experience in working with a business community, Chamber of Commerce, downtown business association, etc.
76. Tell us about an economic development project that you are particularly proud of and your role in its success.
77. What sort of concessions would you ask of developers when discussing their desire to bring a new development to our community?
78. Can you tell us about your experience with Tax Increment Financing?
79. Do you think it is necessary or appropriate to redevelop this community? If yes, how would you go about redeveloping it?
80. Do you feel it is desirable to bring new businesses to the community? What kind of businesses would you try to attract?
81. What actions would you pursue to bring jobs to our City? What sectors would you target?
82. What attributes of the City would market to businesses that you want to attract to our community?
83. Describe your experience with out-sourcing and your methodology for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of outsourcing.
84. What is your opinion of sole source procurements?
85. How will you balance the need for timely/efficient procurement with the need for checks and balances?

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

86. How would you go about building a good relationship with the County?
87. How would you go about building a positive relationship with other governments with whom you will have to deal if you are selected for this position?
88. Describe your experience in dealing with state agencies.
89. Describe your experience dealing with federal agencies.
90. Describe your experience obtaining grants. What agencies would you approach for grants? What kind of grants do you think would benefit us?
91. Are there other external sources of funds (beyond grants) that you would seek out?
92. Have you ever been involved in initiatives to contract out services? Tell us about them. Did these efforts succeed?
93. How do you feel about succession plans for managers and directors? Do you presently have one in your City?
94. What experience do you have in developing and implementing policies and programs that further the goal of green and sustainable communities?
95. Describe the kind of organization for which you would like to work. If you could change one thing in your current (or most recent) job, what would it be?
96. Who do you view as your customers? How will you interact with them?
97. What great idea have you had that did not go anywhere and why did it fail?
98. If we were look at your personnel file, what would we find? Would there be anything negative?
99. How do you respond when a resident walks into City offices and wants to meet with you about an issue that concerns him/her?
100. Would you make yourself available for two hours a week to see the public on a first-come, first-served basis?
101. How would you address a situation where an employee places the City in an embarrassing light?

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

102. What do you see as the primary drawback to being the City Manager of our community? What do you know about our operations and current employees?
103. If we hire you, would you seek a salary increase every year?
104. If the community decides to install a plaque somewhere in your honor after you leave your current job, what would it say?
105. If they decide to give you a roast, what would people say about you?
106. What was the most pertinent question you were asked today by any one of us, and how did you answer it?
107. Would you favor setting up a non-profit to deal with the feral cat and stray dog population in our community? [This question may seem a bit odd but it tests the ability of a candidate to think on his/her feet.]
108. Assume our 100th anniversary is next year. What ideas would you offer to make it a rousing success?
109. What was the last book you read and why did you choose it?
110. Who is your favorite comedian and how do you incorporate humor in your management style?
111. What did you do to prepare for today's interview?
112. If you accept this position, how long do you expect to stay?
113. How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?
114. How would you describe your ideal day off?
115. Why should we hire you?

Topics / Question Set III:

1. If you are selected as the successful candidate, and understanding that pay and benefits are matters for negotiation, tell us in broad terms what sort of compensation package you would expect?

Section 2**Possible Interview Questions**

2. If we hire you, how long would you expect to stay in the position?
3. What kind of severance package would you expect if you were terminated?
4. When would you be available to start work?
5. Is there anything which we have not discussed today that you would like us to know?
6. Are there any questions you would like to ask us?

Topics / Questions Set IV: Topics to Avoid During the Interview Process

A large body of legislation has developed over the years addressing civil rights and race/gender/age discrimination. Questions in these areas should be avoided during the interview process. The process of interviewing and selecting an applicant is no longer a simple matter of conducting a casual conversation and hoping to learn a candidate's strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. Various civil rights laws now make the average interview a process that should be approached with extreme caution. However, if you keep in mind certain basic rules, you will facilitate the process and avoid problems.

In most instances, asking inappropriate questions may raise an inference of either discrimination or retaliation against a particular candidate. In other instances, such as those involving issues of mental or physical health, inappropriate questions are presumptively discriminatory. Therefore, the interviewer must avoid questions relating to the following:

1. Political affiliation, political views, or voting history.
2. Religious beliefs or practices.
3. A candidate's race.
4. A candidate's age.
5. A candidate's national origin or ancestry.
6. A candidate's family and whether or not they would be willing/able to join them in the new City.
7. A candidate's desire to have children or raise a family.
8. Pregnancy and other gender related issues.
9. Sexual orientation or sexual practices.
10. Marital status or personal and private relationships.
11. Potentially controversial issues of race, gender or ethnicity.
12. A candidate's availability due to serving as a reserve in the military.

Any information a candidate may *volunteer* during the interview process regarding these matters does not render the interview invalid or otherwise taint the process. Consequently, open-ended questions, such as asking if the candidate wants to reveal anything else to the City that has not already been covered, are not prohibited. In fact, they can sometimes provide valuable insight into a candidate's views and perspectives.

Topics / Questions Set IV: Topics to Avoid During the Interview Process

With regard to issues of physical or mental health, many questions are appropriate after a conditional offer of employment is made, but must be avoided beforehand. The interviewer must avoid questions relating to the following topics:

1. A candidate's medical history.
2. Past workers compensation claims.
3. Past use of sick leave.
4. Health of a candidate's family members.
5. Any obvious physical or mental impairment of the candidate. However, it is permissible to ask if the candidate is able to perform the essential functions of the job for which he/she is applying. A better practice is not to ask this type of question at all. Of course, from a practical point of view, it is hard to imagine anyone answering negatively.
6. A candidate's frequency of illegal drug use or addiction. However, it is permissible to ask if the candidate ever used illegal drugs, and if so, the last time he/she did so. Once again, this is a very delicate area that can create significant problems for the employer if the questioning is intrusive.
7. Alcoholism or the frequency of alcohol consumption.

The questions listed above which relate to medical conditions may properly be asked of a candidate after he or she has received a conditional offer of employment. Before an offer is made, however, the questions must be avoided.

If you need further assistance in crafting proper interview questions, please do not hesitate to contact us for further guidance.

Section 3

Suggested Interview Schedule

March 4th: 1:00 p.m.: Tour of Town. Meet at Town Hall at 340 Ocean Drive in Juno Beach. Phone: (561) 626-1122

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.: Finalist Reception at Town Hall at 340 Ocean Drive in Juno Beach.

March 5th: *One-on-One Interviews at the Town Hall*

Time	Davis	Halpern	Hosta	Callaghan	Wheeler
8:45 a.m.	Coffee, tea, danish and fruit				
9:00 to 9:40 a.m.	Finalist #1	Finalist #2	Finalist #3	Finalist #4	Finalist #5
9:40 to 10:20 a.m.	Finalist #5	Finalist #1	Finalist #2	Finalist #3	Finalist #4
10:20 to 11:00 a.m.	Finalist #4	Finalist #5	Finalist #1	Finalist #2	Finalist #3
11:00 to 11:10 a.m.	Break				
11:10 to 11:50 a.m.	Finalist #3	Finalist #4	Finalist #5	Finalist #1	Finalist #2
11:50 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Finalist #2	Finalist #3	Finalist #4	Finalist #5	Finalist #1
12:30 to 1 p.m.	Light lunch for Finalists and Council Members				

Special Meeting - Interviews with the Council as a Whole at Town Hall

Time	Name
1:00 to 1:05 p.m.	Review procedures for interviews
1:05 to 1:35 p.m.	Finalist #1
1:35 to 2:05 p.m.	Finalist #2
2:05 to 2:35 p.m.	Finalist #3
2:35 to 2:45 p.m.	Break
2:45 to 3:15 p.m.	Finalist #4
3:15 to 3:45 p.m.	Finalist #5

4:00 p.m.: Council meets to make a selection or discuss next steps.

March 7th: *If it has not already been done, the Council selects next manager and appoints a negotiating team to develop an employment agreement with the selected Finalist.*

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 4

Sonia A. Alves-Viveiros

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

Sonia Alves-Viveiros, MPA, QPA
197 W Springtown Road
Long Valley, NJ 07853
alves.sonia62@gmail.com – (908) 956-3792

Town of Juno Beach Florida

RE: Town Manager Position

Dear Sir/Madam:

I'm writing to express my interest in the Town Manager position. My experience as a public servant has enabled me to provide both elected officials and residents with the highest level of customer service. I have extensive experience in human resources, labor negotiations, financial management, budget development and implementation. Additionally, my concentration as the executive officer of a municipality has been to examine and reorganize departments so as to effectively and efficiently lessen the burden to taxpayers while providing exceptional services.

My experience in government and current duties are crafted in a collaborative manner and at the direction of the governing body. I have direct communication with all of the governing body members to discuss key items in their respective subcommittees, such as the municipal budget, succession planning and shared services. I believe these three areas are vital to an organization to have a sound budget and to be a prime example of a forward-thinking community. These items, as I am currently experiencing in the pandemic, are telling for the municipality's overall financial health.

A goal of mine is to engage the community with honesty, integrity and dedication. Dealing with diverse communities is something I have deep connections with. Without that group of diverse members, our communities would not be what they are. Keeping that in mind, is how I measure my success as the executive officer in a municipality.

Sincerely,

Sonia Alves-Viveiros



Sonia Alves-Viveiros, MPA
City Manager/Administrator

Personal Information:

908.956.3792
 alves.sonia62@gmail.com

EDUCATION:

Seton Hall University

Master of Public
 Administration 2010

Seton Hall University

Bachelor of Arts - Political
 Science 2008

Rutgers University

Certified Qualified
 Government Procurement
 Agent (QPA)

SKILLS:

Language(s):

Spanish & Portuguese - Fluent
 Reading & Writing

BOARDS/ASSOCIATIONS:

- NJ Municipal Managers Association - Board Treasurer and Executive Member
- International City Managers Association - Member

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Integration of Two Career Fire Services Departments
- Reorganization and Restructuring Departments
- Project Manage \$120m Infrastructure & Capital Improvement Projects

SUMMARY

More than ten years of local government experience with expertise in management operations, strategic planning, labor relations, organizational restructuring and analysis, financial operations and budgeting, project management, customer service and media relations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CITY MANAGER/BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR *(Actual Title)* **2022-Present**

Township of Edison, Edison, NJ / Apr 2022 - Present

The Township of Edison, NJ is located in central NJ with a population of approximately 107,000 residents and is the sixth largest municipality in the state. There are approximately 1,000 employees throughout the municipality. As the Chief Operating Officer, I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Township along with planning and creating a budget. I currently manage and oversee all of the Township's services by setting programs and organizational goals and objectives, establishing organizational structure and determining the need for and developing plans for organizational changes; negotiating with ten bargaining unit contracts. Additional duties include the following:

- Recommending and setting policies for the organization; Implementation of performance evaluation reviews
- Develop and implement all procedural guidelines
- Work with elected officials to provide assistance with their constituent needs in their districts
- Oversight responsibility for the following functions: police, roads, stormwater drainage, water and sewer utility, parks, recreation, planning, zoning, finance, general services and personnel.

CITY MANAGER **2020-2022**

City of Englewood, Englewood, NJ / Nov 2020 - April 2022

The City of Englewood is located in northern NJ and is considered a suburb of New York City. It is the home to many NYC commuters with a population of 30,000 residents. There are approximately 400 employees in the municipality. I served as the Chief Executive Officer responsible for day-to-day operations and creating municipal budget; Managed and oversaw City services by setting programs and organizational goals and objectives, establishing organizational structure and determining the need for and developing plans for organizational changes; negotiated eight bargaining unit contracts and prepared the municipal budget.

- Created and implemented policies for the organization
- Developed and implemented all procedural guideline

CITY MANAGER**BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR & ASSISTANT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR** (Actual Title)**2016-2020**

Township of Maplewood, Maplewood, NJ / Jun 2018 - Nov 2020 /Asst BA Sep 2016 - May 2018

The Township of Maplewood is located in the northwestern part of NJ with a population size of approximately 27,000 residents. It is considered a suburb of NYC with a direct train line to NYC Penn Station. There are approximately 300 employees in the Township. I served as the Chief Executive Officer responsible for implementing Township policies along with planning and creating a budget; managed and oversaw all of the Township's services by setting programs and organizational goals and objectives, establishing organizational structure and determining the need for and developing plans for organizational changes; negotiate eight bargaining unit contracts. As the Assistant Business Administrator, I was responsible for planning and creation of the Township budget, acting as a department head and performing all necessary duties in absence of the administrator.

- Prepared the Township's municipal budget
- Setting policies for the organization
- Developed and implemented all procedural guidelines
- Performed duties and acted as the Township's Qualified Purchasing Agent; oversight on all procurement procedures for the government entity
- Compiles and prepares the Township budget
- Performed all human resources duties which include FMLA processing, grievances, performance evaluations, union negotiations and attendance tracking
- Attended all Township Committee meetings including closed session and budget hearings
- Managed IT services for the Township, operated and oversaw the Township's website
- Performed purchasing duties which include creation of bid specifications, review bid packages and make recommendations to the Township Committee to award contracts
- Other roles in the Township are as follows: - Commissioner & Executive Member of the New Jersey Intergovernmental Insurance Fund; serving as an executive member and liaison to the Risk Management Committee; review and research liability factors, make risk assessments, and recommendations to members for overall safety guidance.

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**PROFESSOR/INSTRUCTOR**

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ/ Apr 2023 - Present

Provide government procurement instruction to students

- Develop and deliver engaging lectures and tutorials, fostering critical thinking and analytical skills among students.
- Assist students with course material, provided feedback on assignments, and held regular office hours.
- Collaborate with colleagues to create innovative teaching materials and assessments.

DEPUTY CITY CLERK

City of Summit, Summit, NJ / Aug 2015 - Sep 2016 Manager responsible for developing the annual budget for the City Clerk's department. Lead administrator supervising staff training and supporting departmental actions.

- Administer financial reports for budget preparation; Summit's current budget is about 55 million and has been reduced by 11.25 percent from 2015. By researching and developing more efficient ways to use technology in which the budget has significantly been affected by those improvements.
- Prepared ordinances, resolutions and proclamations for execution, recording, archival and distribution.
- Performed administrative tasks, such as answering telephone calls, filing court documents and maintaining office supplies and equipment.
- Issued public notification of official activities or meetings.
- Recorded and edited minutes of meetings and distributed to appropriate officials or staff members.

ASSISTANT TO THE TOWNSHIP CLERK/HR ASSISTANT

Bernards Township, Basking Ridge, NJ / Feb 2012 - Sep 2015

- Maintained personnel files; monitor record retention
- Provided technical support to the QPA, compiled bid packages, contracts and resolutions for vendors; created purchasing orders for the entire Administration department
- Monitored tort claims involving the Township
- Assisted the Township Clerk with municipal duties such as, prepared resolutions, ordinances, agendas and minutes, Informed and provided citizens with current Township information including having knowledge on ordinances and resolutions that affect their daily lives. In addition, I organized materials and make all necessary arrangements during elections
- Provided assistance to Human Resources department with data entry and filing as well as developed and redo FMLA excel spreadsheets for Human Resources, compiled FMLA paperwork for employees; maintained confidentiality with employee and Township related issues, assisted employees during injuries and monitored and maintain up-to-date Federal and State labor postings on all employee bulletin Boards and processed Workers' Compensation claims for Human Resources

Candidate Introduction

Section 4**SONIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

EDUCATION

- Masters in Public Administration with a concentration in Public Policy
- Bachelor Degree in Political Science and Minor in Applied Music
- Certified Qualified Procurement Agent

EXPERIENCE

Business Administrator, Township of Edison	2022 - Present
Instructor, Rutgers University	2023 - Present
City Manager, City of Englewood	2020 - 2022
Business Administrator/Asst. BA, Township of Maplewood	2016 - 2020
Deputy Town Clerk, Town of Summit	2015 - 2016
Asst. to the Municipal Clerk, Bernards Township	2012 - 2016

BACKGROUND

Edison Township is the 6th largest municipality in the State of New Jersey with a population of 107,000 residents. There are approximately 1,000 employees throughout the municipality. As the Chief Operating Officer, I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Township along with planning and creating a budget. The Township operates under two separate budgets. The municipal budget is approximately \$176 million dollars with a Solid Waste budget of approximately \$11 million dollars. The Township currently maintains a surplus of \$12.5 million dollars.

I currently manage and oversee all of the Township's services by setting programs and organizational goals and objectives, establishing organizational structure and determining the need for and developing plans for organizational changes; negotiating with ten bargaining unit contracts. I directly supervise 25 employees under the Administration department which oversees Information Technology, Human Resources, Procurement, Edison TV and general administration for the municipality.

My greatest achievement in my career has been overcoming and rising through challenging moments as I worked my way from an internship to a Town Manager position. The process of working my way up has been a labor of love and I am truly appreciative of all of the challenges that have made me stronger as a Town Manager today. Each position whether it was through an internship in Millburn Township, being a Bernards Township support staff member, and the several supervisory positions, I was able to communicate, build relationships and develop teams that were able to get things done for all stakeholders. All of the roles I played were opportunities that I went above and beyond what was required. I hope that through my experience, I can inspire other public servants to be proud of the work we do on a daily basis in

Section 4**SONIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

whatever role they serve. My ability to serve in various capacities while facing several challenges is my greatest achievement.

The three most significant issues facing the Township are:

- One of the most important issues the Township faces is poor water and sewer infrastructure. There is a mandated Department of Environmental Consent Order the Township is under which requires a full rehabilitation of all of the municipalities water and sewer infrastructure. As a result of the Township operating its own utility, it has become a \$100 million dollars worth of capital investments.
- The second issue is redevelopment. The Township is unique in its size and demographics. It has been struggling to create a cohesive identity given issues such as having a multitude of warehouses and being surrounded by three major State highways.
- The third issue is outdated and unsafe parks and recreation facilities. The Township in the last couple of years has begun making improvements to approximately 36 parks. This has become a major topic regarding quality of life issues as well as committing to large capital investments in the parks.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

My management and leadership style would be described as communicative and collaborative. I do not believe it is efficient to micromanage staff but rather have a participatory type of environment where department heads and subordinates feel valued by the Township. This is done through management and individual department meetings. Having regular weekly interdepartmental meetings and biweekly department head meetings allows for a constant flow of communication. This avoids a majority of potential misunderstandings.

Employees and elected officials would say that I am open and efficient. I like to have a balance of new and participative ideas while having employees understand the value of structure when it comes to doing your work. My relationship with everyone including the elected official and taxpayer is professional. I understand that as an employee of the government entity that I am here to serve those two people. In addition, I entrust my department heads to run their departments independently. However, I make them aware that I am here to support them in any means possible. My best management skill is listening to all of those around me and allowing them to speak as to their ideas and concerns. My weakest management skill would be that while decisions have to be made, I should understand that pleasing isn't going to get the job done. I have made many strides to overcome this personal challenge.

Employment accountability and engagement is vital to the organization. I have created a performance evaluation form that covers a range of areas that help both the manager and

Section 4**SONIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

employee identify goals. Without this process, it would be difficult during situations where termination is a necessary action. This is perhaps one of the hardest tasks as the decision to terminate is not a light decision and must be well-thought out.

The balance of being both the Chief Executive Officer and working closely with the Mayor and Council is perhaps the most challenging of all as a Business Administrator. While it is your duty to serve the Mayor and the Council, it is also your duty to maintain a good working environment for employees. Both go hand-in-hand when it comes to being able to supply the public with the best customer service and having employees feel like their hard work is always appreciated. While I feel these are challenging, I also feel that the reward comes out as being a well-rounded Business Administrator who can administer his or her best knowledge of the laws of the municipality as well as labor laws.

The challenges I see facing the Town of Juno Beach:

- Economic Development and reviewing potential or further growth. Aside from being known as a destination town, a year-round approach to making it a viable and growing Town may be a potential challenge.
- Resident involvement in their local government by providing volunteer opportunities. In addition, creating an internship program for high school students to understand and get involved in their local government.
- Collaborating with new stakeholders who can contribute to the growth of the Town.

During the first six months my efforts will involve:

- Review and meet with finance staff to understand the Town's viability and growth;
- Meet with local stakeholders, employees, elected officials and any other key community leaders. This would also be combined with holding a public forum to "meet and greet" the new Town Manager.
- Review pertinent policies and procedures, manuals, etc.
- Review the Town's social media coverage and develop a more civically engaged platform.

I work daily with the Township's very own TV station. This has allowed positive and important content to be transmitted to the public about important Township events and meetings. Holding public meetings is an essential part of my job and I hold myself accountable and responsible to be respectful to anyone who may have a negative response to actions taken by their local government. Therefore, I know that I would not have any issue with a future employer reviewing any media coverage that involved me. I also communicate regularly with media outlets to provide accurate information.

During my leisure time, I enjoy the performing arts, outdoor family activities and traveling.

Section 4**SONIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Integrity
- Effective
- Dependable
- Loyal
- Communicative
- Responsible

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

The Town and State of Florida are under a renaissance. I find this an opportunity to improve the quality of life of the residents with my extensive knowledge and experience in diverse communities.

CURRENT SALARY

My current compensation at the Edison Township is \$237,000, including vehicle allowance and attending conferences for professional development.

Section 4

CB&A Background Checks

Background Check Summary for SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Morris County, NJ	No Records Found
Middlesex County, NJ	No Records Found
Bergen County, NJ	No Records Found
Essex County, NJ	No Records Found
Union County, NJ	No Records Found
Somerset County, NJ	No Records Found
State	
New Jersey	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Morris County, NJ	No Records Found
Middlesex County, NJ	No Records Found
Bergen County, NJ	<p>August 2021 – Civil Lawsuit filed by Pulice against the Maplewood Township including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her capacity as City Manager. Disposition: Open</p> <p>November 2021 – Civil Lawsuit filed by Lester against the Maplewood Township including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her capacity as City Manager. Disposition: Open</p> <p><i>*See pages 16 & 18 for Candidate Explanation of Records Found</i></p>
Essex County, NJ	<p>November 2021 – Civil Lawsuit filed by Bell against the Maplewood Township including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her capacity as City Manager. Disposition: Open</p> <p><i>*See pages 16 & 18 for Candidate Explanation of Records Found</i></p>

**Background Check Summary for
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

Union County, NJ

January 2017 – Civil lawsuit filed
Against Ms. Alves-Viveiros
Disposition: January 2017, closed

July 2015 – Civil lawsuit filed
Against Ms. Alves-Viveiros
Disposition: August 2015, default by
Clerk

**See page 16 for Candidate Explanation
of Records Found*

Somerset County, NJ

No Records Found

Federal
New Jersey

March 2020 – Civil Lawsuit filed by
Bell against the Maplewood Township
including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her
capacity as City Manager.
Disposition: July 2021, Terminated

May 2019 – Civil Lawsuit filed by
Bell against the Maplewood Township
including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her
capacity as City Manager.
Disposition: February 2022, Terminated

**See pages 16 & 18 for Candidate
Explanation of Records Found*

Motor Vehicle
New Jersey

No Records Found

Credit

Good

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

**Background Check Summary for
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

Social MediaNothing 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.

To: Lynelle Klein <lynelle@cb-asso.com>

Subject: Re: Background Check Records that Require an Explanation

The ones in Essex and Bergen Counties are named parties to cases related to the City of Englewood and Township of Maplewood which names me automatically as a defendant when an employee sues the municipality. They are public records which can be found at the following site: njcourts.gov

The one in Essex County Bell vs. Maplewood, et als is for alleged wrongful termination/discrimination. The termination was of course substantiated for conduct unbecoming and several other performance issues.

One of the Bergen County cases is for alleged ageism/discrimination for not promoting someone to a captain's position. The employee was suspended for 20 days for major infractions therefore was not promoted.

The second Bergen County case is for alleged discrimination/harassment, there was no action taken by me for this employee rather this employee alleges that the City harassed him during his 2 year leave for allegedly having Covid and then told to come back to work when the City doctor said he was able to.

The others in NJ are related to a sale of a house where a buyer broke contract.

Should you have any other questions, please contact me.

**Background Check Summary for
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS
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 / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, 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.
see attached.

Attested to:

Sonia Alves-Viveiros
Signature of Applicant

**Background Check Summary for
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

Sonia Alves-Viveiros, Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Lawsuits involved and represented by municipalities I have worked in as follows:

Lester Martin vs. City of Englewood, et. Als.

Fred Public vs. City of Englewood, et. Als.

Calvin Bell vs. Township of Maplewood, et. Als.

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

Robert Diehl – Council President / Councilman, Township of Edison , NJ 732-841-9000

Mr. Diehl has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2022 when she was hired as the Business Administrator in the City. He was on the interviewing panel, and she was the top candidate by a large margin.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is effective at business administration. She deals with labor negotiations as well as all major contracts. She is involved with union issues and solves problems in a decent and fair way. Her ability to be equitable in negotiations is an asset to the city's administration.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros uses her knowledge well for the City's yearly budget of \$175.9 billion. She has strong financial skills, always double-checking the numbers. She is prepared and works hard, showing up at meetings and presentations with all reports in place. She is the best Business Administrator the township has had in Mr. Diehl's time of service, which spans over twenty years.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is heavily involved with the hiring process. She interviews everyone applying, and narrows down the field. Mr. Diehl works with her through this process, and is impressed with her approach. Based off their combined recommendations, the Mayor completes the final hiring signature.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros deals well with the stress of deadlines. She is present for every Business Administration meeting. Due to her thorough preparation, she can handle any questions or stressful situations. In addition, she is comfortable with ongoing communication to sort through issues. In the City, the six elected officials and hired officers work closely together. They meet every day throughout the day, and there is ongoing communication.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is pleasurable to work with. She has a nice disposition, good manners, and approaches others well. She gets along with others, and completes her job. The mayor has been extremely progressive, and she is part of a progressive team within the City. They have accomplished more in two years than in the previous ten. She adds a practical perspective on their forward measures, finding out how things will work. Her solid assessment of desired changes has helped implementation.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros attends city meetings, and is skilled good at handling the public. The City is known for being difficult to work in and manage as it is bordered by seven other towns, and has a town in the middle of their town. There are many pressing needs. In addition, it has a diverse population and is known as New Jersey tough. At council meetings, Ms. Alves-Viveiros must address questions without exacerbating it. It would be easy to escalate, and she never does. Her calm responses with these difficult interchanges increase trust between citizens and city staff.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is dependable. She shows up and puts in a good day's work. She focuses on the job at hand, and completes it. She is appreciated and respected. Her work ethic and

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

commitment is unmatched. Mr. Diehl has worked over twenty years in local government, and she is one of the best.

There is nothing controversial in Ms. Alves-Viveiros' history. She will continue to do well in local government management. Her experience and knowledge make her a qualified candidate for a city manager position.

Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:

- Conscientious,
- Dependable,
- Hard-working,
- Detail-oriented,
- Good communicator, and
- Pleasant.

Strengths: A committed administrator, willing to communicate and collaborate with elected officials and department heads.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Frank Panucci – Business Administrator, Point Pleasant Borough and Bay Head Township, NJ 732-232-5111

Mr. Panucci has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2019. They both serve on the Executive Board of the New Jersey Municipal Management Association (NJMMA).

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is skilled at networking within the board and with state leaders. She helps to craft policy, and represents the group well. She takes action, picking up the phone to get to the person she needs. She is not afraid to call around and ask questions to help policies move forward. She is known as an innovator within the board and the state.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is involved in training for NJMMA. She readily shares experiences with less-experienced municipal managers. She is an asset to the association and shares experiences with younger municipal managers.

New Jersey has some of the most stringent purchasing laws – so to survive there, one must understand financial guidelines. There is an immense amount of red tape to go through, and Ms. Alves-Viveiros keeps up with it. She accomplishes tasks well before the deadline. She sets the tone for others to be diligent with assignments, and is known for her dependability.

New Jersey is tough. The town Ms. Alves-Viveiros currently works in is known for being extremely tough. There is not an easy road: dealing with the public, with elected officials, with

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

the laws. Ms. Alves-Viveiros is a leader in the city, and known throughout the state. She knows how to read people and how to respond to the issue at hand without escalation. She carries an air of authority that contributes to positive interactions with individuals and groups.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros deals with stressful situations without becoming stressed herself. Within the board, she shares experiences and advice that helps others. She takes care of herself so that she approaches situations with a clear head and calm response. Individuals want to talk and work with her. They respect her and are drawn to her because of her experience and ability to positively impact her environment.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is involved with the association. She attends the meetings and helps others. When Mr. Panucci was dealing with staff being absent, he called her for advice. Over the next few months, she continued to check on him and offer support. She was not paid for it; she did not have to do it – she simply did it to help a colleague. She is the same person in all interactions: individual or group, public or private.

Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:

- Kind,
- Dependable,
- Consistent,
- Positive presence,
- Skilled at networking, and
- Uses authority well.

Strengths: Exceptional networker, excellent mentor and colleague, helpful to municipal leadership throughout the state.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Ken DeRoberts – CEO, SGR Firm, NJ 908-930-0232

Mr. DeRoberts has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2022. His firm oversees all financial operations for the City of Edison.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has an excellent grasp on finances and budget. She applies good public policy and public management. When approaching the budget, she asks good questions and then passes along helpful directions to department managers.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is exceptional at meeting deadlines with financial reports. She is organized and manages multiple departments. When attending public council meetings, she is ready with

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

the necessary reports and information. She understands that while she is responsible for managing departments, she also must answer to the governing body of the city.

A strength of Ms. Alves-Viveiros is that when she does not know the answer, she does not guess – she tells them honestly that she will get back to them with the information. She gathers the information by talking to respective departments as well as her own research and delivering the information in the time she promised.

In a town like Edison, it is constantly stressful. Ms. Alves-Viveiros maintains decorum and gives a fresh approach to dealing with issues. She never collapses under stress. She brings a great energy to the city leadership.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is experienced at dealing with professionals. When needed, she is not afraid to call and follow up to get responses. At council meetings, she maintains respect.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has been integral with labor negotiations. She is just now completing eight new contracts. She completed it with fairness and benefitting taxpayers. She has contributed to a better system, including the health benefits for workers. Both the city and the union were pleased with the results.

Ms. Sonia Alves-Viveiros would make an effective manager in any city, as she has already proved in Edison. She would be much missed.

Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:

- Responsible,
- Honest,
- Hard working,
- Talented,
- Good temperament, and
- Creative.

Strengths: An inquisitive and prepared individual, she seeks to improve conditions for citizens through diligent work and research.

Weaknesses: She is a bit overambitious. For the town of Edison, she needs a business deputy administrator, and it has been put in the budget because her office is so busy. She has resisted hiring someone because she does not want to cost the citizens more money, and simply works harder.

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

Matthew Watkins – Former Mayor, Bloomfield, NJ 973-619-3954

Mr. Watkins has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2017. They met through a mutual work connection, and have their work association since. They currently work together: she as the City Manager for Edison, New Jersey; Mr. Watkins as a consultant for the City.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is very thorough with her job, and has an outstanding record for completion of work on schedule. She takes charge and gives direction clearly. She meets with police and firefighters and holds her own. She exudes her authority without having to remind people of it. She commands a good presence.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros brings a great deal of experience and knowledge to her role as City Manager. She will engage in conversation to learn others' opinions and is willing to change her opinion. She is simultaneously a leader and team player.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros presents herself with authority. She is firm in a good way: standing in public meetings when insults are being thrown and maintaining a good presence. She does not engage in it or allow it to escalate. She is poised and diplomatic in all circumstances. She has control over her emotional response, and treats others with respect and dignity. She handles the public spotlight well.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is involved with hiring personnel and executes good decisions. She handles labor negotiations with firmness. She approaches business quickly and is professional at work: taking in information, and then clarifying. She takes exceptional notes for reference, gathering information and clarifying as needed. Her methodical approach yields results. In tense situations with firefighters and police officers, she handles herself well and remains calm. This approach has helped to create respectful bonds throughout the city departments.

Not afraid to work, Ms. Alves-Viveiros accomplishes a great amount of work. She is quick to process with a sharp and active mind. Her ability to balance work and family life is phenomenal. She attends community events with her family.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has a history of working in and navigating challenging circumstances. She understands the role of public servant and the appropriate unwritten rules and procedures that are expected. She is a rare talent among municipal leaders. She is valuable to the city and state.

Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:

- Calm,
- Deliberate,
- Kind,
- Advancing,
- Committed, and
- Trilingual.

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

Strengths: A bright professional who is knowledgeable in the municipal leadership field; continually working to improve himself and the city.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Victor De Luca – Former Mayor, Maplewood, NJ 973-868-4611

Mr. De Luca has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2016. He was the Mayor of Maplewood, and she was hired to be the Assistant Business Administrator.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is eager to learn. She is open to different ideas and explores alternative ways to approach problems. She will both make recommendations and listen to recommendations from others. She keeps awareness of different projects simultaneously. Due to her superb organization skills, she stays on top of tasks and directs the work. She understands when department heads can do their own work, and when to step in to help.

One example of this happened when different departments within the City had overlapping operations. The Department of Public Works oversees parks and fields while the Department of Recreation uses them. There was a great deal of tension. Ms. Alves-Viveiros scheduled and moderated meetings. She required shared communication, which helped solve the problem.

In her role, Ms. Alves-Viveiros oversaw mundane tasks to very serious issues. When some department heads were underperforming, she researched the issues to know how to proceed. Her recommendations about corrective action and who to renew or not renew was taken seriously. She was involved with hiring new personnel, and her recommendations and reporting to elected officials was superior.

Known as an innovator, Ms. Alves-Viveiros researched what other towns were doing and implemented best practices for the City. She constantly asked how others were approaching similar problems. Her strength was being willing to consider new ideas, and helping others in municipal leadership convert systems and structures. She helped to improve the technology to the extent they could. These changes have remained in place. She was willing to consider doing things differently – and to help others think differently.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros maintains a positive relationship with elected officials. She sought out the Mayor and met with him every Friday on a standing basis. They conversed about what could be done more efficiently and better for the community. They maintained an ongoing conversation. She also sustained positive relationships with other members of the governing body. She made sure they all had the same information in a timely manner to sustain the equal positions of the township committee.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros was present at committee meetings, held twice a month. She also kept them informed by a weekly bulletin. She had an open-door policy, and people were welcome to

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

approach her throughout the day. If something was going to hit the press, she informed them immediately so they could be prepared. She recognized their responsibility to be informed, so that they could deal with the community.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros dealt proactively with a personnel situation at the local pool. In the summer, many college and high school students are employed. A manager was verbally harassing some of the young women. It had been occurring for some time before being reported to the Department Head, and then to Ms. Alves-Viveiros. She was proactive in responding and holding an investigation. Her quick response was appreciated by the community and those affected.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros worked hard within the City's protocols and procedures. The City required many checkoffs, and she was adept at cooperation and consensus. She needed the elected officials to be on board, and became skilled at working with them. Her flexibility and communication was an asset to progress.

Mr. De Luca gives full support to Ms. Alves-Viveiros as a city manager in any city. He is still sad that she left Bloomfield, as she ran the day-to-day operation for the City efficiently and with innovation. He recognizes her movement through jobs as forward and upward. He does not know anything in her history that is controversial.

Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:

- Inquisitive,
- Complete,
- Committed,
- Fun,
- Connected, and
- Multicultural.

Strengths: A diligent worker with exceptional communication, cooperation and consensus.

Weaknesses: She was not an exceptional writer. She can convey messages much better when spoken. This skill has improved over time.

Catherine Melendez - Executive Assistant, City of Englewood, NJ 201-745-5675

Ms. Melendez has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2020 when she was hired as the City Manager for Englewood. She brought a youthful energy to the city, which was needed and overdue.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is extremely knowledgeable. She is not afraid to execute what needs to be done. An excellent writer, she is fluent with technology and how to best use it for

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

communication in real time. In addition, she is open to in person meetings with staff, elected officials, and citizens. Ms. Alves-Viveiros is a well-rounded city manager and brought innovation to the area.

When Hurricane Ida occurred, Ms. Alves-Viveiros mobilized to help affected residents. She ordered multiple sump pumps and mobilized the various departments to help residences. She was the sole leader with this endeavor: leading the efforts and physical labor to help citizens. She worked with all departments to complete this time-sensitive issue. She was a rallying point for the city, bringing energy for the work.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has good financial skills. She handled the budget for the city. She was very involved with hiring personnel. She made good decisions of which individuals match the job requirements.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is present and prepared for public meetings. Englewood is considered a tough town with many generational citizens. The sentiment is generally if you were not raised here, you do not belong. She deals with it and handles it well.

Ms. Melendez is not aware of anything controversial in Ms. Alves-Viveiros' background. She considers Ms. Alves-Viveiros one of the best city managers she has had the opportunity to assist. She gives full support to Ms. Alves-Viveiros continued work as a city manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:

- Tough cookie,
- Passionate about job,
- Honest,
- Smart,
- Positive, and
- Energy.

Strengths: A determined leader that works well under pressure. Brings change and energy to revitalize areas.

Weaknesses: She is very passionate about her job. When residents verbally attacked her at meetings, she took their comments to heart. Though not shown outwardly, it affected her.

Edroy Jenkins - Director of Public Works, City of Englewood, NJ 201-486-7141

Mr. Jenkins has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2020 when she was hired by Englewood as the City Manager. Mr Jenkins was the Director of Public Works.

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has an excellent job performance. She is a competent leader with strong communication skills. She gets along well with her subordinates.

As an innovator, Ms. Alves-Viveiros stands above the rest. When new problems are discussed, she surprises department heads with the scope and success she reaches quickly. She is customer service oriented and seeks to help the city. She represents city leadership well when attending community meetings.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros converses well with the public in group and individual settings. She takes time to listen to ideas and concerns. She understands that in public government, listening is essential to creating trust with the public. She also takes time with different departments to converse with employees. When questions arrive that she does not know the answer to, she will research and respond quickly after completing research.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros' ability to solve problems is above average. She categorizes problems by their impact, and then works first with those that have the most worth. She works on one project until it is completed, and then moves to the next. She works hard and smart, and the combination results in her accomplishment more than seems possible in a workday.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros knows how to work within a budget. When given a budget, she makes it work. Her financial skills are superior.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros worked overtime during Hurricane Ida. She is very capable during a crisis, stepping in to help residents' issues. She understood the issues in real time and solved problems quickly. She helped individuals and families who were displaced relocate to warming stations. She helped with managing the emergency response team, as well as showing up and personally helping with cleanup.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is already working as a city manager, and has enormous capability to work in other cities with the same level of success. Mr. Jenkins is not aware of any controversy involving Ms. Alves-Viveiros. Any city would be thrilled to have her as a hired official.

Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:

- Go-getter,
- Helpful,
- Punctual,
- Amiable,
- Teachable, and
- Present.

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

Strengths: A competent leader that is pleasant to work with, capable during a crisis. Organized in her approach which yields immediate and long-lasting results.

Weaknesses: She works so hard on every task, that she will overachieve on tasks that are not as imperative.

Matthew Hale, Ph.D. - Professor, Seton Hall University, NJ 609-240-2171

Mr. Hale has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2010 when she was a student in the MPA program at Seton Hall University. Dr. Hale is a professor in the MPA program.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros and Mr. Hale have stayed in contact since her MPA. They set up a program where MPA students interned with Ms. Alves-Viveiros and others to gain municipal work experience. The experience has helped many MPA students be better qualified when they complete their studies. Her specific role in this program has been critical to the growth of individual students.

As a graduate student, Ms. Alves-Viveiros was incredibly diligent. A pragmatic individual, she sought to know how theories applied to practical work. She kept her professors on their toes by asking for connections between the theoretical and the concrete.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is involved with the League of Municipalities in New Jersey. Good at networking, she keeps up connections with previous colleagues and professors. She increases the success of those entering to work with local government.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros can speak truth to power. She is an effective communicator. She is direct and discusses facts without emotion. She can present reports to professors and elected officials with confidence, due to her preparation.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros shines as a mentor. She values the person and the experience, and works hard to help them succeed. When an intern is not hitting work objectives, Ms. Alves-Viveiros takes time to train and teach them. She never gives up on an intern, but instead commits to helping them learn through positive mentoring. Interns that have been with her are then hired to work in municipal government, a testament to her ability as a mentor.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is an effective member of a team. Throughout the MPA program, there are many team projects. Her ability to work within a team is unparalleled. She capitalizes on everyone's strengths. She understood that each assignment and each group were different, and adjusted accordingly. She steps up and takes charge, or alternatively, steps back and completes the background work.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros never missed a deadline. She also took full opportunity to learn, rather than just hit the benchmarks. She met with Mr. Hale during office hours to ask for feedback on

Reference Notes

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

assignments to improve. The academic interchange provided learning greater than the finished product.

Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:

- Direct,
- Honest,
- Thoughtful,
- Diligent,
- Organized, and
- Disciplined.

Strengths: A diligent learner and agreeable team player; vested in helping other elected officials find success to promote strong local governments in a large region.

Weaknesses: She likes to know the beginning to the end and works sequentially. If a problem requires creative thinking, she struggled. She could, however, come up with a structure to help those with creative thinking succeed.

Prepared by: Brooke Krim
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

MyCentralJersey.com
February 12, 2025

'I'm not happy:' Edison Sports Building cost balloons \$11.6 million, timeline extended

Author: Suzanne Russell

The price to build the Edison Sports Building on Central Avenue just got higher – by \$500,000. That's due to a \$557,000 change order unanimously approved Monday by the Township Council that hiked the once envisioned \$5 million project to more than \$11.6 million. The change order, a modification of the original contract, is the third for this project with Epic Management of Piscataway. No council members were happy about the cost increase or the additional time for the project which was expected to be completed last month, but they believed the project needs to move forward.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said there were delays and conditions that have extended the timeline for completion to the end of this year. The resolution authorizing the change order cites unforeseen conditions such as weather, utility requirements and changes, leading to cost overruns in bonding, insurance and cost of labor increases. Much of the change stems from the redesign of the utilities, specifically the electrical and water service, from a 6-inch to 8-inch line, and the PSEG gas service, officials said.

Alves-Viveiros reminded the council members that the township had issues with the architect, which the township continues to work on. Officials said it is expected to take an additional seven months or less to complete the project. A Nov. 25 completion date has been set, which is at the end of the football season, which means the children in that program won't be able to use the facility this year, said Councilman Richard Brescher. Once completed, the building is slated to be used for cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball, lacrosse and other youth activities year-round.

Alves-Viveiros said the cost for the change order was initially \$656,000 but it was negotiated over the past few months to \$557,000 for Epic to manage the project. Under the change order, the \$557,000 is not to be exceeded.

"I think this is very, very expensive for seven months of additional work," said Councilman Asaf Shmuel. Without approval of the change order the township might have needed to hire a claims attorney, an added cost, as a recourse, officials said. In addition the project would come to a stop and the township would have a construction shell, which would be a hazard, **Alves-Viveiros** said. "I'm not happy to see change orders," said Councilman Joe Coyle.

Council Vice President John Poyner agreed and Council President Margot Harris said residents aren't happy when they see this many change orders on a project.

Rich Brown, the construction manager, said more minor change orders of less than \$100,000 are possible because labor and material costs do rise.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Brescher, who has worked in construction, said he had called for the township to have a construction manager at the start of the project, at the design phase to push things forward. The township hired a construction manager last year following issues with a roofing change order. "This is the problem right here. This is what the change order is about. Because if we would have had a construction manager at the beginning during the design phase, this would not be here," Brescher said. "I spoke about this but nobody wanted to hear it."

Council members suggested the township should have a construction manager for every project more than \$5 million.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://edisonreporter.com/edison-approves-salary-increases-for-department-heads/>
September 4, 2024

Edison Approves Salary Increases for Department Heads

By The Edison Reporter Staff

The Township Council has taken steps to ensure its top officials are fairly compensated amidst rising living costs. In a unanimous decision at their Wednesday August 28th meeting, the council approved an ordinance to increase the maximum salary range for three key department heads.

This move will see the maximum salary for the Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** rise from \$230,000 to \$236,900 plus a vehicle to take home to her residence in Morris County. The Directors of Water and Sewer and Public Works will also see their maximum salaries increase from \$195,000 to \$197,000 each.

The ordinance cites the need to adjust for the increasing cost of living as the primary reason for these salary bumps. This decision follows a similar ordinance passed earlier this year for other department officials, signaling the council's commitment to maintaining competitive compensation packages for its workforce.

While the salary adjustments demonstrate the Township's recognition of the challenges posed by inflation and its commitment to retaining experienced leaders, some residents have questioned the increases in light of the many ongoing problems in town. Concerns have been raised about infrastructure issues, public services, and the overall allocation of resources. Critics argue that addressing these pressing concerns should take priority over salary increases for top officials.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/07/26/edison-sports-building/74532214007/>
July 26, 2024

Is the new Edison Sports Building a 'money pit?' Here's the new cost
By: Suzanne Russell

EDISON - The cost of the new Edison Sports Building has gone up again. The project, originally envisioned as a \$5 million investment, has more than doubled in price and is now up to more than \$11 million. That prompted one resident to say the project is "a money pit." The Township Council on Wednesday approved a \$96,814.05 change order for more stormwater piping and modification to the basement. The work includes additional drainage due to field conditions, installation of gas piping not originally included in the contract drawings, additional excavation and site work and additional steel support for decorative screens. Councilman John Poyner said there needed to be modifications to the foundation when adjustments were made to the roof. The change order amends the contract amount of \$11,071,247.45. In addition the council awarded a contract to Colliers Engineering & Design of Holmdel for engineering services such as construction management and architectural construction contract administration services for project at a cost not to exceed \$378,000.

The new firm was selected to address the larger scope of work, according to township officials. "Our intent is to engage with a new firm for the architectural services but at the same time engage in construction management due to the issues that have arisen out of the roofing change order," Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said at Monday's meeting.

"This is an increase in the cost of the project. However, we're hoping with the construction management oversight that it will be a lot more efficient in terms of the cost and any other potential issues that may arise. Having someone on site to see exactly between the contractor and subcontractors that everything is exactly the way it is supposed to be, including all of the architectural design work so that there is a much higher level of oversight and hands-on approach to this project given the pricing," she said. **Alves-Viveiros** said the township has "learned from our mistakes" which is why the administration came to the council to hire a construction manager. She said the funding will come out of capital and the township is hoping to recover some of the costs.

Earlier in the week a resident questioned why the town didn't hire a project manager at the onset. In May the Township Council authorized a \$187,433.40 change order to revise the metal roof panels on the pre-engineered Edison Sports Building. That change order amended the sports building contract with Epic Management of Piscataway to \$10.8 million, the resolution stated. Township officials said that to move forward with the building, Edison needed to make sure the roofing material was ordered and done correctly. "That roof shouldn't have created a problem if you had a project manager on the site looking at the plans," resident Mary Ann Hennessey said at Monday's meeting. "This is in my opinion, a disgrace. It keeps costing more money for stupid reasons." The project involves the removal of the existing buildings and trailers at the Edison

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jets Football Field, 370 Central Ave., and construction of a pre-engineered metal building with a surrounding one- or two-story podium structure framed of steel columns, steel beams and a composite metal deck slab. Both structures will be supported on concrete shallow foundations. Wet weather earlier this year delayed the construction schedule. The building is slated to be used for cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball, lacrosse and other activities year-round.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://edisonreporter.com/edison-settles-discrimination-lawsuit-with-police-officer-council-left-in-the-dark/>
July 8, 2024

Edison Settles Discrimination Lawsuit with Police Officer, Council Left in the Dark
By The Edison Reporter Staff

Edison Township has quietly settled a racial discrimination lawsuit filed by decorated and respected veteran police officer Nicole Fields for \$90,000, with the Township Council being kept unaware of the agreement. The settlement, approved by the Central Jersey Joint Insurance Fund (JIF), addresses Fields' claims of racial discrimination, hostile work environment, discriminatory failure to promote, and retaliation within the Edison Police Department. Fields, represented by Nancy Erika Smith of Smith Mullin, PC, alleged a pattern of discriminatory practices that hampered her career advancement and created a toxic work environment. Despite denying any wrongdoing, the Edison Township agreed to a comprehensive settlement that includes monetary compensation and significant policy changes without informing and without any public input from the Township Council.

Key Points of the Settlement

Monetary Compensation: Fields will received \$90,000 as a full settlement of her claims.

Revised Promotional Process: Within 90 days of the current promotional list expiring, a new process will be implemented, emphasizing objective criteria like seniority, education, and disciplinary history.

Diverse Interview Panel: The interview panel for promotions will include at least one member from a racial or ethnic minority group.

Non-Retaliation: The township has committed to fair treatment of Fields, adhering to the same policies and practices as other officers.

Despite the significant financial and policy implications of the settlement, the Edison Township Council was not informed or involved in the approval process. This has raised concerns about transparency and accountability, particularly given that Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** sits on the board of commissioners for the JIF.

The lack of council involvement in the settlement raises questions about the JIF's decision-making process and the township's oversight of such matters. Critics argue that such settlements, especially those involving significant policy changes, should be subject to public scrutiny and council approval. The case highlights the challenges faced by minority employees in law enforcement and the ongoing efforts to address systemic discrimination within police departments. While the settlement represents a victory for Fields, it also underscores the need for greater transparency and accountability in resolving such disputes.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://edisonreporter.com/edison-council-meeting-erupts-in-chaos-over-transparency-concerns/>
June 27, 2024

Edison Council Meeting Erupts in Chaos Over Transparency Concerns

By The Edison Reporter Staff

A recent Edison council meeting erupted into a heated debate over transparency concerns, following a complaint from resident Sue Malone regarding the consistent delay in posting meeting minutes online. Malone expressed frustration over the lack of transparency, stating, “It reinforces a lack of transparency... The administration is always being accused of a lack of transparency.” While acknowledging that the issue falls under the council’s purview, she emphasized the importance of adhering to the law and improving practices.

Councilman Brescher then questioned the Business Administrator **Sonia Alves- Viveiros** about the staffing situation in the clerk’s office, which has been understaffed for roughly a year. The BA admitted that a fully staffed office would likely resolve the delays in posting minutes. However, Councilman Coyle dismissed Councilman Brescher’s concerns, attributing the issue to the clerk’s workflow rather than understaffing. He further accused Councilman Brescher of unfairly targeting the administration, claiming, “I just don’t listen to anything Councilman Brescher says, it’s just wrong... he’s just beating up the administration.”

This ignited a fierce exchange between the two council members, with Councilman Brescher responding, “My council colleague seems to think it’s okay if you don’t get your meeting minutes, it’s okay if you don’t get your opra request, here’s the difference between me and my council colleague, I had a business for 30 years that was very successful, he ran his into the ground so who do you want to follow, do you want to follow my advice or Bankruptcy Boy.” Referencing Councilman Coyle’s to his past financial troubles.

The personal attacks and accusations quickly escalated into chaos, with the council president struggling to maintain order amidst shouting and interruptions. The meeting eventually adjourned, leaving the transparency concerns unresolved and highlighting deep divisions within the council.

The incident has sparked further criticism of the council’s lack of transparency and raised questions about its ability to effectively address important issues facing the community. Residents like Sue Malone are left wondering whether their concerns will ever be taken seriously in a council seemingly consumed by infighting and personal vendettas.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/06/12/edison-taxes/74057871007/>
June 12, 2024

Not everyone happy with Edison mayor's budget address
Suzanne Russell
MyCentralJersey.com

EDISON – Mayor Sam Joshi gave a 25-minute presentation of a \$175.9 million municipal budget for 2024 which will increase the municipal tax rate by 2.5% that left some council members longing for more time to question the mayor's spending plan. Joshi gave the budget presentation to the Township Council during a special meeting shortly after 5 p.m. Monday, before the governing body's scheduled 6 p.m. work session. Monday was selected after Joshi had a scheduling conflict on June 13, the original date for the budget presentation. Some residents also opposed the 5 p.m. time for the budget presentation because of the conflict with work schedules, while a council member said the budget presentation "felt very rushed."

Councilman Ajay Patil complained it's unfair that council members were only getting five minutes each to ask questions after the mayor's presentation. "If you don't have time, come back and answer all the questions," Patil said, adding the budget presentation could have been scheduled for another day to give council members enough time to ask questions. Patil also expressed concern about the amount of debt Edison has taken on. Joshi, however, reminded Patil, who has served on the council for several years, that the mayor's budget presentation began after former Mayor Thomas Lankey took office and previous mayors did not give budget presentations. Joshi added the township debt is paid back over years, not at one time.

Council President Nishith Patel said council members would get another chance to ask questions before voting on the budget in a few weeks. A public hearing and vote on the budget is scheduled for June 26.

Councilman Richard Brescher, who was also dissatisfied with the five minutes allotted to ask questions, got up and called the council president, the mayor and the meeting "a joke" and walked off the dais with his belongings.

But Councilman John Poyner said he felt the budget puts the township in a good financial position, adding the planned sale of a liquor license and state aid could add several tax points that could be put into reserve for next year's budget.

During his presentation, Joshi said the \$175.9 million budget includes \$109.6 million in local taxes. The non-property tax revenue appropriations include \$12.7 million in surplus, \$706,800 in American Rescue Plan funds, \$4.6 million in construction code fees and \$3.3 million in payments in lieu of taxes. He said the top three appropriations were for insurance at \$35.4 million, the police department at \$32.2 million and the fire department at \$22.4 million.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** explained insurance rates have increased, which is why that appropriation has gone up.

The mayor noted there has been an increase in staffing levels in nearly every township department from last year to this year. The biggest increases were in public works which increased from 130 to 139 employees, police which increased from 234 to 242 and administration which increased from 20 to 27 workers. The total number of township employees has increased from 668 to 703, he said. "We are simply getting more things done," the mayor said.

Under the budget, a property owner with a home assessed at \$183,400 would pay \$5,806.44 in school taxes, \$2,708.82 for township services, \$18.34 toward open space, \$1,806.49 for county services and \$166.69 for library services, the mayor said.

Joshi said that despite the record high inflation over the past few years, the township has achieved property tax stabilization while significantly improving the community. "Residents have said over and over they are happy with seeing the improvements in the community while knowing their tax dollars are not dramatically increasing. It's fair to say we have finally achieved property tax stabilization," the mayor said.

Councilman Joseph Coyle agreed a lot has gotten done, noting the township has 196 police officers, and plans to hire four more before the end of the year.

Township officials anticipate Edison will be in almost as good a position with surplus funds next year, as this year. Edison is using \$12.7 million in surplus this year with just under \$5 million remaining but expects to generate more through the year to end up with \$15 million to \$16 million. The township also has reserve funds to cover any potential exposure from tax appeals.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/05/28/edison-jets-toth-center/73816668007/>

May 28, 2024

Edison council OKs more funding to advance two big development projects

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – Two big-ticket development projects, one involving a health center and the other a \$10 million sports building, appear to be moving forward, following nearly \$250,000 in change orders approved by the Township Council last week. On Wednesday council members unanimously approved a \$60,000 change order for additional site remediation and removal of soil contaminated by previously removing underground storage tanks at the Toth Health and Senior Center Renovation project.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** explained earlier in the week that in 2019 there was a permit that wasn't closed out correctly and this corrects that issue and the remediation work so the town can work on the building. The change order increases the total contract award to \$5.5 million according to the resolution. The resolution also marks the fourth change order to the township's contract with Shorelands Construction Inc. in Monmouth Beach. Last year the council awarded Shorelands Construction a \$5.29 million contract to renovate and expand the Dr. William Toth Health Center on Idlewild Road.

The building, which dates to the 1950s, is being expanded by nearly 3,000 square feet to provide programming similar to the activities at the Edison Senior Center on Woodbridge Avenue. The new space is expected to include a large meeting space for events and activities, reading room, full kitchen and a common lounge and will also allow Edison to expand its vaccinations, health screenings and other essential services to older residents.

More controversial was a \$187,433.40 change order to revise the type of metal roof panels on the pre-engineered Edison Sports Building from a Perlin Bear Rib system to a standing seam roof, which also was approved by the council. The change order amends the sports building contract with Epic Management of Piscataway to \$10.8 million, according to the resolution.

Alves-Viveiros said the town is having potential legal issues with one of the professionals and is getting another architect to look at the project. The change order is to move the project along, but the town will be looking to recoup the money. "In order for us to do any other part of the building, the anchors, the walls, everything else, we need to make sure the roofing material is ordered and is done correctly," she said last Monday.

Another town official said the inability to meet the roof's energy efficiency and 20-year water tightness warranty is among the reasons for the change order. Last year the council approved a \$10 million contract for the construction of a new sports recreation facility, more than twice the \$5 million originally earmarked for the project. The project involves the removal of the existing buildings and trailers at the Edison Jets Football Field, 370 Central Ave., and construction of a

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

pre-engineered metal building with a surrounding one- or two-story podium structure framed of steel columns, steel beams and a composite metal deck slab. Both structures will be supported on concrete shallow foundations, according to public documents. The building is slated to be used for cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball, lacrosse and other activities year-round. The new Edison Sports Recreation Center will be located on Central Avenue near the Edison Jets youth football field.

On Monday, Stephanie Woomer, who serves on the Edison Jets executive board, said the building has already been plagued by weather delays and she's seen social media posts complaining about the building's cost. Woomer said the girls flag football program is looking to grow and add tournaments. "We are grateful the Town Council approved the building, however without the change order being approved, we would be at the mercy of waiting for insurance to continue construction which has already been plagued with weather issues. Every day we are stalled is another day the kids of Edison do not get access to the space," Woomer said. "While millions of dollars have been allocated for this building it would be shameful to make these kids continue to wait because of \$187,000. I implore you to please pass this change order."

Dan Boslet, who also serves in the Edison Jets executive board, said he understands the change order money is a bridge loan that the town pays to keep construction going, and hopefully the errors and omissions insurance from the engineer or architect, who ever made the plan, should be responsible for reimbursing it. He added insurance companies make you wait, which only delays construction of the building, and the construction company would charge the town for every day they are not allowed to work, which would result in higher costs for the project. "There are many children that are waiting for this with bated breath and any delay would hurt their chances of getting into it this coming winter. It's not that far away that we have time to burn," said Boslet, adding all the rain this spring has delayed days of work which makes it a long shot the building will be ready for the winter.

Another resident said there wouldn't be so many change orders if the township had a project manager.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.aol.com/edison-29-million-spending-plan-091554753.html>
May 22, 2024

Edison \$29 million spending plan: what's in, what's out?

Author: Suzanne Russell

The Township Council is again looking to introduce a \$28.8 million capital improvement bond ordinance, but this time the planned \$5 million purchase of an Amboy Avenue restaurant, that was being considered for conversion into a community center, is gone. And instead, \$1.8 million has been allocated toward streetscape work along Amboy Avenue in the Clara Barton section of town, as well as additional funding earmarked for street paving and resurfacing work and park improvements. The revised ordinance was scheduled to be introduced Wednesday.

On Monday resident Joel Bassoff asked if Edison is still planning to purchase the Jade Dynasty commercial restaurant property at 925 Amboy Ave. Council President Nishith Patel also asked what the administration's plans are regarding the Jade Dynasty site. "There is none," Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** responded.

Earlier this month a \$29.8 million proposed capital improvement bond ordinance included \$5 million to purchase the Jade Dynasty property even though listing sale price is \$2.2 million. The website The Real Estate Book lists Joseph Coyle, a township councilman, as the property's listing agent. That ordinance was removed from the agenda before the council's regular May 8 meeting, without any reason mentioned. Prior to the removal, **Alves-Viveiros** had said the restaurant building on a .65-acre site was being considered for conversion into a community center, at neighborhood residents request.

Clara Barton residents have repeatedly called for the town to ban four-story high-density developments along Amboy Avenue especially on sites like the Jade Dynasty and the former Stewart's restaurant properties near the New Jersey Turnpike. The residents are looking to preserve the existing character of their neighborhood.

Bassoff also mentioned the Planning Board has missed the 45-day deadline to come back with a report on repealing the existing four-story ordinance for Amboy Avenue and asked when the repeal of that ordinance will return to the agenda.

Hank Bignell, township director of planning and engineering, said the Planning Board received the council's request to look at changing the Amboy Avenue ordinance from four-stories to three stories and because the master plan is still ongoing, the board asked the master plan planner to look at the ordinance in detail, which he expects to come back in about 30 days.

During Monday's meeting, Coyle, who also serves as executive director of the Edison Chamber of Commerce, said the town needs to consider what business owners want, as well as the residents. "When people want to spend \$15 million in your community, you have to listen," Coyle said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

For the public safety department, the revised capital improvement bond ordinance includes \$1 million for the acquisition of a fire engine; \$530,000 for the design, procurement and installation of solar-powered feedback signs at Brotherhood, Ethel and McKinley streets and Old Post Boulevard; \$220,000 for various roadway striping projects; \$170,000 for the design, construction and installation of a pedestrian flashing beacon system at Old Post Road and Boulevard of the Eagles near Edison High School; and \$300,000 for the acquisition of vehicles and equipment. For the engineering department, the bond ordinance includes \$8.25 million for various road paving and resurfacing work; \$1.1 million for various drainage and stormwater projects; and \$1.8 million for Amboy Avenue improvement projects including streetscape, sidewalk, crosswalk, tree, landscaping and irrigation system improvements.

In the public works department, the ordinance includes \$4.3 million to acquire vehicles and equipment, including dump trucks, backhoes, paving units, salt spreading equipment, tree removal vehicles and equipment utility vehicles; \$1.7 million for various building improvements and renovations including construction and repairs, lighting, alarm systems, and HVAC systems; \$6.8 million for various park improvements; and \$1.65 million to acquire and install fuel tanks. The ordinance also includes \$85,000 for the acquisition of vehicles and equipment for the recreation department and \$425,000 to acquire and install network infrastructure component and switches in the information technology department and upgrade the telecommunication system.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/05/10/edison-amboy-avenue-jade-dynasty/73614122007/>

May 10, 2024

Edison looks to purchase commercial property listed by township councilman

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – A \$29.8 million capital improvement bond ordinance, which included more than \$5 million to acquire the Jade Dynasty restaurant property on Amboy Avenue, which is \$3 million more than the current property sale price, was scrapped by the Township Council. No reason was announced for removing the ordinance from the agenda and it's unclear if the bond ordinance, which also includes funding for many other projects, will be introduced at a future meeting.

The council's decision on Wednesday not to introduce the ordinance comes two days after the planned acquisition sparked controversy because the commercial property at 925 Amboy Ave., in the Clara Barton section of town, is listed for sale at \$2.2 million. The website The Real Estate Book lists Joseph Coyle, a township councilman, as the property's listing agent.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the 3,500-square-foot building on a .65 acre site with about 50 parking spaces is being considered for conversion into a community center, at residents' request.

Clara Barton residents have repeatedly called for the town to ban four-story high-density developments along Amboy Avenue, especially on sites like the Jade Dynasty and the former Stewart's restaurant properties near the New Jersey Turnpike. The residents are looking to preserve the existing character of their neighborhood.

Alves-Viveiros said the \$5 million was for the acquisition, renovation, furniture and fixtures. "You're going to buy it for \$2 million and then you are going to build something for \$2 million. Can you tell me what you have built here in this township for \$2 million?" Councilman Richard Brescher asked. **Alves-Viveiros** said she understands there would be improvements to the existing building.

Brescher, who has dined at the restaurant, said you wouldn't be able to play basketball in the existing one-story building, but maybe badminton. "This is the silliest idea," Brescher said.

On Monday night **Alves-Viveiros** explained that besides the \$5 million for Jade Dynasty property, the \$29.8 million bond ordinance also included more than \$1 million for various police and public safety equipment and projects such as an addition to the police garage and \$1 million for the acquisition of a new fire engine to replace a more than 15-year-old vehicle.

Also included in the bond ordinance was \$6.5 million for the engineering department to cover all the township road paving and resurfacing work; \$250,000 for drainage and stormwater work as well as more than \$500,000 for design, procurement and installation of solar powered feedback

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

signs at Brotherhood, Ethel, Old Post Boulevard and McKinley streets; \$250,000 for various road striping projects throughout the township and \$150,000 for the design, construction and installation of pedestrian flashing beacon system at Old Post Road and the Boulevard of Eagles.

The bond also included \$4.3 million for the public works department to acquire vehicles and equipment such as dump trucks, backhoes, paving and salt spreading equipment, tree removal vehicles, trailers and other mobile equipment. **Alves-Viveiros** said a lot of the existing equipment is about 20 to 30 years old.

The bond ordinance also included \$1.5 million for various building improvements and renovations, construction, repairs, lighting alarm and HVAC systems for various buildings; \$5 million for various improvements to the town's 36 parks including renovations and improvements to park facilities and \$1.6 million for the installation of fuel tanks and related systems at one of the garages.

There was also \$355,000 for the purchase of recreation department vehicles and equipment; \$50,000 for the purchase of various equipment in the purchasing department including a new postage machine; \$300,000 for the technology department to acquire and install network infrastructure components, switches and upgrade telecommunications systems and \$2.1 million for professional services.

If approved the bond ordinance would have added \$28 million to the township's nearly \$200 million debt, township officials said

The council also removed from the agenda a \$1.4 million bond ordinance for improvements to the solid waste collection district.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/02/20/edison-internet-tv-municipal-broadband-xfinity-comcast-optimum/72599815007/>

February 20, 2024

Edison gets \$2M grant to kick-start municipal broadband but feasibility questions remain

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township has received a \$2 million grant from the state Department of Community Affairs to expand municipal broadband services. The Township Council passed a resolution last week accepting the grant. Edison now has a 24-month period to build a portion of the infrastructure, part of which is a server, as well as a business plan which is expected to be completed soon, officials said. Previously officials have said the business plan would look at the strengths and weaknesses of municipal broadband and determine market competition. A consultant would then analyze the best approach for Edison.

The total cost for the broadband structure has not been disclosed. The \$2 million is considered a start, according to Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**.

The idea of high-speed municipal broadband in Edison has grown from the quest for faster, more reliable and more affordable internet service in town, where Optimum has been the major provider and residents with old lines have complained of service interruptions and other problems. Residents and officials have cited a need for more competition.

The grant comes just as Comcast Xfinity will hold two video conference public hearings on Feb. 27 to receive comments on its plan to provide TV service in Edison, as part of a Jan. 30 application filed with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, Office of Cable Television & Telecommunications, according to public documents.

Last year the Council approved an ordinance to allow Comcast Xfinity to wire Edison for the service. The plan calls for Comcast to construct its own fiber network. The company has said it plans to bring its Xfinity 10G Network to Edison providing residents with access to Comcast's full suite of Xfinity and Comcast Business services. Under the agreement with the township, Comcast would pay Edison an annual fee of 3.5 percent of gross revenues.

But both residents and officials remain uncertain about the township's broadband plans, especially since **Alves-Viveiros** said she's not aware of any other municipalities in the state that have started a broadband, so Edison would be the first.

Resident Joel Bassoff said there are questions about whether any municipality has been able to run a municipal broadband service profitably. "My research shows the only (town) arguably that has been able to do it profitably is Chattanooga, Tennessee, that is a service area with maybe three times the population of Edison, and there are studies that indicate that even their profit numbers are probably misstated because they don't appropriately account for the capital costs of establishing the system," Bassoff said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Another resident said these companies have huge infrastructures and he questioned how Edison would be able to set up a whole broadband internet cable company, with equipment, parts and technology, computers, a call center, technicians and insurance, when there are already other companies doing the job. "This whole thing is ridiculous," the resident said, adding Chattanooga is not showing a profit and municipal broadband has been a failure in other towns that have tried it. "We should try to work out better relationship, better alliances with Comcast."

Councilman Richard Brescher also isn't sold on the municipal broadband idea. "I don't see the feasibility in it. I haven't seen the business plan for it yet. There are people on this dais and in the administration that think that they are Thomas Edison or Elon Musk, and I think this is more like Tesla and it's not going anywhere, unless I see a business plan that makes sense and the numbers make sense. To me this seems like a scam," he said.

But Council President Nishith Patel said he hopes it works out. He recounted a story he read about a man frustrated with the service he was getting that built his own broadband for 30 homes and was successful, and he received money to cover 100 more houses. "It is possible to do it. It's not that complex. I think it's necessary if it's feasible, and I believe the state believes in us. And I hope that we can get this done for the residents and provide them another alternative beside the monopolies they have now," Patel said.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/01/30/edison-stelton-community-center/72357161007/>

January 30, 2024

Edison greenlights \$3.7 million makeover of Stelton Community Center

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The Stelton Community Center on Plainfield Avenue will be getting a much-needed makeover to make it usable again as part of a nearly \$8 million capital bond improvement package recently approved by the Township Council. The bond ordinance includes \$3.7 million for renovations, repairs and alterations to the Stelton Community Center, of which \$1.6 million is earmarked for roof repairs and other initial costs. The \$7.9 million bond ordinance also includes \$1.5 million for improvements, renovations and repairs to various municipal buildings; \$500,000 for furniture, fixtures and other equipment in various municipal buildings; \$1.4 million for a backup generator for the municipal building; \$300,000 for improvements, renovations and repairs to township firehouses; \$250,000 for road signs and \$175,000 for design work to improve and repair the Edison Animal Shelter, which could include building a second floor to house a medical examination room. But mostly the council and some residents focused on the community center, a former school building constructed in 1925 and expanded in 1949 that was closed in 2018 due to lack of attention to needed repairs and maintenance. The large building has roof, mold and asbestos issues, which require major repairs. Municipal services, including a sheltered workshop program, were relocated out of the structure. The building is on the state Department of Environmental Protection's Recreation and Open Space Inventory which prevents the township from expanding the building's footprint. Resident Walter Stochel, who serves on the township's Open Space Advisory Committee, said the building also has many beautiful architectural elements that he hoped will be preserved as part of the restoration. Stochel, who read a letter from the Open Space Advisory Committee supporting the building's restoration, said the township should also consider placing a display of historic photos of the building and the Stelton neighborhood inside the structure, building a rain garden and replacing the parking lot with pervious pavement to reduce stormwater runoff. Stochel said the township might also want to acquire the adjacent property to expand Stelton Park. With nearby Thomas Jefferson Middle School and the Edison Main Library, Stochel said the building is not just a community center but the center of the community.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the Health Department went in and looked at some of the rooms, which are fairly large. She said the township is looking to retrofit some of those spaces to accommodate senior services, Health Department and recreational activities, all of which are included in the \$3.7 million. She previously said the building would be used to provide programs for seniors as well as children with disabilities. "It will be a restored operable building," **Alves-Viveiros** said, adding the administration has been active in pursuing grant funding to provide more money for programs. "The goal is to make the space usable and operable." No timetable was announced for when the work is expected to begin. Council Vice President Margot Harris said she sees a lot of potential in the building's future. "It's a real diamond in the rough," she said.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/12/13/edison-animal-shelter/71890745007/>
December 13, 2023

Edison to scale back animal control: ‘We can’t bring in any more’
By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township is ending its animal shared control service agreement with Piscataway this year to help address overcrowding at the Edison Animal Shelter. The township will continue its service with three other towns, Dunellen, Highland Park and Metuchen. The Highland Park agreement was renewed last year, and the Dunellen and Metuchen agreements expire at the end of 2024, according to Township Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**.

"We can't bring in any more animals," Township Council Vice President Margot Harris said at Monday's agenda meeting about the need to shed the shared services with other municipalities, as Edison works to get the animal shelter in better working order following an inspection report finding the facility overcrowded, too small and understaffed.

Piscataway has had a shared services agreement with Edison for several years, according to Gene Wilk, Piscataway's public information officer. "Although Piscataway has been negotiating since June with Edison regarding this shared services agreement, we were notified by Edison about two weeks ago that it plans to cease our contract at the end of December," Wilk said. "We are seeking a four-month extension of shared services with Edison as we consider what our long-term options may be so we can go out to bid for future services." Wilk said Piscataway has retained services for its annual free rabies clinics on Jan. 27 and Feb. 3.

Alves-Viveiros said there has been no discussion about discontinuing the shared services agreements with the other towns. She said Piscataway was a huge burden to Edison in terms of the intake of animals. "That was about a third of our issues and the overcrowding," **Alves-Viveiros** said, adding she notified the Piscataway business administrator about the termination of the shared services agreement.

Harris, who recently attended an Edison Animal Shelter Committee meeting with Councilman Richard Brescher; Ross Licitra, the Monmouth County SPCA executive director who has assumed oversight of the Edison shelter; the shelter veterinarian and the shelter manager, said there are many structural problems with the shelter. The building, located in a corner of the Municipal Complex parking lot, needs to be expanded and renovated, work which is expected to cost between \$2.5 and \$3 million.

The Edison Animal Shelter is about 2,000 square feet. Monmouth County has a 20,000-square-foot animal shelter which services the entire county. Proceeds from the Monmouth County SPCA shelter's thrift store benefit the shelter, Harris said. "While we can't look to completely replicate what the (Monmouth County SPCA) has we can certainly use them as a model on a smaller scale," Harris said.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Edison shelter has not had a budget for 2022-23, and all the expenses were charged to a trust account which included donations, according to **Alves-Viveiros**. For 2024 all the costs associated with the day-to-day operations of the shelter will be part of the township budget. The shelter employees, who make about \$35,000 a year, are overextended, officials said. Over the summer the shelter was overcrowded with 23 dogs and 86 cats.

"I'm optimistic that we are on the same page and that we are going to be headed in a very positive direction," Harris said. Harris said there are two upcoming pet adoption days. On Dec. 17 from 1 to 4 p.m., a Barks and Brews event will be held at the South 40 Brewing Company, 110 Newfield Ave., Suite 2, Raritan Center, Edison; and on Jan. 13 from noon to 4 p.m. at Hailey's Harp and Pub, 400 Main St., Metuchen. "There are some lovely animals that are still in the shelter that would be great pets and great family members," Harris said.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/09/30/edison-township-nj/70983212007/>
September 30, 2023

Edison punts shipping container purchase for township departments

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township doesn't want to be boxed in. Plans to buy 11 shipping containers for more than \$90,000 to be used by five township departments, are on hold, at least for the next two weeks. Township Council members on Wednesday unanimously voted to table a resolution to buy the shipping containers.

Plans called for four shipping containers for the Department of Public Works Division of Roads for \$33,320, two shipping containers for the Department of Recreation for \$16,660, two shipping containers for the Department of Public Works Municipal Garage for \$16,660, one shipping container for the Department of Health's Animal Shelter for \$8,330 and two shipping containers for the Department of Health's Senior Center for \$16,660 . "No one else on the planet is paying this much for a container," Councilman Richard Brescher said.

Four of the containers would be placed next to the garage for the Division of Roads to store utility items, said Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**. She added other containers would be stored in the parking lot behind the Municipal Building. She said the containers would be kept in a location that doesn't interfere with parking.

The containers would be used for storage while improvements are being made to buildings around town. In the future, if the containers are no longer needed, they could be auctioned, **Alves-Viveiros** said.

Brescher, who doesn't want to have containers on municipal property, also questioned whether the containers would be painted, and expressed concern they would attract graffiti. "We've lived all these years without these containers and now we're buying a bunch of them. I get needing one, but it just looks like we're trying to make it a cityscape," he said. "So are you going to paint them?"

Alves-Viveiros liked the suggestion of painting the containers, adding it could be an art initiative that she could present to the administration.

"It all looks like graffiti to me," Brescher said.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/08/25/edison-school-crossing-guards/70667830007/>
August 25, 2023

Edison council tables plan to outsource school crossing guards. Now what?

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The school year will start with a combination of police officers and residents as school crossing guards after the Township Council decided on Wednesday to table plans to privatize the service. Following a lengthy discussion and questions raised by residents, Township Council members unanimously voted to table plans to hire a Connecticut company to provide crossing guards. Police Capt. Jason Gerba said until the Township Council decides what to do, police officers and the crossing guards the department has retained will man the posts when classes begin Sept. 6.

Edison has been looking to privatize crossing guards due to long-standing staffing shortages that often required police officers to cover those assignments at a significant cost to taxpayers. The township has 40 crossing guards for 53 posts. There is one unfilled post and 12 guards performing a double post, according to township officials. Edison spends about \$600,000 a year for crossing guards' salaries and about \$200,000 for the police officers who fill in on posts. "I believe there are certain functions of government that government should do. I believe sewer and water and crossing guards should be in-house," said Councilman Richard Brescher. "That we can't get people is an unacceptable answer to outsource." He suggested splitting \$200,000 for police among the 53 crossing guard posts, which he believes would lead to more people signing up to become crossing guards.

Council members were planning to hire Crossing Guard Services of Stamford, Connecticut under a \$900,000 contract for the next three years. The preliminary plans called for crossing guards to work 180 days, two posts per day with a minimum of three hours per post at a pay rate of \$19 an hour. The contract called for all township crossing guards in good standing to be offered positions with the company.

Police Chief Thomas Bryan, who said officers on crossing guard posts can't leave if an emergency arises, said Thursday he's disappointed the privatization plan didn't go through and the township will have to pay more money. But he said he's hopeful the crossing guard contract will come up for a vote at a council meeting next month.

Councilman Ajay Patil, who said he believes most crossing guards take the job for the passion, not the paycheck, expressed concern about the company being based in Connecticut, not Edison or even New Jersey.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the company's ownership is based in Connecticut, but has operations in Wayne, Demarest, Montclair and Parsippany. The company uses a pool of employees, including alternates.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Patil questioned how the company would be able to attract more workers because it is not offering benefits and that they might transfer crossing guards to different posts. "To me there is no protection to our own residents, who are doing this thankless job. We should be looking to more out-of-the-box solutions," said Patil, who suggested possibly hiring retired police. He encouraged the administration to find other ways to hire more local residents who will be connected to the school children.

Residents questioned if the company would reimburse the town for the cost of having a police officer at a crossing guard post, at the hourly rate of \$65, if the guard doesn't show. Another resident asked if the company would be providing uniforms, stop signs, training and background checks for the crossing guards, while another questioned if current crossing guards could be guaranteed employment with the company.

Alves-Viveiros said she has been in contact with the crossing guards and their unions. She said the scope of work under the proposed contract includes offering all the current crossing guards their same positions. The company could also hire workers from out of town. **Alves-Viveiros** said the equipment provided by the company includes jackets, gloves, hats, stop sign, reflective vests, raincoats, whistles, badges and background checks. "We are hoping to not have any of our police officers make those crossings. This is all on the company to be able to do that," she said.

Another resident asked how the company would entice residents to become crossing guards, if the rate of pay remains unchanged and no other incentives, such as benefits, are offered. Township Attorney David Minchello said state law was changed in 2011 requiring employees to work a certain number of hours to be eligible for benefits and crossing guards don't qualify.

Alves-Viveiros said the company also was looking at offering higher pay rates.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/07/27/edison-animal-shelter/70461456007/>

July 27, 2023

Edison Animal Shelter ‘absolutely overrun’ by pandemic pets being returned

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – Though it may be overcrowded, the Edison Animal Shelter is clean and stocked with supplies, despite what some social media posts have alleged, according to a Township Council member. The township is considering whether to build an addition at the back of the shelter and may also look to some of the communities where Edison provides animal control services to help fund the construction. During Monday's Township Council work session, both Councilman Richard Brescher and Council Vice President Margot Harris mentioned they had both seen social media chatter about conditions at the animal shelter at the municipal complex across the parking lot from the Edison Police Department. Harris, a dog owner for 44 years, said because the social media posts contained "very disturbing" reports of the shelter not being clean and lacking supplies, she made an unannounced visit on Monday and met the new manager who took her on a tour of the facility. Brescher said he's heard the new manager is not a licensed animal control officer, but Harris said the manager has an animal control license. "I was very impressed and relieved with the condition of the shelter. The shelter was clean. They are absolutely overrun with pets right now. They have 86 cats, 23 dogs and they got nine huskies from a hoarding situation in Piscataway and one was pregnant," Harris said. She said the puppies were adopted and there are still four huskies left, one female and three males. Harris said the adoption fee for dogs is about \$175, which is among the lowest in the state. "They (the shelter) are busting at the seams, there is no question about it," Harris said, adding the facility was clean. The isolation section where there were three dogs were recovering from Parvo, a contagious dog virus, was being cleaned during her visit.

Harris said everything looked like it was in place, the facility was clean and there was no shortage of supplies. She said the manager indicated there was talk of possibly getting a new building because of the large number of animals. "We're talking about a central design of adding onto the building, not just the outside space, but the inside space so that we're a more welcoming environment to those that are seeking adoptions and are seeking our services at the shelter. This administration is looking to expand on that," said Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, adding the township is looking to share that responsibility with the five towns that use the shelter as part of a shared services agreement. The Edison Animal Shelter/Animal Control serves Edison, Dunellen, Highland Park, Metuchen and Piscataway, according to the township's website. "We're looking to get some contribution from them to make larger capital improvements at the shelter," **Alves-Viveiros** said.

According to Harris, the shelter manager said the increase in the number of animals is mostly due to the end of the pandemic and people who formerly adopted pets and worked from home find they no longer have time to care for their pets because they've returned to their workplaces.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/07/26/edison-sports-recreation-center/70462816007/>

July 26, 2023

Edison OK’s the “Ferrari” of youth sports buildings, a \$10M structure

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The Township Council approved a \$10.8 million contract for the construction of a new sports recreation facility, more than twice the \$5 million originally earmarked for the project. This comes after the Council in April rejected bids of \$10.8 million and \$14.1 million for the project, in an effort to allow more proposal options to be considered, Mayor Sam Joshi said at the time. Councilman Richard Brescher, who abstained during Wednesday's vote, acknowledged the project's price tag is much higher than the governing body anticipated. He asked the council to cut back on some of the expensive architectural features which have no impact on the children. "I'm not in favor of a \$10 million building," Brescher said. "I don't think we need to have a Ferrari here, and I think that's what we're building. It's all about the look, the show, not about the use." He explained the price for the sports facility, where work will involve the removal of the existing buildings and trailers at the Edison Jets Football Field, 370 Central Ave., went as high as \$12 million before the plan was reduced.

Township Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the project's funding comes from 2022 capital improvements and other bond ordinances. Public documents indicate the new sports facility will be a pre-engineered metal building with a surrounding one- or two-story podium structure framed of steel columns, steel beams and a composite metal deck slab. Both structures will be supported on concrete shallow foundations.

The heating, ventilation and air conditioning system will be dedicated for a sports area with high occupancy, as well as providing traditional systems for office and storage areas, according to the documents. The heating will be provided with an air source heat pump and supplemental hot water heater and the electrical system will include a dedicated transformer and emergency generator, the documents say. The building also will be equipped with new connections to water and sewer utilities as well as a fire alarm and sprinkler system and is slated to be used for cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball, lacrosse and other activities year-round. The Township Council on Wednesday unanimously also approved a \$2.8 million contract to build a splash park at Papainni Park. The original proposal featured cultural artifacts reimagined as sprinklers, splash zones and tipping buckets of water, with a replica of the Edison Tower in the park's center. Councilwoman Joyce Ship-Freeman said that under a prior administration, the splash park was estimated to cost \$5 million and questioned if the size of this facility had been downsized. Brescher, however said he believes the \$5 million was for two splash parks, at opposite ends of the town. The township is hoping to break ground on some of the projects this fall, with work on the splash park expected to continue to the spring, while the sports facility is estimated to take about a year to complete.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/07/05/is-edisons-winter-street-park-park-a-jungle-or-one-of-the-nicer-ones/70373483007/>
July 5, 2023

Is Edison's Winter Street Park park a 'jungle' or 'one of the nicer ones'?

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON - Some residents in the area of the Winter Street Park say the park is so overgrown with weeds, and has been in such poor condition since Superstorm Sandy more than a decade ago, that it needs to be renovated. "This park is a jungle, it is not a park anymore," said a resident who presented photos and a petition for the renovation to the Township Council last week. But another resident who brought her grandchild to the park on Saturday had a different opinion. "We've been to a lot of the parks," she said, "and this is one of the nicer ones."

The township's website lists Winter Street Park off Winter Street and Anita, George and Oliver avenues as having two basketball courts and a playground. The park however appears to have two playgrounds and a tennis court. The park sign says Durand Cormaci Park, which a 40-year resident said was named for a husband and wife who formerly lived at the edge of the park.

After viewing the pictures with the petition, Council Vice President Margot Harris said it looks like it's in "pretty deplorable shape." The resident told the Council there are no basketball hoops and no nets, the grass needs reseeding and the walkway to the court has tripping hazards and needs to be repaved because children walk, ride their bicycles and run through there. "The park was never renovated after Sandy. There is debris, it needs a whole cleanup," said the resident, who asked that the work be done as soon as possible.

A Southfield Road resident added trees and bushes in the park become very overgrown during the summer and there is chipped paint on park apparatus. "We're going to look into this. I know we put in a new pickleball court there so we've made some improvements there," said Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**.

A visit to the park Saturday morning found a few water bottles on the ground and some dog feces, but otherwise a fairly well maintained park with two playgrounds, a tennis court without a net, and no basketball hoops or nets. A married couple who have lived in the neighborhood for 40 years brought their grandchild to the park Saturday. The wife said the court has very poor drainage and when it rains, the water ponds on the court for days. "They did repave it, but you can see there is no net. I think it would be better with a net," said the woman, adding there used to be basketball hoops on the court. Her recommendation for park improvements include moving some of the benches into the shade, because they get very hot in the summer. She also said some dead trees in the park have been removed and new mulch was installed around the playground equipment. She said the park is well maintained, with the grass cut and generally people clean up after using the park.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The couple said if basketball hoops were installed, maybe more of the older kids would use the park and the lines for the tennis court could be redrawn. "My kids came where when they were little and played every day and when (her daughter) was older she worked at the summer program in the park," she said. "It's a nice park. They put the picnic tables up and that was good too. We've been to a lot of the parks, and this is one of the nicer ones." The wife said the park was renovated several years ago, sometime after 2012.

Councilman Joseph Coyle said he believes the park is on the town's list for a full renovation this year and Councilman Ajay Patil said the condition of the park was brought to the mayor's attention during the spring and he knows renovation work is planned.

Council President John Poyner said the council has passed resolutions related to playground surface and playground equipment at the park and possibly fencing.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/06/30/heres-how-much-the-price-of-edison-turf-field-project-went-up/70362318007/>
June 30, 2023

Here's how much the price of Edison turf field project went up
By Suzanne Russell

EDISON - The cost of the synthetic turf field project at Papaiani Park has gone up. The Township Council on Wednesday authorized a change order for Picerno Giordano Construction to relocate the bleachers and fencing, as well as concrete and paver removal work at a cost of \$96,085. The resolution indicates funds are available in a township account.

In anticipation of the sports building construction, the current placement of the bleachers needed to be moved further from the location of the building for safety reasons, according to Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**. "It's a safer environment for all the spectators coming in," **Alves-Viveiros** said Monday. She explained that with any construction project, once you break ground and review all the aspects of the project there may be some changes and in this case, it was the bleachers that needed to be moved for safety reasons. The bleachers are located where the groundbreaking for the sports center building will occur and there will be construction debris in that area. **Alves-Viveiros** said an addendum will be issued to the sports building project to remove plans to demolish the bleachers, since that work has already been done under the turf field contract. She said the change may offset some costs related to the sports building.

Council President John Poyner said the initial scope of work on the turf field did not include the moving of the bleachers in the turf field part of the construction work, which is currently going on. But engineering officials determined that in reviewing the timelines of the contractor, it made sense to have that work done now instead of having the sports building contractor remove the bleachers during part of the sports season. He said this also allows for the opportunity of new bleachers to be installed on the home team side of the field, which is the side where the building will be constructed. He said the recommendation was to keep the bleachers on the home team side and move them to the away team side of the field and have a new set of bleachers installed on the home team side. He said the sports building contract had called for the existing bleachers to be deconstructed, put to the side and then reconstructed in their existing location.

Poyner added that once the sports team season is underway, and if construction was still underway on the second story of the sports building and the home team side bleachers were already back in place, that would create a safety concern. Councilman Ajay Patil on Monday said he supports the project but indicated things could have been planned better. Councilman Richard Brescher on Monday asked to see the original architectural drawings and renderings as well as engineering plans and new drawings because he had a lot of unanswered questions.

In March the council awarded a \$4.2 million contract to Picerno Giordano Construction LLC of Kenilworth for the artificial turf football and baseball fields at Papaiani Park for youth athletes. The football field is for the Edison Jets, a youth football program, on the opposite side of Lake

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Papaianni. Field improvements also will allow for soccer and lacrosse on the football field and soccer on the baseball field outfield. The project was bid twice and had four respondents each time. The first one had low bid of \$4.3 million and a high bid of \$6 million. The township project also includes lighting, curbing and drainage improvements, in addition to the field work. Funding will come from various township engineering projects, engineering improvements and recreational department accounts.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/05/26/edison-comcast-xfinity-optimum-cable-tv-internet/70252378007/>
June 5, 2023

When will Comcast Xfinity internet and TV come to Edison?

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township is moving forward with plans for municipal broadband by authorizing competitive bids for a consulting service to create a business plan, more than a year after several council members campaigned on the issue, and months after a study on the issue was completed. The Township Council on Wednesday approved a resolution for the bids. Councilman Richard Brescher, who had questions about the success rate of broadband in other communities as well as the maintenance, abstained from voting and Councilwoman Joyce Ship-Freeman, who wanted to table the issue until the council had more information, voted no.

The idea of high-speed municipal broadband in Edison has grown from the quest for faster, reliable and more affordable internet service in town, where Optimum has been the major provider. Comcast will now be constructing its own fiber network in town, and Brescher said internet service has improved for residents who have Optimum's newer fiber optic cable system. Councilman Nishith Patel, who was one of the most vocal advocates for broadband this week, said he thinks of it as a utility. "I think we need to own these lines. We need more competition. The majority of people are not happy with what they have," said Patel who estimates the town could be looking at millions of dollars in surplus in 10 years with broadband. "I think this is a great investment for the long term and for the future," Patel also believes the town would be eligible for grants and other funding from the state.

Council members this week had two lengthy discussions about broadband. On Monday, much of the discussion was centered on why a broadband study was completed in October but the results were released to the Council just in the last week, a decision by the administration that left Councilman Ajay Patil said he, too, expected the release of the results a while back and since the township started looking at broadband, the technology has evolved, and the town will have to determine if it is a viable project for the long term.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said at Mayor Sam Joshi's administration's direction, the township is on to the next steps of creating a business plan, which is why a request for proposals is out for the broadband and the 41-page study report was released.

Council President John Poyner said the business plan would look at the strengths and weaknesses of municipal broadband and determine market competition. He said the consultant would analyze the best approach for Edison. "I do believe municipal broadband is the way for the township to go. We have increases in technology and advancements in technology that are going to require additional bandwidth, not just from the sense of the capacity of upload and download speeds, but eventually we're going to have to look at our electrical infrastructure because the more computing that is done, the more energy that is used," Poyer said.

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Ship-Freeman questioned if the township is truly serious about municipal broadband because the issue only seems to come out at election time. "We've got to do better than what we are doing," she said. "Don't bring it out every time there is an election and tease people like we're getting something that we're not getting."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/05/24/edison-township-council/70247238007/>

May 24, 2023

'You have duped this council': Edison fireworks after corruption charge in \$1M contract

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON - An unsuccessful GOP mayoral candidate has called for an investigation after the Township Council awarded a nearly \$1 million no-bid contract to an engineering firm that had recently hired the township business administrator's husband, and the council was not notified of the connection before the vote. While the business administrator said she notified others in the administration that her husband was hired by the engineering company that got the contract, it's unclear if that notification was made before or after the contract was approved.

At Monday's Township Council agenda session, Keith Hahn, a retired township police officer who has twice run unsuccessfully as mayor, said the governing body last month awarded the contract to T&M Associates for the rehabilitation of the Westside Sanitary Pumping Station. The resolution states that before entering into a contract, T&M Associates will have completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification which certifies that they have not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in Edison in the previous year, and that the contract will prohibit T&M Associates from making any reportable contributions through the term of the one-year contract. Hahn said the \$974,200 contract seems excessively high for the engineering work especially since only a few years ago the township was building pump stations for \$500,000 to \$1 million. He added that T&M Associates in the past has received smaller contracts, not \$1 million contracts. Hahn said he's also learned that Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros'** husband recently got a job with T&M Associates. He said he considered that highly inappropriate and questioned if there would be an investigation into the apparent conflict of interest.

Alves-Viveiros husband works as an inspector for T&M Associates. "I did disclose that to the administration, the township attorney as well as human resources, so that is disclosed," **Alves-Viveiros** said. Hahn also questioned whether that disclosure was before or after the contract was awarded. **Alves-Viveiros** responded by saying T&M Associates had done work in Edison before her husband's recent employment.

Township Attorney David Minchello said the business administrator's husband's employment with T&M Associates was properly disclosed to the administration and **Alves-Viveiros** recused herself from any contracts involving that engineering firm. "As determined by the Township Attorney, Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** properly followed all legal and ethical procedures related to this matter. Not only did she disclose her husband's employment appropriately, she also recused herself from all dealings with T&M Associates going forward," the township said in a statement Tuesday. "It should be noted that T&M Associates has been one of the contracted engineering firms for the township for decades dating back to the 1990s, well before this development. Additionally, **Mrs. Alves-Viveiros'** husband is not a partner, executive

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

or a decision maker at the firm and serves only as an inspector. Township officials have mandated that Mr. Viveiros will not perform any services related to township projects under any circumstances," the township's statement said. At the meeting Minchello and Hahn exchanged words about the cost of past contracts and Hahn said while the attorney may not be aware of some of the past contracts, council members should know.

"This is a farce, if I'm not even allowed to respond," Minchello said. "We're not going to make a mockery of this council," said Council President John Poyner, who later called for a five- minute recess to restore decorum. "That bid was a mockery to this council," Councilman Richard Brescher responded, indicating Poyner had been aware of the connection between the administrator's husband and the engineering firm. "We were not made aware. You voted for it and I think you knew about the no-bid contract and you knew about the employment and you didn't tell the rest of the council. You, my friend, are in the same boat as the administration. You have duped this council, sir," Brescher said. Hahn said if the administration hires the vendors for the no-bid contract and the council approves the expenditure, the council should have been aware of the conflict.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/05/01/edison-township-nj-school-crossing-guards/70151890007/>
May 1, 2023

Edison plans to outsource school crossing guards. Here's why
By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township is looking to privatize the school crossing guard service because of longtime staffing issues. The Township Council has approved putting out bids for a private company to provide crossing guards. Part of the bid requirement will be current crossing guards get first preference for jobs, especially since some crossing guards have performed their crosswalk duties for a long time. According to Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, the township's crossing guard staffing issues has resulted in police officers covering those assignments at a significant cost to the township.

Councilman Richard Brescher agreed police officers should not be serving as crossing guards but questioned how a company is able to find and hire crossing guards at a competitive wage, yet the township is unable to get crossing guards. "That tells me we're not managing properly because we should be able to get crossing guards, keep them, and maintain them. When government can't function within itself and has to subcontract out itself, I think there needs to be a change in government," Brescher said. "I don't feel positive about outsourcing. I'm not a big fan of outsourcing our public work that I feel should be done in-house." He added if the township is not able to get enough crossing guards, it's probably an issue of pay or benefits. "But some company has found employees that are willing to get out of bed for that amount of money, and what I'm saying to the administration is find those people," Brescher said.

The councilman said he's concerned that eventually every township function will be outsourced and all that will be left is a township administration. Edison currently has 40 crossing guards with 53 posts. There is one unfilled post and 12 guards performing a double post, according to township officials. Crossing guards receive \$19 an hour for three hours a day, when school is in session, township officials said. Edison has two high schools, four middle schools, one intermediate school, 10 elementary schools and a preschool program. **Alves-Viveiros** said there are companies that have the number of people who can provide the service.

Council President John Poyner said crossing guard positions are not full-time, or even full-year jobs, so outsourcing may make sense for the township. Councilwoman Joyce Ship-Freeman said crossing guard positions have been an issue for the past few years and she's glad some action is being taken. She does want to see any crossing guard posts uncovered for the children's safety. "This is the direction we are forced to go into," said Ship-Freeman who noted crossing guards only get a few hours of work, sometimes in very harsh weather, and there have been some recent retirements. **Alves-Viveiros** said the cost benefit of outsourcing would be based on benefits the township pays as well as administrative costs including the cost of coverage provided by police officers. "We'd be talking a huge difference just on the surface," she said.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/01/27/edison-senior-center-slated-to-reopen-next-week/69843771007/>
January 27, 2023

Edison senior center set to reopen next week

By Suzanne Russell

The senior center will be open by Tuesday, Nick Bond, township spokesman, said he was informed. Bond's announcement on Thursday came less than 24 hours after a Township Council meeting in which no date for the reopening was stated.

Township officials previously had indicated the Woodbridge Avenue building work would be finished in mid or late January, but during Wednesday's City Council meeting Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the senior center, where work is nearing completion, will be reopened but didn't specify when. "We are going to be cleaning up and and starting up programming so for those that attend the senior center, including the clubs if you could just hold on and wait to get the word from us with regards to the actual schedule we will provide you with that. We want to get it up and running. It will be opened but we just want to set up our programming," **Alves-Viveiros** said.

"I don't really understand that," said the president of one of the senior citizens clubs that uses the facility who had expected the center to open on Monday. She hoped to receive a telephone call announcing the reopening date so she could inform her club members, some of whom walk to the center. She said each club president plans to call their members to let them know when the center will reopen. **Alves-Viveiros** said the town will get in touch through the senior coordinator.

The senior center at 2963 Woodbridge Ave. was closed for all in-person activities on July 29 after a bathroom renovation project revealed that the connection to the fire suppression system had deteriorated to the point that it needed to be replaced. The building is Edison's only senior center. During the center's closure, the township has used other buildings, including the Clara Barton First Aid Squad on Amboy Avenue, to host senior citizen programs and events. A fire department inspection also found issues with emergency lights that were not working, problems with exit signs, missing components on the fire alarm panel and the sprinkler system turned off.

In August 2022, council members awarded a \$115,000 emergency contract to Allied Fire and Safety in Neptune to move the project along, but initially there were issues with the availability of supplies. Last month council members approved two resolutions related to the bathroom work at the senior center and reported work on the suppression system was nearly completed. One resolution was a change order with Goksu Construction in Sparta for restroom renovations, including a valve replacement and additional dumpster in the amount of \$14,517.16 for a total amended contract amount of \$213,467.16. The other was a \$20,500 change order with Allied Fire and Safety for dry valve assembly at a cost of \$10,500 and \$10,000 to perform a water flow test and to provide an installation plan with hydraulic calculations.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2022/10/31/edison-nj-dpw-garage-parks-rec/69596857007/>

October 31, 2022

Edison officials state long-term goal for DPW

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township is taking an expensive, but necessary, step toward making improvements at the Department of Public Works garage on Truman Drive, aimed at consolidation while setting the stage for a future major overhaul at another township DPW garage. Township Council members last week unanimously approved a resolution awarding a state contract for a new floor at the DPW garage at 101 Truman Dr. at a cost of \$549,239.63. Township Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the cost is lower than the engineer expected, and the public works director said the purchase was made through a co-op so it is already pre-bid for the service.

Council President Joe Coyle, who serves on the DPW committee, said the floor on the Truman garage, which formerly stored tanks, has settled over the years creating a slope and safety issues. "It's like jacking a car up on a hill," he said. Creating a level floor will allow for more indoor repair of vehicles. Coyle said the goal is have all the department's vehicles undergo repairs and maintenance at one location, the Truman garage, where all the parts and supplies, like tires, also will be stored. Training also is expected to be housed at the Truman garage site. The new floor also will allow more vehicles to be brought into the garage at one time. "Township motor vehicle maintenance and repair is a huge responsibility. We need to get these trucks in and out and back on the road," Coyle said, adding the township does a lot of its own repairs.

The Edison DPW covers 35 square miles and 250 miles of roads, he said, adding the township already has the trucks and manpower ready to tackle any upcoming snowfalls. "People care about their streets being plowed, their streets being paved, and their garbage picked up," Coyle said. The floor is expected to take about five weeks of work, including curing the concrete.

The council also approved resolutions to purchase a new wheel alignment machine at a cost of \$30,746.20; purchase a new scissor lift for \$35,010.01; purchase two new and unused vehicle post lifts for \$100,788.72; and a contract for welding of the trench drain risers for \$21,624.75. Councilman John Poyner said the improvements are necessary to get through the proper level of efficiency in the department and the right improvements to make going forward.

A concept plan is being developed by the mayor and his administration for the DPW garage at 745 New Durham Road, which is currently used for some indoor, but mostly outdoor, storage, Coyle said. The township also has a parks and recreation garage off Nevsky Street. "The long-term goal is to have all of our vehicles out of the elements underneath an overhang or inside a garage during the months when the weather is challenging," Coyle said.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

In January 2015, a four-alarm fire leveled the DPW maintenance garage on New Durham Road, destroying 11 salt spreaders with attached snowplows, three street sweepers, three repaving vehicles, a road maintenance truck and a fire engine that was awaiting repairs. The damage was estimated at about \$4 million.

Coyle said the end goal for the township is to provide every opportunity and services to residents in an efficient manner. By working on the Truman garage first, it positions the township to develop plans for the future restructuring of the Durham garage, he said. "We're shuffling our manpower and our vehicles and our services into one area so we can look at Durham as a blank canvas," Coyle said.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

TAPinto Edison (NJ)
March 10, 2022

Mayor appoints new business administrator

Author: Tapinto Staff Edison

Mayor Sam Joshi appointed **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** as Edison's next Business Administrator. **Alves-Viveiros** most recently served as the Business Administrator in Englewood and prior to that was the Business Administrator and Assistant Business Administrator in Maplewood. She served in municipal administrations in Summit and Bernards Township as well. She holds a B.A. in Public Administration and a Masters in Public Administration from Seton Hall University. She will begin her tenure in Edison on April 4, 2022.

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The Record (NJ)
December 2, 2021

Two more suits filed against Englewood police department

Author: Katie Sobko

Two city officers have filed lawsuits alleging pervasive racial discrimination in a police department that has been fraught with tension for years. Sgt. Lester Martin Jr. and Sgt. Zellvon Lucas filed individual suits in Superior Court in Bergen County against the city and its Police Department. Martin also named City Manager **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, Director of Human Resources Daria Trumpet and Lt. Fred Pulice in his suit. Both complaints say the city and its police force "have long histories of conflict based upon a person's race, including claims, resulting lawsuits, and out-of-court settlements, arising from allegations involving unlawful racial discrimination (against employees and citizens)."

Sgt. Lester Martin's lawsuit

Martin was hired by the department in 2002. He was promoted to sergeant in 2016 and he registered to take the lieutenant's exam in February 2018. However, the test was pushed back to April of that year. He alleges that the change was made so that fellow Officer Gregory Martin would be eligible after having been temporarily barred from taking promotional exams for committing employment misconduct.

Martin, no relation to Gregory Martin, alleges the shift was "racially motivated" and done to hamper his efforts in securing the promotion. His complaint also says he "personally observed defendant Pulice sleeping on the job and became a witness of that incident in the Department's internal affairs investigation" in October 2018. But the department didn't take the misconduct seriously and the investigation was "compromised and otherwise lacked integrity," Martin claims. After learning that Pulice knew the particulars of the investigation, Martin reached out to the chief and deputy chief, pointing out that that was illegal, the suit says. Retaliation followed, Martin alleges, including a grievance filed against him that resulted in his removal from the patrol overtime list.

Martin claims he was not the only target. He alleges that after Pulice was suspended, he "mounted a horrific, racially motivated campaign" against then-Chief Lawrence Suffern and then-Deputy Chief Gregory Halsted, both persons of color, and "other persons of color who are department members." Pulice pursued a vote of no confidence against their leadership, was openly hostile to employees who are persons of color and forced people of color out of the union, Martin claims, and the city and the department have tolerated it. He alleges that complaints he brought up to **Alves-Viveiros** and Trumpet were not investigated appropriately.

Martin also alleges that the department failed to properly clean up black mold, and even opted to "ignore toxic mold in areas of the building where people of color were assigned to work, while cleaning and remediating the toxic mold in other areas where Caucasians were assigned to work." The mold remains, he said. Martin says Gregory Martin was unlawfully promoted to

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lieutenant in June of this year and officials "intentionally disregarded Gregory Martin's personnel jacket to promote him in a racially motivated manner despite substantial information indicating that Gregory Martin was not as qualified." Lester Martin's attorney, Christopher Deininger, had no comment.

Sgt. Zellvon Lucas' lawsuit

Lucas was hired in June 2001 by the Fire Department and transferred to the Police Department the following year. She was promoted to sergeant in 2018. She alleges that because she has reported fellow officers for infractions, she has been retaliated against, overlooked for promotions and discriminated against based on her race and gender. She was also forced to work in an office full of black mold despite having "known respiratory conditions," she alleges.

Lucas claims that in February 2019 she reached out to her supervisor regarding air quality in her office, saying the "office itself was infested with mold, the carpets in the office were overridden with mold and there was rat feces all throughout the office," but that no substantive action was taken. Instead, Lucas paid out of pocket for some repairs and an air purifier.

A test taken in summer came back positive for black mold and while remediation has been done, she says, "air sample tests still show elevated levels of black mold in the records area," where Lucas worked. After the vote of no confidence was taken against the chief and deputy chief, Lucas alleges that there was an increase in "verbal attacks on African American PBA members." Lucas is Black. After she and seven other officers signed a letter in support of the chief and deputy chief, they were suspended from the union and lost benefits as a result.

When Halstead retired as deputy chief, Lucas was recommended for the role, she says. Instead the process was changed. The table of organization was updated to allow for three candidates to vie for the position instead of using the recommendation of the chief. Several promotions were made in June 2021, all to white officers. Lucas also says in her complaint that nepotism was prevalent in the department. Representation for the city and for Lucas did not respond to requests for comment.

Other bias suits in Englewood

Other lawsuits have been filed in recent years against the city citing racial discrimination from people of all backgrounds. In August, Pulice sued the city alleging that he was discriminated against and passed over for a promotion due to his age and for speaking out against what he calls unlawful practices. Two lawsuits filed last summer accused the department of threatening residents with false arrests and displaying racial bias when promoting officers.

In another suit, a Hispanic police lieutenant says he was passed over for promotion because the department prefers to advance Black officers. In addition, discrimination suits have been filed related to the city's Fire Department and Public Works Department. In September 2020, Public Works employee Gaby Nelson alleged discrimination and retaliation on the basis of national origin, as well as a hostile work environment. According to the complaint, Nelson's supervisor Raymond Romney asked her, "What did President Trump call your country?" referring, she said,

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to comments made by Trump in 2018, when he referred to Haiti and African nations as "s-hole countries."

A prospective city firefighter alleged racial discrimination in a lawsuit over a withdrawn job offer in April 2019. According to the suit, Charles Barnhart was offered the job but received a letter from then-City Manager Edward Hynes days later saying his offer had been contingent on the budget and was being rescinded. Meanwhile, other individuals who were offered employment at or about the same time had been hired, the complaint said. Barnhart said the Fire Department was made up predominantly of white firefighters from out of town. About a third of Englewood's 28,400 residents are non-Hispanic whites, according to census figures.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.inglewoodnjrotary.org/speakers/5b586b1b-547c-45e9-9755-29936487b739>
Feb 16, 2021

Englewood's New City Manager



Sonia Alves-Viveiros Englewood's New City Manager

Ms. Alves-Viveiros brings extensive background and experience to Englewood. Since 2018, she has served as the Township Administrator for Maplewood, New Jersey, where she was responsible for an approximately \$47 million dollar budget and the supervision of 225 full time and 179 part time employees. Before that, she served as the Assistant and Acting Township Administrator of Maplewood and served in administrative capacities in the City of Summit and Bernards Township.

She graduated from Seton Hall University with her Bachelor's Degree, and earned a Master of Public Administration from Seton Hall University. She is a certified Qualified Purchase Agent (QPA) and is a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the New Jersey Municipal Management Association (NJMMA), and Governmental Purchasing Officers Association of NJ (GPOANJ).

In her new position, **Ms. Alves-Viveiros** oversees the operations of 12 municipal departments and divisions and supervises 262 full time, 47 part-time employees plus seasonal employees. The City's 2020 general operating budget is \$68.3 million and its 2020 Capital Budget is \$ 7.3 million.

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<https://www.nj.com/bergen/2020/12/bergen-county-prosecutor-taking-over-nj-police-departments-internal-affairs-unit.html>

Dec. 16, 2020

Bergen County Prosecutor taking over N.J. police department’s internal affairs unit

By Rodrigo Torrejon | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

The Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office is taking over Englewood Police Department’s internal affairs unit for at least the next six months, citing a months-long investigation into the unit. Starting this week, the Prosecutor’s Office will enter into a monitoring agreement with the Englewood Police department to take complete control over the department’s internal affairs unit, Bergen County Prosecutor Mark Musella said in a statement. The agreement will temporarily override Police Chief Larry Suffern’s authority over the unit for at least six months, with the potential to extend the time period for longer, according to the agreement. The agreement will install a full-time monitor who will be able to review and audit every aspect of the internal affairs unit, dating as far back as necessary, according to the agreement. The monitor will be granted complete access to any books, documents, records and personnel they need, according to the agreement. The monitor will also be able to review and audit other parts of the police department if they deem it necessary, according to the agreement.

The agreement comes after the Prosecutor’s Office conducted a six-month long investigation into the Englewood Police’s internal affairs unit, the statement said. After the investigation, the office provided City Manager **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** with their findings. The Prosecutor’s Office statement and Englewood administration did not provide those findings or the reasons for the agreement. **Alves-Viveiros**, who signed the agreement along with Musella, declined to comment on the agreement, referring questions to the Prosecutor’s Office. Police Chief Suffern did not immediately return calls requesting comment.

Englewood Mayor Michael Wildes alluded to conflict within the Englewood Police department but stopped short of explaining what the Prosecutor’s Office investigation found and the specific reasons why the agreement was forged to install a monitor. “I had the privilege of being at the Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office last week, where he announced this,” said Wildes. “He has a stellar reputation and as in the past has stepped into other departments in similar fashion. It’s not a secret that our department is fractured. And I welcome his team and know that they will - together with our department -establish our best practices.”

The police department has been beset by in-fighting among police officers who support Suffern and those who don’t, as reported by NorthJersey.com. In April, a majority of 67 members of the PBA on the police department voted “no confidence” in Suffern, NorthJersey reported. Later, eight of the officers who did not vote “no confidence” sent a letter in support of Suffern and were ultimately suspended from their union, NorthJersey.com reported. In response, the eight officers chose to create their own rival union. And last month, the local chapters of the PBA and the Superior Officers Association sued Suffern, claiming he got rid of extra-duty shifts as retaliation, NorthJersey reported.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/maplewood/maplewood-township-administrator-sonia-Alves-Viveiros-leaving-for-new-job-in-englewood/>
October 20, 2020

Maplewood Township Administrator Sonia Alves-Viveiros Leaving for New Job in Englewood

Maplewood Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** will be leaving for a new job as City Manager of Englewood, NJ. **Alves-Viveiros** is expected to continue working in Maplewood through late November before embarking on her new job. The news was announced October 20 at the Maplewood Township Committee meeting.

Alves-Viveiros, who graduated in 2010 from Seton Hall University, interned in Millburn before working in administration in both Summit and Bernards Township. She was hired as Maplewood Assistant Township Administrator in September 2016, and was selected from a pool of six candidates as Township Administrator in 2018, after the retirement of Joseph Manning. This story will be updated.

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros
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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/maplewood/maplewood-got-hammered-in-tropical-storm-isaias-with-downed-wires-trees-throughout-town/>
August 4, 2020

Maplewood ‘Got Hammered’ in Tropical Storm Isaias with Downed Wires, Trees Throughout Town

By Colleen Falconer

Tropical storm Isaias barreled through New Jersey on Tuesday, leaving numerous trees and wires down in Maplewood and some residents without power.

Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** reported on the damage at Tuesday night’s remote Township Committee Meeting. The Department of Public Works and the Fire Department are coordinating the removal of trees and wires, which has already begun. **Viveiros** said “PSE&G is here in town at the moment” with an MPD sergeant.

Residents with downed wires should report them to mpddesk@twp.maplewood.nj.us , according to Glenn Michalowski, Assistant Township Administrator.

Committee member Greg Lembrich asked how to best contact PSE&G, whose website has been down several times in the last few hours. **Viveiros** recommended emailing Township Engineer Paul Kittner at pkittner@twp.maplewood.us, as Kittner has direct contact with the regional PSE&G representative. Residents can also text 47734 to directly report to PSE&G if their account is already registered to PSE&G’s text update system.

The two kids’ camps out of the Woodland and Dehart Park both have generators and will be up and running as usual on Wednesday, said **Viveiros**. There will also be a “massive cleanup effort” tomorrow, according to Deputy Mayor Dean Dafis. “We’re gonna get to everyone as soon as we can,” said Dafis, who said there are over 70 locations in town with trees or wires down at this time.

Mayor Frank McGehee echoed Dafis’s statements, asking residents to be patient. “We got hammered,” he told the Committee and residents. The Departments of Public Works, fire, and police “were out everywhere, in all four corners of our township, securing streets, sidewalks, front lawns, whatever the case may be...It’s gonna take some time.” McGehee also informed listeners that the DPW will be coming around in the coming days to remove debris in all 6 zones.

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<https://villagegreennj.com/health/maplewood-board-of-health-telling-the-story-of-the-virus/>
May 11, 2020

Maplewood Board of Health: ‘Telling the Story of the Virus’

At the May 5 Maplewood Township Committee virtual meeting, Board of Health Chair Dean Dafis and Township Health Officer Candice made a lengthy presentation in an effort to give the public a more holistic look at how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting their town of 25,000 residents. “This evening we thought it was time after seven weeks or so of data and social distancing ... to tell the story of the virus,” said Dafis. “How does this virus work and what does that look like nationally ... as well as right here in our community.”

“How is it that while infections may be slowing down deaths are rising,” said Dafis. “And what does the future look like? Science equals confidence. The data will inform the dates and how we open our society again,” he added. Flattening the curve isn’t the end, explained Dafis, who added, “The pandemic has a new shape: the plateau.”

“While social distancing does work ... the virus is still on the loose. The virus is not taking a summer break and we shouldn’t either. ... The number of affected persons could be even greater. ... Flattening the curve the first step, it’s not the end of the game and it’s not enough.” Davenport then made her way through a detailed presentation (scroll down or find it at twp.maplewood.nj.us) that cited the State of New Jersey’s COVID-19 porthole. Davenport explained that she and her team have been entering local data into that porthole, as are municipalities throughout the state.

Maplewood is embedded in Essex County which has the highest death toll of the 21 counties in the state, reported Davenport, who then gave numbers for Maplewood’s positive cases (263), recovered cases (120) and negative tests (more than 400) as of May 5. She noted that the work of the health officials doesn’t end with those numbers. There is ongoing contact tracing and support and follow up for positive diagnoses as well as all family members of those diagnosed with the disease (otherwise known as “probable cases”). Dafis noted that “half of hospitalizations are in the ICU” and that the disease is “still very strong and spreading.” He said that New Jersey is “really in the hot zone.”

Regarding the demographics of the disease, Davenport said that, as of May 5, “deaths don’t have an impact until [age] 30-49 then increases rapidly and exponentially as you get older.” She said that age is one of the major risk factors. “The other major risk factor are underlying conditions,” said Davenport. Those include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, immuno-depressed diseases and more. Davenport said that Maplewood was a “microcosm” of New Jersey, tracking closely with the state overall in terms of age and ethnicity impacted by the virus. “The ones who are getting sick are the essential workers,” said Davenport. In addition, “We are seeing cases in the elderly in long-term care facilities and nursing facilities throughout the state.” Dafis asked how Maplewood compared to similar municipalities. “We fall right in the middle,” said Davenport. “What makes us different is we have a working class population who are the workers in health

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care and essential personnel. ... We have multi-family housing units. COVID-19 tells a story about density; that's how it can spread unfortunately." She noted, "We have an uninsured population" and that "24% of our residents are ALICE [Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed] -qualified. With this economic crisis that number has probably increased significantly. As [TC member] Vic [DeLuca] mentioned, 25% of our population is renters. 18% is foreign born."

Davenport noted that Maplewood's first COVID-19 case was diagnosed on March 14, with those numbers going up exponentially over time. She cited a peak around April 4 then another peak on April 17. "This mimics to a 'T' the state peaks." "March 21 is when we had the social distancing mandate," said Davenport. "Unfortunately it takes almost a month to make a difference." She said cautioned that, "as we lift any new restriction in a month we will see more cases if people don't continue to follow social distancing."

"The decrease shows what social distancing has done. without it, these numbers would have gone higher," said Davenport. "The peak would have been later and this decline would not have been possible." Besides social distancing, "wearing that face mask is key," she added. Davenport said to look out for symptoms including cough, fever, shortness of breath increasing to chest tightness, head aches, body aches, chills, sore throat, diarrhea and vomiting. pneumonia, and blood clots. "This disease keeps morphing and changing," she said. "Blood clots can lead to other issues such as strokes, heart attacks and embolisms." Later in the presentation, Davenport gave more details about contact tracing and recovery: "We take the time to follow every patient and all their household contacts. You are not a recovered case until everyone in your household has recovered."

Mayor Frank McGehee noted, "That 's 263 cases. That's 263 phones calls and all the followups. The amount of work coming out of your office is unbelievable ... a mountain of work." "We love what we do. We love our community," said Davenport.

Later in the regular meeting of the Township Committee, Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** noted that the Township is looking to reconfigure the way it does business in preparation for an eventual reopening of physical Township offices. That included everything from hand sanitizers to physical barriers in the offices ("we're working with the Historic Commission," said **Viveiros**). The Township is investing in an intercom system and will be doing once a month deep cleaning.

Viveiros stressed that the opening of buildings would not happen "until the governor issues orders." She also added, "I recommend enhancing and promoting an online platform of doing business and processing permits online. ... We were ahead of the game here. Our courts are a great example with processing of pleas and even virtual sessions now." "That would be the responsible way to open up."

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

TAPinto Edison (NJ)
February 6, 2020

Maplewood recycling vendor narrowly re-awarded contract

Author: Alia C. Covell

After an impassioned promise from the vendor that this year will be different, a divided Township Committee has voted to continue using the current recycling collection provider. The move was unexpected, considering that the Township Committee meeting's agenda read "13. Report of receipt of bids — Recycling/SV 14. Hearing 15. Rejection of Recycling Bids."

The Maplewood Township Business Administrator, **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, indeed advised the Committee that two bids for the contract had been received, and that she recommended dismissing both and putting the contract out to bid again. The low bidder, current provider F. Basso Jr. Rubbish Removal Inc., should be rejected for "bad past experience" and "lack of performance," said **Alves-Viveiros**; the vendor has had multiple complaints against them during their six years as a vendor and specifically in 2019 concerning how they handle pickups, not collecting recycling at all on pick up days, and lack of responsive customer service from the office. She said the higher bidder should be dismissed as well because the bid came in well above Maplewood's budget.

Multiple committee members acknowledged that Maplewood residents have complained about the company to them. Mayor Frank McGehee then allowed Dave Basso, the company's operations manager, to speak on the company's behalf. Basso started by acknowledging the past bad experiences, saying he was "embarrassed" to be in front of a township committee for the first time in his career, and that he "hoped to ease the concerns that you have." He delineated what the company has done to rectify the situation and ensure excellent service in the future. He said after receiving fines in September 2019 for missed collections in August, he evaluated "all existing policies and procedures" and underwent "a modernization of administrative procedure, equipment, and on my fleet." As for the staff who served Maplewood, "several employees were disciplined for these missed collections and some were even let go." The remaining staff was retrained in what was expected of them, Basso said.

Technology within the company was also stepped up. "GPS was added to all trucks in the fleet. This allows for real time monitoring of the trucks in the field." Their office can now track not only where an individual truck is currently, but what time pick up occurred on each block in town. "This will ensure the recycling is collected promptly and efficiently," he said. Since the implementation of F. Basso's new policies and the addition of the GPS system, he said, "in the last four weeks we had zero missed collections," which contrasted with 10 missed collections in the 18 weeks prior. He said his pricing, roughly one third less than the higher bidder, is due to the advantage of his company being close by in Irvington, and delivering the recyclables to Newark. Since the short distance saves time and fuel costs, "This allows me to pass along the savings to the township."

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For close to half an hour after Basso's plea, the committee members discussed the pros and cons of giving the company another chance. The time constraints of putting out a new request for bids when F. Basso's contract will expire at the end of February was another consideration. Committee Member Vic DeLuca had made a motion to reject both bids, but rescinded it during the discussion. In the end, the vote to accept the bid and award the contract was passed three to two, with DeLuca and Mayor Frank McGehee voting against the motion. The new contract is set to begin March 1.

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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/maplewood/maplewood-terminates-department-of-public-works-director/>

January 12, 2020

UPDATED: Maplewood Terminates Department of Public Works Director

By Colleen Falconer and Carolyn Parisi

Updated January 12, 2020 with information on a lawsuit that Calvin Bell filed against the Township of Maplewood on January 3, 2020. A copy of the filing is attached below.

The Maplewood Township Committee terminated Director of the Department of Public Works Calvin Bell on January 7, 2020, after the town’s Business Administrator delivered a detailed account of Bell’s alleged insubordination, abuse of time, failure to report employee incidents and neglecting to pay outstanding invoices — in one case reportedly leading to the brief suspension of recycling services to the town — among other issues. Township administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** told the Township Committee that Bell’s insubordination and neglect of duties “are at a point where operations have been and are compromised” and she suggested his immediate termination.

Bell has been DPW director since November 2014, following the retirement of Eric Burbank. **Alves-Viveiros** said Bell had been notified of the hearing regarding his employment — called a Rice notice. Bell was present at the meeting, along with his attorney Eldridge Hawkins. Laying out a timeline that stretched back to June of 2018 when she assumed the role of township administrator, **Alves-Viveiros** told the TC she had noticed issues within the Department of Public Works, including failure to report incidents, hiring of staff, and morale within the department. She said she brought her concerns to Bell in the beginning of 2019, and throughout the year they worked to initiate culture studies and employee trainings including anti-bias training. But she said the incidents persisted; DPW employees failed to report to work, and around 20 grievances were filed for improper distribution of overtime.

In a November 2019 incident involving an altercation between two employees, one of whom was a supervisor, Bell did not report the incident to the proper chain of command, **Alves-Viveiros** said. The township then suspended Bell for five days. Hawkins told a Village Green reporter in November that it was the supervisor, not Bell, who should have been responsible for reporting the incident. “[The supervisor] didn’t get censured,” Bell’s attorney Eldridge Hawkins said then, adding, “I find it very disturbing that Maplewood is still going through (this) but that’s why we’re litigating.” Bell also reportedly failed to appear at various meetings that required DPW representation, which **Alves-Viveiros** said she brought to his attention throughout 2019.

In the most recent incident leading to her recommendation to terminate Bell, **Alves-Viveiros** said she was copied on an email dated January 3, 2020 to Bell from Tiffany Giordano of Giordano Recycling that stated the vendor “would no longer be accepting our recycling” effective immediately, because the township owed “approximately \$57,000, and were past due 90 days.”

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Alves-Viveiros said she immediately called the vendor to assure payment so that services were resumed. On January 7, she met with Bell and township CFO Joseph Kolodziej and asked Bell about the unpaid invoices. Bell reportedly said that he didn't know, with "no justification or explanation" despite the fact that the invoices were sent directly to him. Bell told her that "he did not recall" any communication regarding outstanding invoices. The Township Administrator noted two other incidents where Bell neglected to pay invoices, including to a landscaper and a vendor who provides fuel for the town jitneys — both of which she said Bell provided no explanation for.

Hawkins took to the podium with an impassioned defense of his client. He expressed grave concerns with information that **Alves-Viveiros** had presented at the meeting that he said she could not have known before sending notice of the hearing to Bell on January 3. "Clearly, she's talking about things that happened today," he said, suggesting the TC question **Alves-Viveiros** "because she didn't give specifics. She was very broad with what she said." At one point during Hawkins' speech, Township Committee member Nancy Adams interjected and admonished him for his repeated references to **Alves-Viveiros** as "young lady" and "lovely young lady."

"Her name is **Ms. Viveiros**," Adams said. "That's disrespectful, and works against her position in this township ... calling her a young lady over and over again." The attorney took the note, but continued with his critique. "Everything she's laid out is wrong. ... I couldn't quite say how my client was on suspension, and never got the communication — as your policy requires — to say 'final warning, the next time you could be terminated.'" He also expressed that he didn't "know how she would be able to get this matter brought before this board," following last week's reorganization meeting.

"You watch yourself," Hawkins told the committee. "'Cause you're going to take responsibility for **Ms. Viveiros**, and all of you are gonna go where she wants to go." As soon as Hawkins finished speaking, Township Committee member Greg Lembrich made a motion to vote on Bell's termination, effective immediately. All five members voted yes. The motion to advertise for a new candidate for the position was also decided on a unanimous vote.

Village Green reached out to the township's attorney, who declined to comment on the situation. UPDATE: Bell filed a suit against the Township on Jan. 3 alleging "trumped up" allegations, racial discrimination and retaliation for filing a suit (scroll down to see the full filing). Township Committee member Greg Lembrich commented on Facebook: "The lawsuit was decidedly not a factor in this outcome. If anything, this decision was made despite the lawsuit. I cannot comment any further or address the specifics because this is a personnel matter, but I would refer the public to the statement/memo from **Ms. Viveiros**, which speaks for itself." **Viveiros** read the memo aloud at the Jan. 7 meeting, but Village Green has requested a copy of the memo and will append it here when it is received.

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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/maplewood/2019-maplewood-state-of-the-township-address/>
January 1, 2020

2019 Maplewood State of the Township Address

By Frank McGehee, Mayor of Maplewood NJ

The following State of the Township address was delivered by newly sworn-in Maplewood Mayor Frank McGehee at the Township Committee's annual Reorganization Meeting on January 1, 2020:

STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP ADDRESS

Happy New Year Maplewood and Thank you again for attending today.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues on the Maplewood Township Committee for electing me unanimously as your Mayor. Over the last three years, we've collaborated and worked diligently to achieve results which will only enhance our community.

I also want to recognize all the staff or as I like to say the Maplewood Township Team. These individuals are the heartbeat of our town's operations. From Public Works to Fire to Recreation and Human Services to Engineering and Health, 225 full-time and 179 part-time employees who are dedicated to The Township of Maplewood. Please join me in recognizing the team that is here today.

I also want to recognize our Town Clerk Liz Fritzen who could not be with us today due to a broken wrist. Liz has been a pillar for our township for 40 years. I know that she wishes that she could be here and is likely watching at home. Liz, we are praying for your speedy and healthy recovery.

Our township administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** and her team have made significant progress with reorganizing multiple departments, empowering department heads, and negotiating collective bargaining agreements with our fire, public works, library, and other labor unions. These are critical initiatives that will have a direct impact on operations and budgeting for years to come. Thank you, Ms. **Viveiros**, for your leadership.

Roger Desiderio, our town attorney: Thank you for your 26 years of dedication to your township. Your counsel has been invaluable. And thank you for stepping in today on Liz's behalf.

Three years ago when I was elected into office on the Maplewood Township Committee, it was the same night that our current president was elected into office. With a new administration in the White House, there was a lot of uncertainty both nationally and around the world about what was to become of the state of our union. There was and continues to be so much at stakewomen's rights, immigration rights, climate change, LGBTQ+ rights, Black lives, criminal justice reform, equity in education, common sense gun laws and affordable healthcare. We are

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living in extremely challenging times. But here's what I know for sure...Maplewood is resilient and as a community, we continue to show the nation and the world who we are.

So who are we?

Maplewood is a welcoming community. In my first month in office, my colleagues and I on the Maplewood Township Committee passed Resolution 3-17 to express Maplewood's commitment to equal, respectful and dignified treatment of all people regardless of their immigration status. Since then, we have established "rainbow crosswalks." We have also raised the pride, transgender and Haitian flags. But this is not about what we on the Township Committee are doing, it's about what YOU are doing! Folks like Maplewood resident Alan Stephenson, who upon learning about the Women's March in Washington DC in January 2017, sprang into action and reserved two buses to transport fellow neighbors and friends from our community to and from Washington DC so that they could participate. Or what about the time that Natalie and Javier Farfan hosted a dinner at their home for Syrian refugees? We will continue to collaborate with local organizations dedicated to celebrate our differences and provide venues for open dialogue.

So who are we?

Maplewood is a community that is committed to sustainability. We continue to be recognized by Sustainable Jersey as one of the leading municipalities in the state and Maplewood was awarded again with Silver Certification. Only 53 out of 565 municipalities have earned this recognition, that puts Maplewood in the top 9% in the state. In 2019 we banned single use plastic bags. We joined 5 other municipalities to form the Sustainable Essex Alliance and launched Community Energy Aggregation and although we have experienced a minor bump in the rollout, the program will provide cleaner and cheaper energy for months to come. We also installed an Electric Charging Station at The Woodland, and held our first Electric Vehicle Car Show at the Maplewood Pool parking lot. In 2020, we will look to enhance our commitment to rid our environment of other plastics and materials such as straws, stirrers, and containers that are harmful to our planet. We will move forward with an Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) for Town Hall and explore other township buildings in the future. But when I think of sustainability and Maplewood, the person who immediately comes to mind is Tracey Woods. Tracey, a long-time resident, is the chair of the Maplewood Green Team. She also works for Sustainable Jersey. Tracey is committed to Maplewood and our environment. She has organized nearly every sustainability event in our town. From Green Day to Biketopia, she is the ultimate Maplewood ambassador and advocate for educating residents on reducing their environmental impact. She participates in marches and student led Climate Crisis teach ins acting with a sense of urgency. With her Husband Rich, she is raising two extraordinary children. Recently, Tracey and her sister Kelly, also a Maplewood resident and volunteer with MEND, lost their mom, Pamela, our prayers are with you and your family. Tracey, Thank you for making Maplewood strong on Sustainability.

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So who are we?

Maplewood is a thriving business community. In the last year alone, we've welcomed several new restaurants like Ani Ramen, Freetown Kitchen, Picketts and Luna Stella. I love hearing residents rave about new businesses on Springfield Avenue and in the Village like the General Store Cooperative, Maker + Muse and City Workshop. And we're just getting started. In 2020 we will continue to attract even more businesses with openings planned on Springfield Ave in locations that have been vacant for many years. Our town is blessed to have business owners who are committed not only to growing and enhancing their business, but also their community. Business owners like Julie and Thomas Pauly of the Able Baker. The Paulys have selflessly dedicated and contributed baked goods, money and an infinite amount of time to charitable events and causes. As my wife likes to say, the Able Baker is "one of the most woke bakeries around AND they make great coffee." And to Pete and Fifi Kikianis owners of the Park Wood Diner, thank you for always putting community first. Fred Shandler not only owns the thriving Arturo's in Maplewood Village but the equally amazing Bread Stand on Boyden Ave. Fred's Bread Stand has answered the call of investing in an area in our Maplewood community which has largely been ignored, but has great potential. Thank you, Fred, for your forward-thinking vision. Deborah Engel and Amy Howlett, founders of the General Store Cooperative, designed to enable local makers and indie businesses to collaborate and allow our residents to shop-local and invest in our community. Thank you Deborah and Amy for giving our local entrepreneurs an outlet where residents can interact and support their fellow neighbors.

So who are we?

Maplewood is a great place to live. Average median home list prices are up year-over-year and appreciation rates for our homes have been tracking above national average according to industry data and our town ranks in the top 30% nationwide. Also, the days that a home is on the market is down year-over-year. Year-to-date more than 480 homes have been sold over 7% of our residential housing stock. Still, we have not lost sight on ensuring that Maplewood remains home for our seniors and residents who span all socio economic demographics. And I look forward to working with my colleagues and with residents to identify viable affordable housing solutions. In the meantime, our Maplewood Housing Rehabilitation Program is available to assist eligible households with making repairs with \$20,000 in forgivable loans.

So who are we?

Maplewood demands commuter-friendly transportation. The Morris Essex and Gladstone NJ Transit lines must be reliable modes of transportation. Commuters should not need to have to take a train several hours earlier out of fear that their regular train will be canceled or delayed which causes a lot of stress particularly on our families who are balancing child care or caring for elderly parents. To mitigate this, we will continue to offer bus service to the city for our morning commuters. And we will continue to push NJ Transit to provide the customer experience that our residents and surrounding communities deserve!

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So who are we?

We are a safe and healthy community. Through the first three quarters of 2019, major crimes in Maplewood are down or flat across all major categories. Assaults, motor vehicle thefts, burglaries are down 40%, 58% and 9% respectively and in 2019 robberies are flat from 2018 with a total of 10. And speaking of safety, let's not lose sight of the progress we've made when it comes to pedestrian safety. Our Traffic Bureau has written over 3,400 moving violations and 7,400 parking violations during that period. Thank you to our police department. Our Fire Department wears many hats as first responders from EMS to fire to conducting safety inspections. The department is well run from training to maintenance to execution. They are a family and consider the residents of Maplewood to be their extended family. Currently, with the help of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, we are negotiating with South Orange the consolidation of our two fire departments. This is an extremely complicated undertaking, where the focus is on creating an enhanced department serving our two towns. I want to thank our fire department for being constant professionals throughout this process, with unwavering dedication to the community. Our Board of Health promotes wellness in our community and The Municipal Alliance advocates for the mental, social and physical health of our youth and an environment that is free of the abuse of alcohol, vaping and other illicit drugs. In 2019, we held Drug Take Back Days to dispose of all expired or unused medication, we raised over \$2,700 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and participated in the Out of the Darkness Walk. In 2020 we will continue to support CHS Midnight Madness and educate our youth about tobacco, vaping and mental health. Thank you to Bob Roe who retired just yesterday as our Health Officer and spent 47 years in public health. We look forward to the leadership of Candice Davenport as our new Health Officer. We are a township that embraces change and innovation which will bring Maplewood into the 21st century. Building a 21st Century Library is still a focus for our township. The state issued regulations regarding the \$125 million bond and we submitted feedback regarding the draft rules and are asking that the state consider gut reconstruction projects be funded as new construction and to raise the per foot project cost from \$350 to \$550 to reflect the true cost of site preparation, construction, project overhead, sustainability features, technological upgrades, furniture and equipment and other factors. We remain committed and Thank you to Sarah Lester and her team, The library Board, Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library for their leadership. The redevelopment of Irvington Avenue will commence and will include two phases. Phase 1 will include lighting upgrades, decorative streetscape furniture, sidewalk reconstruction with enhancements between Prospect Street and Hillcrest Road and a crosswalk at Coolidge Road. Phase 2 will also include lighting upgrades, streetscape, sidewalk reconstruction, trees, signage, crosswalks and intersection enhancements between Hillcrest Road and Florence Avenue. We are also moving forward with a redevelopment study. To the residents of the Borden Park neighborhood, we hear you and look forward to making progress in 2020. The Pavers in Maplewood Village are complete and now we begin the process of assessing the Maplewood Village Visioning Plan provided by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. The township looks forward to collaborating with stakeholders on the feasibility and a phased implementation. In June of 2019, we approved a bond to pay for our school district's \$157.4 million capital improvement and integration plan to build additional classroom space, address long-standing maintenance issues, and achieve

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integration across our community. We look forward to seeing the positive results of this investment under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Ronald Taylor, Mr. Paul Roth, and the Board of Ed.

So who are we?

We are a town where our youth not only have a voice, they have a seat at the table. Since we appointed the Youth Advisory Committee in 2018, they have been busy doing the work for our community and young people. In 2020 look for the rollout of MAPSO safe rides. The 2020 equivalent of a designated driver initiative, MAPSO safe rides is a peer-to-peer volunteer and leadership program designed and led by youth for the purposes of preventing underage exposure to drugs and alcohol and other unsafe or dangerous situations unexpectedly and unwillingly at after school gatherings or other social settings in the community.

So who are we?

We are a town that wants your ideas. Earlier this year we invited residents, community groups and non profit organizations all based in Maplewood to submit ideas that provide a community benefit. The winning project selected was a neighborhood Wifi pilot to help close the digital divide.

So who are we?

We are a community who is not only passionate about the arts, it's in our DNA. For the second consecutive year, the Springfield Avenue Partnership Public Art Initiative has brought art to Springfield Avenue. Please visit Firehouse two on the corner of Springfield Ave and Boyden Ave to see for yourself.. And this past fall The Maplewood Arts Council unveiled public works of art in the North tunnel of our Maplewood Train Station. And not only is Maplewood a community where Broadway goes to sleep, it's where Broadway gives back. Our Broadway stars under the leadership of the Vanessa Pollock Music Initiative are actively working to raise money for the Achieve Foundation so that more students throughout Maplewood and South Orange can get access to music education. And I hope you will all come out for the second annual SOMA Rocks event at the Woodland on Saturday, January 11, where the proceeds will benefit music programs at Columbia High School. We are a township that will count and be counted. The 2020 Census is here. From now until the end of July, we will work diligently with the Essex County Census Staff and the SOMA Complete Count Committee to count every single person with an emphasis on children and hard to reach populations. We will distribute leaflets in English, Spanish and Creole and The Maplewood Library will promote Census employment positions and provide computers to allow residents to complete Census questionnaires online; A complete Census count helps Maplewood get more federal and state funding. Everyone counts in Maplewood so remind all your neighbors to BE counted.

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So who are we?

We are a township where hate has no home. Where we stand up not only for ourselves but for each other. We are a community that comes together in celebration and in unspeakable grief. We are a community that is willing to have the tough conversations. We are a township where we have appointed women and people of color in top leadership positions. We are a Township that is resilient with a shared vision and purpose heading into 2020, whether it's enhancing our infrastructure, reducing our carbon footprint, streamlining our operations to be more efficient or investing in our business districts all while ensuring that Maplewood is a safe community to live, work and play. And we're just getting started!

Thank you, God bless Maplewood and God bless the United States of America.

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TAPinto Edison (NJ)
July 15, 2019

Westfield looks at Maplewood leaf blower law

Author: Matt Kadosh

The leaves are long gone but the gas-powered blowers are still making noise. Jon Spitz, a Dorian Road resident, is lobbying the municipality to find a fix for loud gas-powered leaf blowers that he said contractors are using to blow grass clippings into the street. “This is a huge quality of life issue for 20 percent of the people who, like me, are over-the-top annoyed by it,” Spitz told the Town Council this week. “My wife, for instance, is not annoyed by it.” However, she is concerned about the pollution from the blowers, he said.

Town Attorney Tom Jardim said during a council workshop this week that the options for regulating such noise are limited. “Other than a complete ban on gas-powered equipment like this, it is very difficult to come up with a policy that actually works in some way that’s going to grant relief to the residents of Westfield,” Jardim said. “The committee is all ears to [hearing] what policy options are available,” he added.

On Thursday, Mayor Shelley Brindle said Spitz would be forwarding those suggestions to the town. “He is going to send us some proposed policy solutions on that for consideration,” Brindle said. “Once we review them, we’ll determine next steps, including the potential formation of a committee, if deemed necessary.” Westfield’s existing regulations may provide some relief. The town ordinance allows for up to 65 decibels of noise outdoors from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. Some leaf blowers can exceed that level.

What have other municipalities done?

Westfield is not the first municipality to wrestle with the regulation of noisy leaf blowers. In 2017, Maplewood made headlines with a ban prohibiting the use of gas-powered blowers from May 15 – Sept. 30. While the seasonal ban on gas-powered leaf blowers was widely popular, even receiving an endorsement from the Star Ledger’s Editorial Board, the regulation landed Maplewood in federal court when the New Jersey Landscaper Contractors Association sued on behalf of nine landscapers in that township.

The lawsuit takes that township to task for targeting with its ordinance commercial entities using gas-powered leaf blowers. Court records show that the parties have been working toward a settlement but have yet to reach one. **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, the business administrator in Maplewood, said that since the Township Committee approved the controversial regulation, her office has not received complaints about noise from leaf blowers. “I haven’t received any complaints about it. It’s been quiet. It has certainly been helpful in that sense,” **Alves-Viveiros** said. “Several people we know of work from home, and those are the people I would have heard from.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

In Westfield, Spitz admits a Maplewood-style blower ban is not the best option. “You don’t want have happen like what happened in Maplewood, where people were so ludicrous over the situation that they [nearly] came to blows,” he said. Like in Westfield, Summit is also looking at a potential ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, but city officials first want to see what happens in the Maplewood court case, said Amy Cairns, spokeswoman for the city. “Everyone acknowledges that not only do they emit harmful toxins into the environment, it’s bad for workers to use them all day — for their breathing for their hearing — but it’s also their livelihood,” Cairns said.

In Clark, the noise control regulations apply to gas-powered leaf blowers, but do not call out gas-powered blowers or commercial entities specifically. The law prohibits “the operation of any noise-creating blower or power fan or any internal-combustion engine, the operation of which causes noise due to the explosion of operation gases or fluids.” The regulation allows for an exception if the device is equipped with a muffler. Scotch Plains lumps the regulation of leaf blowers in with the use of other noisy lawn care equipment and reminds the public to limit the use of such equipment from 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Taking it to the public

In 1996, Montclair Township let voters decide on a seasonal gas-powered leaf blower ban. The anti-blower voters won the referendum by a thin margin: 2,815 to 2,093, according to the Montclair Times. And 26 years later, gas-powered leaf blowers may only be used March 1 – June 30 in that township, under the regulation in force. Spitz, for his part, simply hopes to put a damper on the noise in his neighborhood. He told the council he wants to educate homeowners on the issue so they ask their landscapers to cut back on the blowing. “The noise is very stressful and it really changes the dynamic of the town,” Spitz added. “You can’t go for a 15 minute period in the morning where you don’t hear these in the Tamaques area.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/government/a-change-in-accounting-causes-pain-in-maplewood-2019-budget/>

March 31, 2019

Maplewood to Introduce 2019 Budget With 6.8% Tax Levy Increase

By Mary Mann

After years of passing municipal budgets at, below or near the 2% state-mandated cap, Maplewood Township will be introducing a proposed \$45.6M 2019 municipal budget on April 2 with a 6.8% tax levy increase. Why the change from recent years? According to Mayor Vic DeLuca, “The key drivers of this year’s increase are roughly \$450,000 in salary increases for all employees as per the employee contracts; an increase of \$1 million in long term debt repayment (which will save us money over the long term); and annual increases in our payments for employee health benefits and pension obligations.”

“To complicate matters,” continued the mayor, “we gave less surplus to carry over into 2019, generally because we have kept budgets and tax increases at a minimal the past few years. This practice, which in the past we did to keep tax increase low, has resulted in less surplus funds to carry over into 2019. Additionally, we are in agreement with the recommended (and more conservative) budgeting policies practices of the current CFO [Joseph Kolodziej]. This will help us stabilize Township finances and improve our bond ratings.”

At a preliminary budget hearing on March 20, Township Chief Financial Officer Joseph Kolodziej presented the TC with three scenarios, ranging from a projected tax levy increase of 3.2% to one of 13%. Kolodziej strenuously advised the TC to avoid the scenario that had the lowest tax impact due to his call for the Township to adopt ‘best practices’ in accounting and to bring Maplewood’s budget process in line with “most towns.” DeLuca stressed the need to find a balance between getting the Township on a path to best practices while being mindful of the pain the increase would place on the pocketbooks of residents. Ultimately, DeLuca and the TC members tasked Kolodziej with crafting a budget for introduction below a 7% tax levy increase. “We charged the Administrator and Chief Finance Officer with the task of reducing the average home 2019 tax increase to less than \$5 per week,” said DeLuca. “The budget we will introduce on Tuesday [April 2] uses these expense and revenue numbers and the tax increase will be less than \$5 per week on average.”

During a 2-1/2 hour budget hearing on March 20, DeLuca and the four other members of the Maplewood Township Committee — Deputy Mayor Frank McGehee, Nancy Adams, Greg Lembrich and Dean Dafis — grappled with the budget issues presented by Kolodziej and Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** and tried to make sense of the situation.

After spending the first hour of the meeting discussing how the town was accounting for projects that would be covered by grants and then running through a list of capital projects, the TC got down to talking about the overall 2019 budget about one hour into the meeting (see the 1:02 mark in the video below). DeLuca noted that the bond service was normally at \$4M in the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

budget, but that this year, “it’s up to \$5M.” Kolodziej explained that that was because the Township “wanted to lock in good interest rates.” He noted that one bond would retire in 2020 and another in 2021, so the town would see “a dip” then, but was “struggling along now.” Elected officials and administrators discussed increases in health care (Kolodziej said the Township might look at a less expensive private health care plan for future), increased costs in recycling (Kolodziej noted that towns across the globe were dealing with changes in this market), and more than \$400K in contractual salary increases.

Kolodziej told the TC that, although some factors couldn’t be controlled by the town — such as the global recycling market or the way the state “plays” the pension obligation — other items could be, such as the Township’s handling of its fund balance. “Things didn’t get broken in a year, they can’t get fixed in a year, but we cannot continue on this path,” said Kolodziej, who urged the Township Committee “to right the ship” by replenishing its fund balance and not using most of it to keep taxes lower. Kolodziej explained that, in the Township’s cash management plan, there is a policy encouraging the use of no more than 50% of fund balance to close a budget gap. “We’ve been utilizing quite a bit more than over 50%,” said Kolodziej. He noted that bond rating agencies look at that number, and said that the practice of using most of the fund balance “has pretty much caught up to us.” Kolodziej said that the town should have been raising taxes higher in previous years.

DeLuca expressed frustration that “this is the one year that we hit a home run on increasing valuations. . . . All the big projects have come online [Avalon Bay, 1701 Springfield Avenue].” The mayor added that it was “very disappointing to see these kind of tax increases.” Although Kolodziej darkly joked that he was “like the harbinger of death,” he said; “While we shouldn’t be putting together a structurally imbalanced budget, we have enough lights on the horizon that we can survive this.” He talked about the Township setting up a sewer authority in the future to move that cost out of the budget. DeLuca said that taxpayers would then just be “paying a higher sewer fee.” Lembrich called it “robbing Peter to pay Paul.” But Kolodziej said that it would be better for taxpayers because they can no longer deduct more than \$10K in property taxes and “with a sewer utility, [that’s a] fee you can control” by flushing the toilet less or taking shorter showers.

Meanwhile in the present, DeLuca instructed Kolodziej to come back with a budget under a 7% increase — an option that would put the Township on the road to best practices but that would be more palatable as it amounted to a \$5/week increase for the average household. “Given what the school district is doing [referring to a \$140M capital project that will need to be bonded], we need to be aware. What we do here may wind up impacting them there,” agreed Kolodziej. “I understand but I also don’t want to be fiscally irresponsible,” said Dafis. “I want to be on the path to recovery so we’re not having this conversation next year.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://villagegreennj.com/business/town-aiming-to-minimize-road-closures-for-maplewood-avenue-paving-in-village/>
November 8, 2018

Town Aiming to Minimize Road Closures for Maplewood Avenue Paving in Village

By Mary Mann

Maplewood Township is working to quell the fears of Maplewood Village merchants — and customers — after its contractor sent out a notice that had many thinking Maplewood Avenue would be closed all this coming week for milling and paving.

No so, reports the Township Engineer Paul Kittner, Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** and Township Committee member Dean Dafis.

Kittner corrected the record by issuing a notice to merchants (see below) that all milling of the roadway would take place overnight Sunday, November 11, through Monday morning, November 12, in order to minimize impact on businesses. Kittner also reported that Maplewood Avenue paving was scheduled for Wednesday, November 14, beginning at 9 a.m. — weather permitting. Kittner said that paving needed to take place during the day due to temperature requirements.

Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** told Village Green that typically the paving should be able to be completed in one day: “It typically takes one day and again pending inclement weather and if the equipment doesn’t break down.” However, Dafis cautioned that the paving could run to a second day. Nonetheless, two days of road closures sounds a lot better than an entire week. Kittner also stressed in his notice that all sidewalks and pathways would be open, as well as parking lots.

Throughout it all, Maplewood police officers will be on hand to aid in directing traffic. Officials encouraged local residents to continue to patronize Maplewood Village businesses as they are all open and ready to serve customers.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Essex News Daily (NJ)
September 24, 2018

TC discusses importance of clear taxpaying guidelines

Author: Yael Katzwer

At its Sept. 4 meeting, Maplewood Township Committee further discussed the town's reasons for no longer accepting partial property tax payments, a change in policy that came after South Orange voted in June to allow its tax collector, Aderonke Zaccheus, also to serve as Maplewood's tax collector. Payments may now only be made for each quarter in lump payments by Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1 and Nov. 1.

"People were making payments in between the quarters and what our new tax collector said that her professional opinion was, is that we should not be taking those payments because payments are due on those four quarterly dates and you cannot make partial payments toward those quarterly dates," DeLuca said at the meeting. "Whether or not we accept partial payments, we can, there's no prohibition," he added, explaining that Zaccheus does this to avoid confusion.

According to DeLuca and Maplewood Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, the confusion came when people would pay, say, 50 percent of their taxes, then, when late on the other 50 percent, be charged interest in penalties on the full amount owed.

"I think the crux of the problem is, if the full amount is not paid on the due date, Nov. 1, or within whatever the grace period is, which is a 10-day grace period, I believe, statutorily, the person's going to be charged the full interest and penalty on the full amount, regardless of the partial payment they've made or not. So, if they owe \$3,000 and they pay \$2,000, and they owe \$1,000, on the due date they're going to pay interest in penalties on the \$3,000," township attorney Roger Desiderio said.

"And they come and argue that 'I've already paid \$2,000, so therefore, whatever you're charging me, should only be on the \$1,000' and we say, 'no, we have to charge you on the \$3,000. It gets to be an issue,'" DeLuca said. "The state doesn't allow that partial payment to be in lieu of the full payment that was due on Nov. 1."

Deputy Mayor Frank McGehee questioned: "So a resident comes in and we reject their payment?" "We're not taking that, not unless that's the full amount," **Alves-Viveiros** said. McGehee asked if the township had been telling partial payers when accepting the partial payment that, interest-wise, they were still on the hook for the entirety of their property taxes, and Desiderio responded that the due date is listed on the tax bill with a notice that, if you are not paid by then, you will be charged interest on the amount.

"I don't think we're letting them know," McGehee said, suggesting that, if the town does go back to accepting partial payments, it should make that clear at the time of payment. "It's an extra document, but I think we need to over-communicate it until people understand this truth."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

But DeLuca pointed out that, in addition to the confusion accepting partial payments can cause, the practice also forces the department to do more bookkeeping and increases the cost of labor in the department.

Committeeman Dean Dafis expressed concern that partial payment may be the only viable method of payment for some residents. “I understand the state law, I understand the tax assessor’s position as well, but am I wrong in thinking that the folks who are making partial payments, even within the quarter, are some of our seniors who are waiting on that check to come in and do it when they can?” Dafis asked. **Alves-Viveiros** assured Dafis that the tax collector’s office will be proceeding on a case-by-case basis. “If there’s a situation where we could do the partial payment, we’ll do that,” **Alves-Viveiros** said. “She’s doing that now in South Orange, she’s not doing anything different than what she’s doing there.” But Desiderio argued against accepting partial payments at all. “If you start making exceptions to the rule, the exception can swallow the rule and someone can say, ‘you did it for me last time or you did it for my neighbor,’” Desiderio said.

DeLuca agreed, saying that he believes case-by-case acceptances of partial payments led to the more widespread practice in Maplewood. “We had a policy and then the policy was ignored and people started to pay, they were allowed to pay, and then more and more people started to pay,” DeLuca said. “The tax collector made a professional judgment now; if we don’t agree with that, we have the right as the governing body to overturn that.”

DeLuca added that he wants to know how many property owners were making partial payments so that he can properly gauge its impact. **Alves-Viveiros** told the News-Record via email that she did not have that figure. “This is not like anybody’s in jeopardy; people are just prepaying their taxes. And they can just put the money in the bank and then pay in November,” DeLuca said. “They’re using this as a bank.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Essex News Daily (NJ)
August 25, 2018

Maplewood no longer accepting partial property tax payments

Author: Amanda Valentovic

Maplewood is no longer accepting partial property tax payments, a change in policy that comes after South Orange voted in June to allow its tax collector, Aderonke Zaccheus, also serve as Maplewood's tax collector. Payments may now only be paid for each quarter in lump payments by Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1 and Nov. 1. "We have recently hired a new tax collector," **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, Maplewood's business administrator, told the News-Record in an Aug. 16 email. "Given her professional advice regarding best practices for tax collection, partial payments should no longer be accepted, but rather in full."

Zaccheus, who now serves as the tax collector in both Maplewood and South Orange, will be doing so at least through 2019, according to South Orange Village President Sheena Collum at the June 11 South Orange Board of Trustees meeting. "The township of Maplewood has a temporary vacancy that they are intending to fill by a new CFO who is receiving their certification," Collum said at the meeting. "For the interim, they are asking for a shared services agreement which we are calling a contract for services."

Collum also said at the meeting that Maplewood may or may not hire its own tax collector in the future. Regardless, at the moment the township is not accepting partial payments, although it did so for many years. "I'm not sure why Maplewood would or would not accept partial payments," Morris Davis, a professor at the Rutgers University School of Business and the academic director of the Center for Real Estate, said in an email to the News-Record on Aug. 16. "Partial payments seems like financing to me."

Kevin Riordan, the executive director of the Rutgers Center for Real Estate, agreed that partial payments "finance a portion of the owner's tax liability." "The mortgage-servicing system for residential and commercial mortgages is predicated on a quarterly pay to the municipalities," Riordan said in an email to the News-Record on Aug. 16. "I think a simple reason may be it is just easier to account for four pays per year versus 12."

The payment schedule could potentially create problems for residents who have a limited income and are not able to pay taxes all at one time. "That has definitely been a problem in New Jersey," Riordan said about property taxes. "Given the increases in property taxes, they take up a bigger portion of lower incomes. As that happens, more homes are at risk of being lost by homeowners for delinquent taxes." Zaccheus did not return multiple requests for comment. Maplewood Mayor Vic DeLuca directed questions to **Alves-Viveiros**, who said residents who need to make partial payments could possibly make arrangements to do so with Zaccheus. "It's a case-by-case basis," she said in a phone interview with the News-Record on Aug. 20. "If necessary, they can make those arrangements with the tax collector."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Essex News Daily (NJ)
May 5, 2018

Maplewood chooses new BA

Author: Amanda Valentovic

The township announced last week that current Assistant Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** will be taking over as the township's next business administrator. Appointed May 1, **Alves-Viveiros** will officially begin as business administrator June 1. She has been working in Maplewood for the last two years, and will be taking over for Joseph Manning, who will retire at the end of May. Manning has been Maplewood's business administrator since 2005. "It's been pretty seamless, I'm here already so a lot of what I've been doing I'm familiar with," **Alves-Viveiros** said in an April 30 phone interview with the News-Record. "It'll be easy to step into."

This was one of the reasons Mayor Vic DeLuca said **Alves-Viveiros** stood out from the other five candidates interviewed for the position. "She's familiar with the system, and the transition will be easier," DeLuca said in an interview with the News-Record on April 30. "She showed that she could take on some changes and we liked how she presented her ideas for the future."

One aspect of the job **Alves-Viveiros** wants to focus on is capital planning; she said an important part of building this year's budget was prioritizing road and infrastructure improvements. "One of the things I wanted to highlight is capital planning for the township," **Alves-Viveiros** said. "I think we need more work there. We certainly have high taxes, so we wanted to make sure our spending was prioritized. Roads were something we needed for this year."

Before arriving in Maplewood, **Alves-Viveiros** served as deputy city clerk in Summit, and then as assistant municipal clerk and human resources assistant in Bernards Township. While there are similarities between Maplewood and her previous posts, **Alves-Viveiros** said there are also big differences between those municipalities. "The culture and needs are different," she said. "Roads and parking and things like that are generally the same. But demographically they're all very different."

Maplewood is a much more diverse town than both Summit and Bernards, according to **Alves-Viveiros**. "They're very different," she said. "I've liked my experience in each, but it teaches you where you want to be. Maplewood is exactly the type of town I want to be around. People are open minded and educated and know how they want to raise their kids, which is definitely something I relate to."

DeLuca said the town also chose **Alves-Viveiros** to take over as business administrator for the ideas that she has brought to Maplewood. "**Sonia** was the person we wanted to work with," he said. "She talked about servicing the people of the town and brought a new vision to it." Going forward, **Alves-Viveiros** wants to bring her vision for Maplewood to life. "I certainly want to be here for the long haul and accomplish what I set out to do," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

TAPinto Edison (NJ)
October 21, 2016

New assistant township administrator in Maplewood

Author: TAPinto SOMA staff

Sonia Alves-Viveiros was appointed Assistant Township Administrator on Sept. 26, according to the fall edition of the Maplewood Leaflet. **Alves-Viveiros** has six years of prior experience working in the City of Summit and in Bernards Township, both in administration and in the Clerk's office, according to the Maplewood Leaflet.

A 2010 graduate of Seton Hall University with a Masters degree in Public Administration, **Alves-Viveiros** says, "working in local government has always been a passion and interest of mine." **Alves-Viveiros** continued, "I find working in Administration to be a key role in any municipality. You are responsible to make things work regardless of the challenges that may come and that's what I intend to do."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Sonia Alves-Viveiros
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/meet-sonia-Alves-Viveiros-maplewoods-new-assistant-township-administrator/>
October 11, 2016

Meet Sonia Alves-Viveiros, Maplewood’s New Assistant Township Administrator

Sonia Alves-Viveiros

A new Assistant Township Administrator has arrived in Maplewood. **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** has been appointed to the position as of September 26th. She comes with experience from two municipalities, the City of Summit and Bernards Township. Throughout her 6-year career she has worked in both Administration and the Clerk’s office. She also graduated in 2010 from Seton Hall University with a Master’s in Public Administration.

Her interest in the local public sector started during her studies as an undergraduate at Seton Hall University as a Political Science major. After graduation from the prestigious MPA program at Seton Hall, soon thereafter, an internship was being offered through Millburn Township to work with the Administrator’s office where she gained an abundance of knowledge about all of the components that go into managing a municipality. Later on she went to work in Bernards Township and looked up to the municipality as a great leader in the public sector.

She is eager about coming to Maplewood Township with the knowledge and education she has gained throughout the last six years. Delivering and maintaining great customer service will be key in her new journey. “Working in local government has always been a passion and interest of mine,” says **Alves-Viveiros**. “I find working in Administration to be a key role in any municipality. You are responsible to make things work regardless of the challenges that may come and that’s what I intend to do.” She looks forward to providing outstanding service to both the Township and its residents.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 5

Darren N. Coldwell

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

01/13/2025

Darren Coldwell
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406-291-9909

Town of Juno Beach, FL
Mayor Wheeler & Town Council
340 Ocean Drive
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Dear Mayor Wheeler & Town Council,

I am writing to express my interest in the position of City Manager of Juno Beach, Florida. As the current City Manager of Page, Arizona, I am responsible for overseeing all day-to-day city operations which include managing thirteen different departments: IT, Finance, Parks & Trails, Planning & Zoning, Recreation, Community Marketing, Economic Development, Public Works, Police, Fire and Rescue, Lake Powell National Golf Course, Horseshoe Bend, and Special Events. Additionally, I oversee smaller departments like the Library, Community Center, and Digital Information. In total, these departments employ over 200 dedicated staff members and operate with an annual budget of nearly \$90 million. Page is a full-service community of 7,500 residents but swells to 40,000 during the day. Page has 2500 hotel rooms, over 400 short-term rental accommodations and 50 restaurants. The operation of these facilities brings workers from all around the area for employment.

My successful business ownership and management demonstrated my proven track record of leadership, strategic planning, and community engagement. By transitioning from the private sector to public service, I now have a unique perspective on city management, which enables me to effectively bridge the gap between local businesses and government initiatives. I use my extensive skills from my business in financial management, operational efficiency, and team development to improve city operations and drive economic growth. Over the course of my career, I have built strong relationships with community stakeholders, promoting collaboration and listening during decision-making processes. My business background enables me to handle complex challenges by using data-driven approaches to create sustainable solutions that address both immediate concerns and long-term goals. Not being a long-time bureaucrat, I emphasize advocating for community well-being, I prioritize transparency and communication, ensuring that residents are informed and engaged in their local government. My leadership style emphasizes empowerment and accountability creating a culture of excellence within city departments. I am dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all residents through cost effective governing, strategic initiatives, and a focus on sustainable practices that promote economic resilience and diversity.

I possess the FEMA 101 Certificate. Emergency management is covered in this class, which includes the foundations of emergency management, emergency operations plans, and

preparation for federal disaster operations. This course covers the history, principles, and doctrine of emergency management in the United States. Included in the discussion are the role of emergency managers, legal issues, and the intergovernmental context of emergency management. In addition, it explains how to acquire FEMA Funds and other Federal Funding that is available after a disaster. I have personally dealt with FEMA and the overwhelming paperwork required for reimbursement. I have extensive experience with wildfires and mass evacuations. I have personally manned a Disaster Recovery Center where all new information was released to the public. I have been a public speaker at a town hall meeting during and after the disaster, discussing how those affected began to recover from the life-changing disaster.

Under the direction of the City Council, I implement approved policies, procedures, resolutions, ordinances, and directives. My duties include appointing, conducting annual reviews, discussing disciplinary actions, and, when necessary, removing City employees. I develop and implement Page's Capital Improvement Program and oversee large capital projects from inception to completion. I also coordinate and approve agendas for City Council meetings and have established strong working relationships with local and state legislators. My knowledge of state politics and the legislative process has been instrumental in my success. To enhance employee working conditions, I have initiated and participated in several developmental committees.

Creating and managing the annual budget is a significant aspect of my role. During the fiscal years 2020 and 2021, I creatively reduced the budget amid the COVID-19 pandemic by introducing incentives, a hiring freeze, and consolidating positions. Despite the financial challenges, I increased the Reserves and General Fund from \$23 million in July 2019 to \$51 million by February 2024, achieving a fully funded reserve fund of over \$12 million. As of July, last year, the City of Page is debt-free, including the emergency services retirement fund (PSPRS) and the Arizona State Retirement Fund. My extensive experience in local government budgeting includes working with Mill Levy Valuations and State Sales Tax Distributions, as well as negotiating health insurance contracts, union agreements, and rental agreements.

My human resources experience includes mentoring staff, setting goals, promoting professional development, encouraging initiative, and ensuring effective working relationships. I am well-versed in the legal requirements for disciplining or removing staff and have experience in both Right to Work and At Will states. My management philosophy is based on inclusion and tolerance, leading by example, and fostering a supportive environment. This approach has resulted in a stable management team, with only one Director leaving for a different career opportunity during my tenure. I am personable, understanding, and a good listener, which has helped me establish positive relationships with regional and local news media outlets.

During my time with the City of Page, I have made significant changes to personnel duties and responsibilities. I brought website design in-house, created a new Special Events department, and successfully promoted our City, resulting in over five million annual visitors, which is more than the Grand Canyon. Our marketing strategy now targets extended stays and includes broader markets like Canada, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Texas, Utah, and neighboring states. These efforts have consistently increased sales tax revenue for the past 53 months and accounted for 5.2 million visitors in 2023.

I am confident that my leadership skills, private industry background, government experience that is both City and County, strong financial abilities, communication skills, human resources knowledge, and management style make me an excellent fit for Juno Beach. I would be honored to contribute to and help lead the staff of Juno Beach.

Thank you for considering my application. My family and I are excited about the possibility of relocating to the area, one of the best cities to live in Florida. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at (406) 291-9909.

Sincerely

Darren Coldwell

Darren Coldwell

Darrencoldwell56@gmail.com PO Box 3857 Page, AZ 86040 (406) 291-9909

City Manager

Education

University of Montana, Missoula, MT
Bachelor of Arts, Interpersonal Communications-Organizational Emphasis

A dedicated and goal-focused City/County Manager with a deep-rooted compassion for community engagement and extensive administrative management expertise. I am Darren Coldwell, a tested City/County Manager with a proven track record in navigating complex union contract negotiations, facilitating critical health insurance agreements, and structuring solid lease agreements. My ability to collaborate and communicate internally and externally provides me with the strengths in personnel management, decision-making, and public relations is complemented by a comprehensive understanding of budgeting, government administration, human resources, and municipal law. Trusted as an advisor and liaison, I am committed to making significant contributions that propel personnel towards achieving their long-term objectives. Open-minded and proactive, I prioritize listening and collaboration to foster success.

Work History

City Manager City of Page, Arizona Page, Arizona 86040	11/2019 to Present
County Administrator Lincoln County, Montana Libby, Montana 59923	02/2017 to 11/2019
Mayor City of Troy, Montana Troy, Montana 59935	11/2013 to 11/2017
Business Owner Booze n Bait Troy, Montana 59935	07/1992 to 06/2017

Skills:

Administrative Management Expertise:

- Oversee daily operations of all departments, providing strategic direction to Directors, Managers, and City Council/County Commission. This includes conducting personnel reviews, setting performance goals, fostering motivation, and implementing disciplinary measures when necessary. Extensive experience in oversight of Human Resources and decision making of Human Resources challenges.
- Created forward-thinking incentives to recruit personnel as well as maintain staffing levels. Incentives include potential signing bonuses, help with moving expenses, help with first and last rent and hook-up fees of new rentals, a mix of available work schedules including a four-day work week for all administrative staff. These changes of decreased tum-over of staff drastically, including Fire Department currently at full employment and the PD is only two recruits short of their staffing goals.
- Review and evaluate departmental structures to ensure optimal cross-functional training, streamline workflows, and enhance operational agility. Implement measures to strengthen the organizational framework and promote fiscal stability.
- Act as the primary coordinator of municipal activities, providing insights to the Mayor and City Council/County Commission on administration, financial management, and data automation. Develop and maintain comprehensive documentation essential for smooth administrative processes.
- A forward-thinking City/County Manager that motivates staff to participate in the vision that the City Council/Conty Commission has conveyed to residents. Ensures that a positive and cohesive environment is provided for all staff and encourages them to challenge the status quo.
- Engage with various stakeholders, prepare written communications for the Mayor and City Council/County Commission, and interact with the media to articulate the City/County's positions on key issues. Plan agendas, provide essential background information, and collaborate with the City Attorney on legal matters.
- Guide union contract negotiations, implement city policies, and foster strong relationships with state personnel. Oversee acquisition contracts for power distribution and solicit contracts for the City Council/County Commission, continuously striving to uphold governance and operational excellence.
- Pride myself in leading staff in going beyond expected delivery of exemplary service to the residents and constituents in the community.

Budget and Finance Management:

- Develop and oversee the City/County budget with a focus on transparency, accountability, and strategic financial planning. Manage and implement the annual budget, ensuring sound financial governance and operational effectiveness.

- Have exceeded in increasing the cash flow for the General Fund and was able to meet the goal for the Rainy-Day Fund by still meeting the expectations of the Strategic Plan, Growth Plan and the Transportation and Maintenance Plan.
- Provide intuitive financial reports to empower the City Council/County Commission with necessary insights for fiscal oversight. Develop and implement policies and procedures in alignment with City Council/County Commission directives, promoting financial stability through constant oversight of fiscal performance.
- Offer leadership and expertise on decision-making issues impacting the City/County's financial landscape, guiding the City Council/County Commission in making informed choices. Develop preliminary budget documents projecting cash flows, reserves, revenues, and expenditure requirements across all departments.
- Emphasize the development and maintenance of cost measurement procedures, BARS accounting allocations, and purchasing practices. Monitor budget execution, implement internal audit controls, and evaluate budget implementation for efficiency opportunities.

Community Development and Relations:

- Foster collaboration with City/County volunteers, representing the City Council/County Commission at meetings, hearings, and public events. Engage with the community to ensure their voice is heard and valued.
- Cultivate and nurture robust community relations while leading development initiatives that enrich the City/County. Participate in meetings and public engagements to address residents' needs effectively.
- Extensive experience working with the marketing of communities and expanding their outreach to improve market share. Innovative City/County Manager with success in public space placemaking and transforming the ideas of the City Council/County Commission into powerful platforms for success.
- Guide and mentor Board members, empowering them to contribute to community governance and progress. Foster synergy and cooperation with volunteer organizations, ensuring successful board performance.
- Advocate for sustainable land-use practices, conservation efforts, and natural resource preservation. Participate in volunteer board meetings to collaborate with community members for the City/County's betterment.
- Attract potential businesses to the community, fostering economic growth and creating opportunities for prosperity. Cultivate relationships with decision-makers and stakeholders for strategic partnerships driving economic development.
- Support the local business community by researching, initiating contact, and engaging with industry leaders and entrepreneurs. Enhance the economic landscape, promote business growth, and create an inclusive environment nurturing entrepreneurship and independence.

- **Volunteer Board Affiliations**

- Kootenai Valley Rotary, Former President
- Troy Fourth of July Committee, Board Chair
- Troy Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director
 - United For Youth, Board Member
- Kootenai River Development, Former Board Member
- Lincoln County Port Authority, Former Board Member
 - Troy School Board, Former Board Member
- Troy Volunteer Fire Department, Former Fire Marshall

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- **Professional Associations**

- American Society of Public Administration
- Government Finance Officers Association
- International City/County Managers Association
- Board of Directors Arizona City/County Managers Association

Candidate Introduction

Section 5**DARREN COLDWELL**

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, Interpersonal Communications, Organizational Emphasis. I have continued to focus on expanding my education by participating and attending classes from ICMA, GFOA and the many different professional management academies that are offered. I have given presentations on *How to Communicate as a Manager* at the Arizona League of Cities and the Arizona County/City Management Association. I have also received the FEMA 101 certification.

EXPERIENCE

City Manager, Page, Arizona	11/2019 – Present
County Manager, Lincoln County, Montana	05/2017 – 11/2019
Mayor, City of Troy, Montana	01/2013 – 12/2017
Owner, Booze N Bait, Troy, Montana	07/1992 – 05/2017

BACKGROUND

The full-service City of Page is located at the base of Glenn Canyon Dam and the Lake Powell Reservoir, the second largest reservoir in the United States. Page is a community located on the border between the state of Utah and the Navajo Nation. Page, which has a population of 7,500, but a service corridor of 40,000, has a greater amount of activity than most communities of its size. In the last five years, Page has gone through a major industry change with the closure of the Navajo Generating System, a coal-fired power plant. A drastic change in marketing has made the City of Page a multi-adventure outdoor tourist destination. With Horseshoe Bend inside the city limits, the Antelope Canyons, Lake Powell, and biking and hiking, Page has developed a tourist-based industry. The aggressive marketing of these outdoor features resulted in 5.2 million visitors in 2023. This has meant an increase in city services with 200 employees, I oversee 11 directors and managers. With additional tourism, the General Fund budget now stands at \$28.5 million, with a total budget of nearly \$90 million. The Capital Fund has reached \$16.5 million, while the CIP has reached \$10.5 million.

The City of Page is facing three major challenges:

- The increase of visitors has created several problems that Page had not anticipated. The first problem is affordable housing for those professionals who are needed in the community. The demand for housing, both rental and for sale properties, has created a very difficult environment for local businesses in terms of retaining and recruiting employees. Page is also surrounded by BLM and Navajo Nation property; this limits its opportunity for further growth.

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DARREN COLDWELL

- The second issue is the need for improved infrastructure. The increased demand on the roads, public utilities, city parks, and airport has created a situation that the city is not only unable to keep up with, but it has also been a challenge to find revenue to fund these projects.
- Water is always a concern in Arizona. The third most important hurdle that Page faces is a lack of water supply. Water is currently supplied by a pump that originates from Glenn Canyon Dam. This water source was installed during the construction of the dam 60 years ago. Currently, the estimated cost of installing new pumps and updating the treatment plant is \$40 million. The services are under financial strain now and in the future due to this daunting cost.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Considering the reasons why my wife and I want to move to Juno Beach, the answers were simple for us. Originally from Western Montana, it is our desire to be in an area that offers everything that comes with living in a smaller metropolitan community that has a small-town atmosphere. We both desire to be in a beachside community like Juno Beach that is a hidden gem with a friendly relaxed atmosphere. Also, Juno Beach offers a low crime rate and safe neighborhoods that are important to both of us. Juno Beach is an excellent place to live, raise a family, and offers an opportunity to advance professionally. Juno Beach offers a financially stable opportunity, and it understands that decreased debt offers more opportunity to improve the town. The final reason, and the most important, is I am looking for a community that wants an experienced manager that wants to commit to a long-term engagement.

Management of people is not something that can be learned in the classroom or from one of the many books available on the topic. My professional management style has evolved over time. I believe that a manager leads by example, and it is important to mentor those who wish to advance in their career. My management style emphasizes mentorship, empowerment, and respect. My management philosophy is one of an open-door policy for the residents, team members, and the Town Council. I believe providing opportunities for advancement and creating an environment where staff can succeed in their own way is crucial to me. My management style is centered around listening to staff and emphasizing customer service. I also think it is important to set achievable goals for both me and my staff members and ensure that ongoing training and educational support for professional growth is offered to all. My hands-on approach not only nurtures individual development but also contributes to a positive and productive workplace culture. I am an expert in conflict resolution and a consensus builder that knows how to help all get to a yes answer.

I believe that my staff members would describe me as a manager who is both supportive and effective. I am a proven leader and decisive decision maker. They are likely to express their

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appreciation for my patience and hard work, acknowledging that I prioritize their needs while meeting the demands of the boards and council. My ability to advocate for staff and ensure that necessary resources are available to them demonstrates my commitment to their success. I am not a micro-manager of staff but rather a manager that delegates responsibility and promotes long range planning and stresses departmental annual plans. I am calm under pressure while having the utmost integrity, which are qualities that build trust and respect among my staff. Overall, staff would say that my down-to-earth management style and energetic approach encourages a positive and productive work environment.

As a City Manager, I believe elected officials would describe me as a dedicated and trustworthy leader who consistently prioritizes fiscal integrity. I hold my staff accountable for their actions. I have successfully built relationships with both the public and our elected officials, making significant progress while working in the state capital and engaging with our DC representatives. Elected officials will say that I understand that following their directives is crucial. I take pride in executing their visions while managing the difficulties of local government. In an environment that requires adaptive skills, I have proven my ability to wear many hats. Elected officials would speak highly of my problem-solving skills and unwavering work ethic, noting that I consistently strive to achieve the goals of elected officials while placing my commitment to ethical standards as a personal priority. Ultimately, I believe they would speak of my integrity and my commitment to represent the boards and councils with the highest ethical standards, ensuring that their interests and their need to be continuously updated, and the needs of our community are always at the forefront of my efforts.

As a City Manager, my greatest strength is my ability to bring together many different viewpoints and personalities to reach a consensus. This ability includes the important personal strengths of listening, respecting, prioritizing, and bringing stakeholders to a consensus. Juno Beach and its residents would benefit from my ability to work on multi-layered projects. The ability to build consensus is important in a small town where every resident isn't afraid to express their opinion to the Council. Working in smaller counties and communities has required me to be a successful multitasker, which enables me to professionally accomplish the never-ending workload that a manager has. Being able to wear many hats and my background in small business and private industry helps when you consider the development issues facing Juno Beach.

If I were to consider a weakness of mine, it would be my lack of patience at times. I am constantly striving for quick results, which can cause unnecessary stress. Now that I am aware of this shortcoming, it is the first step towards being patient and taking a deep breath and appreciating the value of taking events slow and steady.

I believe that there is a place for annual reviews, but as a manager I consider meeting once a year with an employee not only unfair to the staff member, but it is also unfair to the whole team. I personally meet every Monday at 7:30 AM with all my Directors as a group to discuss the prior week and the upcoming week. The team has fostered a sense of camaraderie because of this. I

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also meet weekly with the Department Managers and Directors individually for a half hour or sometimes less to make sure that they receive what they need and to see if there are any issues that couldn't be discussed at the team meeting. By using this approach, I can ensure that I am on top of any personnel issues and have the chance to mentor and review the staff at least once a week, not annually. Twice a year, we all gather in one room to set department and city goals and discuss the progress of those goals. This has resulted in great productivity and provided a chance for team members to motivate each other in front of the entire group.

My professional career's greatest accomplishment is the new roundabout being constructed on HWY 89 and North Lake Powell Blvd. in Page. For many years now, this intersection has been problematic and has resulted in deaths. Although we worked diligently with the Department of Transportation, we were unsuccessful. Having built relationships with state and federal elected officials, I made the decision to attempt to apply for a state appropriation. It took three years of constant trips to the capital and phone calls to our senators and representatives to finally achieve success. Our congressman introduced it to the Transportation Committee, and with some wrangling and trading, the bill passed the Transportation Committee, succeeded in Finance, and was signed by Governor Ducey. Page was the first in the state to receive a state appropriation for an ADOT project, and I am currently watching the \$8 million project being built.

My biggest disappointment is a project that I had committed to for years. In 2020, the City Council directed me to develop a plan for a complete new Downtown Revitalization. Past councils have committed to the project by contributing to a Capital Improvement Program Fund, selecting an architectural and engineering firm, and continuing to place the project on their City Council priorities. In 2024 we succeeded in a Federal Economic Development grant for \$5 million to support the project and we learned that the regional League of Counties and Cities were placing it in their top three for funding requests in the amount of \$8.6. These two combined would fund the entire project. A contentious group of citizens came out against the project and sued the city. They were not successful in two lower courts, and they threatened to recall Councilors who supported the project. They have taken the case to the Arizona Supreme Court. I spent hours trying to inform the public and educate the City Council about the advantages of the Downtown Streetscape plan. Even with all of this, the plan failed 3 to 3. What I have learned is that no matter what you do, the dais changes every couple of years which can change the focus of the elected body. I also have learned that stepping back and reevaluating isn't failing.

Dismissing personnel is one of the most challenging expectations a manager faces. Of course, some are easier than others, but changing a person's life, normally never for the better, always bothers me. The Page Chief of Police was one of the hardest dismissals I had to do. For almost a year, I faced difficulties with the Chief. I placed him on a Performance Improvement Program, I did a 360 review, and hired a professional management coach to try and change his behavior, None of these actions brought him to a professional level that I felt comfortable with. The Chief of Police is an extremely political position and a very public one. In our final meeting I let him know that he was leading, but he no longer had any followers. As a result, I had to let him go. I did offer that if he had a resignation letter on my desk by the end of the day, I would accept it. It

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is important to treat employees with respect, and as a manager, I take all steps to ensure that a staff member can succeed.

The challenges that I believe Juno Beach is facing:

- Juno Beach is a small town and with small towns come different challenges. Growing up in a small town I know how important it is for the Town Manager to spend the necessary time getting to know the people who call Juno Beach home. This can be one of the biggest challenges for many managers. The importance of making time for the residents and having that open-door policy that I discussed is especially important.
- The cost of aging infrastructure is a challenge that needs to be addressed. The next Town Manager is going to face a potential budget challenge with the town-wide Sales Tax expiring. I am fiscally conservative, which will be a positive during this time.
- With Juno Beach being a small community, the next manager is going to have to realize that the residents and the City Council are protective of the development of their town. A focus needs to be on growth that is a plus and beneficial for the entire community, not just a few or the developer. This is why my experience in consensus building can be beneficial to Juno Beach as a whole.

In the first six months as City Manager, my focus will be working with the leaders of the community to understand the culture of the town and focus on what they consider to be the priorities. I will spend time with the staff understanding what they feel the team sees as problems and what they sense the town is doing well. The next steps are to become familiar with the City Council and to take the time to understand each of their personalities and what they consider their priorities are for the Town Manager. Finally, spending the time to focus on the Council's written priorities and begin the necessary long-term Strategic Planning that needs to be accomplished.

The press has always been a great partner for me, I actually see the press as an arm of City Hall. In my view, transparency is superior to avoiding or ignoring the press. My approach to the press is to be proactive in working with reporters. If a story is going to be made public, I'd rather be the one to explain it and keep the press updated. This way I can set the tone of the article, rather than the reporter assuming information. Because of these relationships I am positive that all the reporters I have worked with will agree that there is nothing in my background that would be a surprise or embarrassment to Juno Beach.

Every manager knows that social media can be used as a weapon against staff, elected officials, and projects that are being discussed by the town. In the last couple of years, I have taken a very proactive approach to social media. A social media coordinator has been hired by me. Because of this change, we now have an opportunity to address rumors on almost every site. We now have a presence on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X. We also have a tab on the city website for questions. We do not respond to comments on any website, but we do release factual information

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when it is necessary. We have also just recently created a virtual magazine called Page Happenings. This monthly magazine gives different departments, as well as me, an opportunity to discuss what is happening in their departments. In just four months of being created, we already have over eight hundred subscribers.

Anyone who has been in local government for very long will tell you that we all have our naysayers. I am no different, but I believe each of them respects my commitment to follow the directives from the City Council and they would never take the time to call to speak badly of me.

In my free time I enjoy flower gardening and lawn work, a special reason I am excited about the opportunity of Juno Beach. I especially enjoy working in the dirt with my roses and flowerpots. I am proud to say that I am a very good cook and baker. I spend time on the weekends baking different breads for the upcoming week. My wife and I also enjoy traveling and attending concerts in different cities. Our kids are spread between Montana and Arizona, so we plan most of our vacations in these two beautiful states.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES THAT I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Great Communicator
- Experienced and Talented Leader
- Responsive to Problems and Staff
- Outstanding Customer Service
- Highest Ethical and Integrity Commitment
- Exceptional Problem Solver

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT POSITION

I am looking to leave my position as City Manager of Page because I believe that the opportunity in Juno Beach offers a new challenge for career growth. Also, Juno Beach is a place that my wife and I would be honored to call home. We are looking for a place that we can make a long-time commitment to and a place that wants a stable manager for the future of the town. In addition, the upcoming changes in city leadership in Page, following the decision of the long-time Mayor and Councilors to not seek re-election, makes this the right time for me to look for a new opportunity in a region we love.

CURRENT SALARY

My current salary for the City of Page is \$178,200, not including benefits.

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CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
DARREN NEWELL COLDWELL
Personal Disclosure**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Kane County, UT	No Records Found
Coconino County, AZ	No Records Found
Lincoln County, MT	No Records Found
State	
Utah	No Records Found
Arizona	No Records Found
Montana	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Kane County, UT	No Records Found
Coconino County, AZ	No Records Found
Lincoln County, MT	No Records Found
Federal	
Utah	No Records Found
Arizona	No Records Found
Montana	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Utah	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
DARREN NEWELL COLDWELL
Personal Disclosure**

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
DARREN NEWELL COLDWELL
Personal Disclosure**

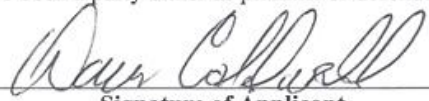
Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: DARREN COLDWELL

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 / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. Facebook, Instagram
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

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Mark Comier - City Council Member, City of Page, AZ 480-452-9895

Mr. Comier has known Mr. Coldwell since 2019 when he hired Mr. Coldwell to work as the City Manager. Mr. Comier worked as a City Council Member.

Mr. Coldwell has exceptional job performance. He never did anything questionable and proved fiscally responsible. He kept the City Council informed on expenditure and budgeting. His coworkers enjoy working with him and he makes good decisions when hiring personnel. Everyone Mr. Coldwell hired still works there. He heavily participates in the process of hiring Managers and Directors with the panel interviews and gives good feedback on candidates. He also makes good decisions in general, always keeping the organization's best interest in mind.

Mr. Coldwell is a problem-solver who can lead a team in solving a problem. For example, the City has a yearly hot air balloon event. One year, outside vendors fought over who got control of what. Mr. Coldwell had to deal with this and bring the issue to the Council's attention. He made changes to the event to limit vendor scope while also creating a fairer process for vendors, thus eliminating vendor infighting.

Mr. Coldwell handles the different elected officials with their different agendas well. He makes sure the outcome of a project matches the City Council's priorities. He understands the City must match certain priorities in its charter, goals, and objectives. He steered the results to meet these priorities.

Mr. Coldwell proves himself innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains an organization at a high-performance level. He gave ideas for changes and improvements for the organization. Overall, he looked for people's strengths and did not shy away from moving employees to where he thought they would perform best.

Mr. Comier would hire Mr. Coldwell if he could and thinks Mr. Coldwell is a good manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Knowledgeable,
- Thoughtful,
- Competent,
- Valuable,
- Well-tempered, and
- Fiscally responsible.

Strengths: A good manager with strong communication, organization, and financial skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Bill Diak - Mayor, City of Page, AZ 602-499-8733

Mr. Diak has known Mr. Coldwell since 2020 when they started working together for the City of Page. Mr. Diak works as the Mayor and Mr. Coldwell works as the City Manager.

Mr. Coldwell works well with the Council and Town Hall gave him an above-average performance review. He deals with several different personalities with different agendas daily. He adapts his communication style based on who he is talking to. He can read the Council's desires and how they want to receive information. He bases his delivery approach on that.

Mr. Coldwell is innovative and a change agent. Since he started working for the City of Page, staff morale has tremendously improved. Before he arrived, Mr. Diak described the morale as low. Mr. Coldwell improved this issue by holding weekly meetings with his Directors and taking care to acknowledge staff accomplishments. Not only does he praise staff when he runs into them, but he also communicates their accomplishments to the Council. With more recognition for a job well done, staff report a more positive working environment.

Mr. Coldwell makes good decisions when hiring personnel and makes good decisions in general. He keeps Mr. Diak informed of what happens in his area of responsibility by talking in person on an almost daily basis. He also meets individually with each of the Council Members to keep everyone up to date.

Mr. Coldwell is a leader in the sense that he takes the organization's vision and rallies the employees around it. He manages the Strategic Priorities and delegates appropriately to ensure the organization meets those priorities on time. He is very hands-on with his Directors but does not micro-manage the staff's day-to-day responsibilities.

Mr. Coldwell solves problems. For example, he recognized that he needed to adopt a more hands-on approach with the staff to improve morale. He addressed this personnel problem by changing the way they thought about upper management throughout the corporation. In the sense that the staff has more trust in management to help them achieve their goals and give them recognition for their accomplishments.

Mr. Coldwell often goes out in the community and attends most major functions. He attends meetings representing the organization with the League of Towns, community meetings, and the city manager association. He makes staying in touch with the rest of the county a priority.

Mr. Coldwell is an outstanding manager. He has a strong work ethic and spends the time he should in the office. He is always one of the first people to arrive in the morning and one of the last people to leave in the evening. He has earned a great reputation in the City. Mr. Diak would absolutely hire Mr. Coldwell if he could.

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Efficient,
- Professional,
- Outgoing,
- Technical,
- Detail-oriented, and
- Diplomatic.

Strengths: A great manager who comes from an accounting background and excels at managing finances.

Weaknesses: He could improve his communication skills when interacting with colleagues on a personal basis.

Rachell French - Director of Human Resources, City of Page, AZ 928-660-9055

Ms. French has known Mr. Coldwell since 2019. Ms. French works as the Director of Human Resources for the City of Page. Mr. Coldwell works as the City Manager.

Mr. Coldwell does an amazing job as a City Manager. In particular, he excels at getting a city team and outside groups to work together. He has done a good job with the City Council and the School District.

Mr. Coldwell genuinely cares about the people he works with and fosters a positive work environment. He makes good decisions when hiring personnel and good decisions in general. Ms. French has not worked with another City Manager as good at their job as Mr. Coldwell. She does not want him to leave the City of Page. He would be missed.

Mr. Coldwell proves himself innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains an organization at a high-performance level. He acts as a leader in the sense that he takes the organization's vision and rallies the employees around it. And he can also manage from behind the desk and make sure organization processes run smoothly. Mr. Coldwell does not micro-manage his employees. He keeps Ms. French informed on what happens in his area of responsibility. He has weekly meetings with all his direct reports and maintains an open-door policy.

Mr. Coldwell can solve problems. For example, the organization had a couple of instances where different departments did not work well together. He worked with his Directors to address the issue, so everyone could start working in a cohesive way. After addressing the issue, people started to work together more effectively.

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Mr. Coldwell handles different personalities very well. He works with several elected officials with different agendas daily. In meetings, he brings the facts and reminds officials why they chose to do things a certain way. Mr. Coldwell presents the reasoning behind his decisions and keeps his cool in high-stress environments.

Ms. French would hire Mr. Coldwell if she could and knows he is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Kind,
- Strategic,
- Personable,
- Problem solver,
- Customer service-oriented, and
- Financially responsible.

Strengths: A good manager with strong budgeting and finance skills. He also showcases great interpersonal skills and encourages his employees to have a work-life balance.

Weaknesses: Can work on having difficult conversations with employees before behaviors become a problem.

Josh Smith - City Attorney, City of Page, AZ 307-884-9000

Mr. Smith has known Mr. Coldwell since about 2019. Mr. Smith works as the City Attorney for the City of Page. Mr. Coldwell works as the City Manager.

Mr. Coldwell does a good job as the City Manager. The Council has expressed its approval of him many times. He gets along well with his coworkers with his easygoing and personable demeanor. He makes good decisions when hiring personnel and in general.

Mr. Coldwell keeps Mr. Smith informed of what happens in his area of responsibility. Mr. Coldwell usually loops Mr. Smith in when things need a legal review. They communicate mostly by phone and email. Although, they do have in-person meetings when necessary.

Mr. Coldwell proves himself innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains an organization at a high-performance level. He cares and wants to do a good job with any task he sets out to do. He is a forward thinker. He is a leader in the sense that he takes an organization's vision and rallies the employees around it. The City Council sets the vision and then Mr. Coldwell directs the organization to achieve those goals.

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Mr. Coldwell can lead teams in solving problems. For example, he realized the organization needed to modernize its systems by initiating online payments, updating websites, and making those experiences more user-friendly. Mr. Coldwell asked the different departments to update their processes to make them easier for the public to use. The modernization proved successful. Mr. Coldwell took the vague description that the Council gave him for the “modernization initiative” and created a clear, actionable plan.

Mr. Coldwell goes out into the community often and regularly attends community meetings representing the organization. He integrates into the community and works with other organizations as well.

Mr. Smith would hire Mr. Coldwell if he could. Mr. Coldwell is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Personable,
- Hard worker,
- Caring,
- Genuine,
- Outgoing, and
- Dependable.

Strengths: A manager who has strong budgeting skills and can make quick decisions without falling into analysis paralysis.

Weaknesses: Making decisions too quickly.

Bryce Anderson - Superintendent of the School District, City of Page, AZ 623-826-9318

Mr. Anderson has known Mr. Coldwell since 2021. They have worked together in a professional capacity. Mr. Anderson works as the Superintendent of the School District for Page. Mr. Coldwell works as the City Manager for the City of Page. They work closely together on issues related to the community.

Mr. Coldwell did an outstanding job as the City Manager. Prior to his arrival, Page had significant challenges with its finances. Mr. Coldwell improved the finances and expanded services to local residents including capital improvements, a splash pad, a community pool, tourism, housing, and childcare.

Mr. Coldwell solves problems. For example, the City had an issue with a school district pool that was no longer operable. Citizens wanted to bring back the pool, but the expense made it not a fiscally responsible option. Mr. Coldwell then found someone who could bring a community pool to the city and started that project. He was instrumental in moving the project forward. This

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

ordeal proved controversial because some people did not understand the funding piece that would go into constructing and operating a pool. Mr. Coldwell looked at the situation multi-dimensionally and found a creative solution with a community pool, rather than repairing the school district pool.

When it comes to working with other people, Mr. Coldwell proves himself personable and able to handle a variety of different personalities. He works with different elected officials with different agendas daily. To keep the working environment productive, he allows everyone to have a voice and keeps the objectives to build a consensus around issues related to the community. Even when the Council does not agree with his ideas, he always operates respectfully and professionally.

Mr. Anderson would hire Mr. Coldwell in a heartbeat and knows he is an excellent manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Positive,
- Communicative,
- Consensus-builder,
- Visionary,
- Fiscally responsible, and
- High character.

Strengths: A personable manager who is reliable and communicates clearly.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Judy Franz - Head of Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, City of Page, AZ 928-606-5829

Ms. Franz has known Mr. Coldwell since about 2020. Ms. Franz runs the Page Chamber of Commerce and the Visitor Center. Mr. Coldwell works as the City Manager for Page.

Mr. Coldwell exhibits excellent job performance. He thinks outside the box and always looks for the best way to do things. He is patient, customer service-oriented and community-oriented. Ms. Franz is highly impressed with Mr. Coldwell's professionalism.

Mr. Coldwell makes good decisions when hiring personnel. He picks out the best candidates and can identify how their strengths will benefit the organization. Since coming to the City of Page, he hired some of the best employees the organization has ever had. He brought the Department Heads up to a better standard overall. Mr. Coldwell also made good decisions in general.

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Mr. Coldwell proves himself innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains an organization at a high-performance level. He handles change well and helps the organization adapt. He keeps the course and works towards moving projects forward. Mr. Coldwell shows leadership by taking the organization's vision and rallying the employees around it. He is a team player.

Mr. Coldwell can lead a team in solving a problem. For example, the City worked hard on the downtown revitalization and recreation center. He and his team faced much opposition to the project from a small population of citizens. He had to adapt and work through the issues to get the projects done. He also put together Town Hall meetings and brought the community and project planners in the same place, so everyone could be on the same page. By addressing their concerns and answering their questions, Mr. Coldwell did a good job appeasing the small population of opposing citizens. He went out in the community often and regularly attended community meetings representing the organization. He is customer service oriented and maintains an open-door policy.

Mr. Coldwell is a good manager and Ms. Franz would hire him if she could.

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Focused,
- Team player,
- Organized,
- Leader,
- Communicative, and
- Follows through.

Strengths: A strong leader or is organized and focused. Excels at creating a good team that works well together.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Marcia Borris - County Attorney, Lincoln County, MT 406-293-2717

Ms. Borris has known Mr. Coldwell since 2017. They worked together for Lincoln County. Ms. Borris worked as the Lincoln County Attorney and Mr. Coldwell worked as the Lincoln County Administrator.

Mr. Coldwell had excellent job performance as a City Administrator and Ms. Borris was sad when he left the position. She has not seen another administrator who has had as much impact as Mr. Coldwell. He interacts professionally and respectfully with his coworkers.

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Mr. Coldwell makes good decisions when hiring personnel. He supervised the Human Resources Department when he worked as the County Administrator for Lincoln County. He also makes good decisions in general.

Mr. Coldwell proved himself innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains an organization at a high-performance level. The County needed to get into a better place financially. He realized the County was still paying insurance on vehicles it no longer owned because no one canceled the policies. He saved the County over \$50,000 by canceling insurance on these vehicles. He fixed this administrative oversight and made sure the County ran efficiently.

Mr. Coldwell kept Ms. Borris informed of what happened in his area of responsibility. They worked together mostly in budgeting. Mr. Coldwell proved communicative and met in person with Ms. Borris on a daily basis.

Mr. Coldwell shows leadership by taking an organization's vision and rallying employees around it. He often went out in the community and regularly attended community meetings representing the organization. He used to hold the title of Mayor in the Town of Troy. He got along with everyone and made himself known as a community leader.

Mr. Coldwell would make a fantastic addition to any organization, especially in an administrative capacity. Ms. Borris would hire him if she could.

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Thorough,
- Conscientious,
- Positive,
- Fiscally responsible,
- Pleasant, and
- Efficient.

Strengths: A great administrator who cares about the people he works with and builds a positive work environment.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Robin Crowther - Clerk and Recorder, Lincoln County, MT 719-580-1688

Ms. Robin has known Mr. Coldwell since about 2016. Ms. Crowther interviewed and hired Mr. Coldwell as the County Administrator. She worked as the Lincoln County Clerk and Recorder. They worked in different departments, but both presented to Commissioners. They discussed complex issues with each other before taking their ideas to the Commissioners.

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Mr. Coldwell's job performance was amazing in Lincoln County. He took over the budget and excelled at finding creative solutions to financial problems. He acts personable and professional when interacting with coworkers.

Mr. Coldwell also works well with handling different elected officials with different agendas. He balanced out the personalities by taking discussions back to the goal. People enjoyed working with Mr. Coldwell.

Mr. Coldwell proves himself innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains an organization at a high-performance level. He had to come up with a detailed County Budget from scratch. He improved the organization by boosting employee morale and creating a positive working environment.

Mr. Coldwell acts as a leader in the sense that he takes the organization's vision and rallies the employees around it. He also does well with managing processes to ensure the organization runs smoothly.

Mr. Coldwell can solve problems. For example, the County needed to figure out its finances. The timber and mining revenue streams shut down. He had to cut the budget by \$100,000 from lack of revenue so the County would not go into debt. He rallied the Department Heads and built consensus around a financial plan that addressed the shortages but allowed the employees to keep their benefits.

Ms. French would hire Mr. Coldwell if she could.

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Friendly,
- Hard-working,
- Solutions oriented,
- Team player,
- Takes direction, and
- Professional.

Strengths: A personable manager who can handle complex situations like the budget with ease.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes Darren Coldwell

Tammy Anderson - Chair Member, City of Troy, MT 406-396-9627

Ms. Anderson has known Mr. Coldwell since about 1990. Mr. Coldwell owned a property Ms. Anderson rented for her business. They also worked together in the Troy Chamber of Commerce on civic duties.

Mr. Coldwell has excellent job performance and follows through with everything he says he will do. He made a huge difference in the community as a Volunteer Mayor. He made good decisions when hiring personnel and made good decisions in general. He often went out into the community and regularly attended community meetings representing the organization with a customer service attitude.

Mr. Coldwell can solve problems and handle complex tasks in a timely manner. For example, he found himself in charge of the City's Fourth of July celebration. He managed all the moving parts including preparing the grounds, measuring and assigning spots for vendors, organizing logistics, and communicating with the City Police to ensure safe traffic re-routing.

Ms. Anderson characterizes Mr. Coldwell as a patient individual and would hire him if she could. He is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Darren Coldwell:

- Polite,
- Nice,
- Honest,
- Hard-working,
- Congenial, and
- Professional.

Strengths: An honest and hard-working person.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Hazel Jones
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Ruben Gallego Press release | Distributed by Public
December 10, 2024

Gallego Secures \$70 Million for Arizona Water Projects

Today, the House of Representatives passed legislation securing eight water infrastructure projects across Arizona. S. 4367, the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024—which is expected to be signed into law in the coming days—includes \$70 million in funding Rep. Ruben Gallego (AZ-03) secured.

"From a new pipeline in Flagstaff to a reclaimed water system in Tucson, I'm proud to have secured funding in this legislation that will have a lasting impact on Arizona's water supply," said Rep. Gallego. "I look forward to seeing this vital legislation signed into law and continuing the fight for Arizona's water future."

The eight Arizona projects are:

- \$20 million for Tucson to expand its Reclaimed Water System and develop needed infrastructure in the fastest-developing area of the Southlands.
- \$12 million for Buckeye to update its Wastewater Treatment Facility to keep it online in the case of a 100-year flood event.
- \$10 million to Page for a new raw water intake pipeline from Lake Powell upstream of the Glen Canyon Dam.
- \$10 million to the Tohono O'odham Nation for facilities for water withdrawal, treatment, and distribution.
- \$5.2 million to Glendale for water and wastewater infrastructure, drainage systems, and water quality enhancement.
- \$5 million to Flagstaff for an advanced wastewater treatment facility.
- \$4.8 million to Sahuarita for water infrastructure and water reclamation.
- \$3 million for Winslow to install a storm drain pipe, catch basins, and storm drain manholes in the downtown area.

"We appreciate Representative Gallego's support of legislation that paves the way for long-term investments in sustainable water infrastructure. Tucson remains committed to working with federal partners to advance projects like the Southlands Recycled Water Loop, ensuring a stronger and more resilient future for our region," said City of Tucson Mayor Regina Romero.

"We applaud Congressman Gallego's leadership in securing \$12 million for Buckeye's water and wastewater infrastructure in WRDA 2024. This important provision will allow the City to build out its capability and capacity at its Wastewater Treatment Facility in one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. We appreciate Congressman Gallego's strong and consistent support for this provision and are grateful for his steadfast leadership," said Buckeye Mayor Eric Orsborn.

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"Page is facing an antiquated water treatment center as well as lacking any water redundancy option. Congressman Gallego has fought tirelessly for the residents of Page, Arizona to help alleviate these very difficult problems. A majority of our water system was installed as the Glenn Canyon Dam was being built, which means portions of the Page water system are pushing 60 to 70 years old. The Congressman has tried continually over the last few years to provide opportunities for funding to upgrade the aging water system. Without Congressman Gallego's willingness to pursue this appropriation the citizens would just continue to hope that their water system holds up to the growing pressures that have been expected of it," said Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell**. "Congressman Gallego and his staff have been amazing to work with and we most certainly hope that they will continue to make the small community of Page a priority. Every resident would like to thank the Congressman for all of his help on receiving this funding."

"Through the leadership of Congressman Gallego, Flagstaff will take a huge step toward guaranteeing our water future. Flagstaff prides itself on leading the way in sustainable water use and we're grateful to have the Congressman as an advocate and ally," said Flagstaff Mayor Becky Daggett.

"Water infrastructure is critical to Winslow's growth. We are on the verge of an economic boom. Congressman Gallego understands the needs of rural Arizona and we are excited that he was the lead sponsor of our \$3 million Winslow water and wastewater project in WRDA 2024. This critical provision will allow the City to repair and rehabilitate our antiquated and dilapidated system that will allow for new economic growth. We applaud Congressman Gallego for his support and inclusion of this critical provision," said Winslow Mayor Roberta "Birdie" Cano.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Powell Chronicle
October 9, 2024

Page Infrastructure

Part 2: Balancing priorities

By Bob Hembree

When word got out that the City of Page received a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), people started talking. The city had already saved enough funds to match the EDA grant. It was part of the deal. So \$11 million originally intended for the Streetscape project seems up for grabs to some. It's the old, hypothetical, "What would you do with a million dollars?" scenario, a chance for armchair city planners to decide how to best spend the money, regardless of what the experts recommend after months of studies, evaluations and consultations.

In Page, the mayor and council members are expected to make reasoned decisions on behalf of the city they represent. They are not experts, nor are they expected to be. Still, they must make major decisions on policies, projects and Page City finances. Councilor Kenna Hettinger summed it up best: "I think that the responsibility of City Council is to give direction to the experts. Have the experts come back with their recommendation so that we can understand the pros and cons of each path forward and then make the best decision." In other words, an effective councilor must grasp and evaluate information presented by experts in various fields and decide what is best for the community.

Non-experts often have good ideas, but ideas need evaluations, comprehensive studies and planning. The city needs experienced, well-informed expert input. Only then will councilors have enough reliable information to make informed decisions to authorize or not authorize large investments, like how to spend \$11 million and do it within the perimeters of federal grant agreements.

While the independent group, Page Forward, is actively exploring Page revitalization options, city administrators are waiting to see what the new city council looks like in November and which direction they decide to go. All council candidates agree on most issues like workforce housing and water infrastructure. They differ on uptown revitalization. Several of the candidates and mayor-elect Steven Kidman opposed making changes to Lake Powell Boulevard, which is at the heart of J2 Engineering & Environmental Design's "Streetscape" project. Even if anti-Streetscape candidates lose their bids for council seats, moving forward is thorny.

Last week, in part one of the Page Infrastructure series, the Chronicle reported on the unknown maintenance needs lurking below Lake Powell Boulevard. When the city's main street is repaved, all five lanes or however many lanes are decided, the piping, conduit and wiring beneath must be inspected and paths forward evaluated. The city must be prepared for the worst and in a position to act quickly. They don't want to affect the integrity of new pavement by cutting it up to fix a broken sewer line, electrical malfunction or a damaged water pipe. There's

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also the expense of bringing the sidewalks and intersections up to ADA code (Americans with Disabilities Act). Even though there's \$11 million for the revitalization, it's unknown how much will be available for aesthetic improvements like nicer sidewalks, benches and rotundas. Of course, if Page's current economic growth continues, as it has with the current administration and council, finding more funds shouldn't be a problem.

One argument voiced at council meetings is balancing the workforce housing shortage with bringing in new business. How do you grow when workers can't find or afford homes? A balance is needed, otherwise businesses are perpetually short handed. The result is poor service quality and tainted reputations.

Under City Manager **Darren Coldwell** and the council before the two recent councilor resignations, over 120 new homes were added in Page. "By the end of 2026, we are expecting the national economy to turn around to bring the interest rates and inflation back to some kind of normalcy," said Page Planning Director Zach Montgomery. "And if that takes place, then we are projecting a minimum of 300 new single-family dwelling units in the City of Page to have been built by the end of 2026. We're looking at least half of those and probably 75% to be workforce housing. That's what we're working toward in our negotiations with the developers. "The type of housing or dwelling units that are in those projections include apartments, single family homes, duplexes and condominiums and townhomes."

When asked about investors snapping up new homes for short-term rentals, Montgomery said, "The primary benefit of the city owning the majority of the property within the city limits is when we sell that property to a developer, we have the ability to negotiate with them on the number, or percentage of housing, that's to remain open for workforce." A property acquisition agreement is used up front to ensure homes are for the workforce. Montgomery said the city is currently doing this with a Cold Spring subdivision. "They're agreeing to build those homes and to sell them for workforce housing as a part of the agreement."

The City of Page isn't as myopic as some residents have expressed in council meetings. The city has the resources and expertise to accomplish multiple tasks simultaneously. Now, it's a waiting game. What direction will the 2025 City Council go and what is going on under Lake Powell Boulevard?

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Darren Coldwell** is listed below.]

City/County Management Association
A State Affiliate of ICMA
2024

Leadership
2024 Board of Directors

Darren Coldwell – Director – City Manager, Page

Darren Coldwell has a rich and diverse background, transitioning from a successful business owner to a proficient public servant. **Darren**'s education from the University of Montana likely equipped him with the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in his professional endeavors, providing a strong foundation for his career. His tenure as City Manager of Page, Arizona, since 2019 has been marked by notable achievements and contributions to the community. **Darren**'s career trajectory showcases his adaptability and leadership skills. Starting as a business owner in Lincoln County, Montana, he transitioned smoothly into public service as the County Manager for the same county before joining the City of Page.

Under **Darren**'s leadership, City Parks in Page have seen significant enhancements, likely contributing to the quality of life for residents and attracting visitors. The development of new biking trails aligns with contemporary trends towards outdoor recreation and promotes tourism while encouraging healthy lifestyles for residents. **Darren**'s efforts in improving the financial stability of the city budget demonstrate his fiscal responsibility and strategic planning abilities, essential for effective governance. Winning awards such as the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) reflects the city's commitment to transparency, accountability and sound financial management under **Darren**'s leadership. **Darren**'s successful management of projects like the roundabout on Highway 89 highlights his ability to navigate bureaucratic processes and secure funding for critical infrastructure improvements. Completion of projects like the Page Master Plan and rezoning of the Page Proper indicates **Darren**'s commitment to long-term strategic planning and sustainable development.

Darren's role in revitalizing the Lake Powell National Golf Course and expanding amenities like the Pro Shop and Mulligans Restaurant and Bar demonstrates his focus on economic development and enhancing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Under **Darren**'s tenure Page has exceeded 5 million visitors, surpassing even the Grand Canyon. Page has also become the state's largest European booking city, and the Asian is a close second.

Darren Coldwell's track record of success and his ability to spearhead diverse initiatives indicate his effectiveness as a leader and his dedication to the well-being and progress of the community he serves.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Powell Chronicles
August 29, 2024

Council adopts Code of Ethics

By Bob Hembree

On Aug. 21, Page City Council adopted a Code of Ethics. The code covers disclosure of conflicts of interest, respecting confidentiality, meeting attendance and conduct in public. “Conduct of Members,” for example, 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 of the Council, commissions, boards, committees, staff and the public.”

“This is a working document and hopefully Council looks at this as a living document,” said City Manager **Darren Coldwell**. “As you go around and as you travel, if you see something that you would like to introduce to this and you think it's a good idea, I think it's very appropriate for you guys to bring it forward to the Council. As we continue with this with the boards and the commissions, it's going to give you some teeth to have more oversight with the president and vice president or the chair and vice chair.”

“I think it's really helpful. I think it helps us understand our role. I think it gives the citizens understanding of what we're trying to do, what the boards and commissions are trying to do,” said Councilor Kenna Hettinger. Mayor Bill Diak said, “It adds accountability to Council.”

The code passed unanimously after **Coldwell** and Hettinger helped Councilor Steve Kidman understand some of the code's language. It was Kidman's first meeting as a councilor; he is completing Brian Carey's term and will become mayor in November. Diak told the Chronicle all council members signed the document after the meeting.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Powell Chronicle
July 24, 2024

Communication Breakdown
Part Two: United by Misinformation
Bob Hembree

Misinformation takes many forms. Often it's creating false context around a grain of truth, a false narrative that derives from a superficial knowledge of a subject or intentional misdirection. Sometimes it's reframing an issue, drawing attention to cherry-picked aspects while hiding others, never giving a true representation of an issue. The most dangerous form of misinformation creates anger, pits people against each other, tribe against tribe, us-versus-them. A common theme throughout history is Citizens versus City Hall. Right or wrong, politicians and city officials are easy targets, easy to dehumanize.

At the June 18 City Council Candidate Debates arranged by the Page-Lake Powell Chamber of Commerce, candidate Tom Preller said, "A PR person, a social media manager, that is very much steps in the right direction. If you get a good feed coming out of the city of all the government ongoings, allow comments, allow input and questions to be asked, and allow that PR person to respond with factual information and sources cited, that's the only way you can do anything about misinformation is to correct it and back it up."

"There's so much misinformation out there, no matter what you do," said candidate Craig Simmons. "I guess the only way the city can combat misinformation is by putting the right information out. Without the right information out there, anywhere on social media or anywhere else, then all people think about is the hearsay. And of course, the hearsay always travels a lot faster than the right stuff." "Putting out correct information is the best way to combat misinformation," said candidate Amanda Hammond. "I think the city is already taking good steps in that direction by hiring a social media manager as well as [a] public relations manager. I think that they can go farther; overhauling the website needs to be done."

Speaking on the city's website, Vice Mayor John Kocjan said, "We need to put it in a smaller, concise form because that's what people are going to read, not have to read through all the minutiae that's out there."

The Chronicle spoke with Councilor Richard Leightner. As longtime Page resident, he's seen both sides of us-versus-them play out in local politics. "At that last councilor debate, I heard so much stuff come out that wasn't anywhere near true," said Leightner. "If you're going to run for council, why don't you get informed about everything and not just go with hearsay or what's on Facebook or whatever."

One of the most common threads in Page misinformation is not knowing what the city council can and can't control. Cities must abide by county, state and federal laws. For example, the 2016 Arizona Senate Bill 1350, enacted by former Governor Ducey, made it illegal for cities, towns,

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or counties to prohibit short-term rentals. City operations are handled by the city manager. Councilors are not experts in everything they must make decisions on. They depend on the advice of experts, the pros and cons, then vote. The city manager sees that council's decisions are carried out. According to Mayor Bill Diak, past councils ignored expert recommendations and the city suffered for it. He said occasionally somebody comes along who thinks they know everything. They lead people astray. "There's a couple times in the history of the city where council basically did not listen to their city manager and their city staff, finance department, their economic development departments," said Diak. "Both times we've ended up in deep, deep financial trouble. And that's what I inherited when I first came into office in 2010." Speaking of the city's current financial state, Diak said, "We are one of very few cities in the state of Arizona and probably other states that is totally debt free and has money in the bank to do projects."

Before the Chronicle interview, Leightner said he spoke with the city manager and city department heads to verify his understanding of a variety of topics to dispel misinformation spreading through Page.

The US 89 Roundabout

Another misconception is that the city council can build a roundabout on US 89; that's in Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) domain. "It really irks me when somebody says, 'Well, the city council did this or the city council didn't do this,'" said Leightner. "And especially on the roundabouts, there was talk that city council was holding up the roundabouts. And the plain and simple fact is those are a function of the State of Arizona, not the council, not the city. So we can make an application, like for the roundabout down here on the north exit, but we can't say when to do it or if it can be done. We just make the request. It was approved for this fiscal year, but we don't have any control over when. But we have heard that they're going to start breaking ground on that this fall. So we will have a second roundabout in Page."

The Swimming Pool

People spreading misinformation often exaggerate or minimize depending on which best supports an agenda or increases outrage. For example, a person claiming a 6-page court document is "very, very brief" if they are on the losing end and seeking to minimize the process leading to the decision, or someone claiming a swimming pool will cost citizens \$116 million when estimates are from under to \$15 million. "They were talking about exorbitant amounts of money for the swimming pool," said Leightner. "I have no idea where they got that. We bonded and we approved with public review to go out and get a bond. And even if the bond's \$15 million, it doesn't mean that we have to spend \$15 million. We want to put in a nice, usable, shareable with the schools swimming pool that does the job for what's needed.

"And the location of it, my goodness, we're going to put it down by the sports complex. That's where it should be. That's where the splash pad is gonna go. So that's gonna be the big recreation area. It's already started that way. And then they were talking about, 'Well, gee, how's our kids gonna get down there? You know, that's dangerous and stuff.' Well, my first answer to that is how do they get down to the ballgames that they go to three or four times a week? But apparently they haven't looked at the budget we just approved. We're going to pick up a shuttle

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service and we're going to run a shuttle to Horseshoe Bend. The stops will be designated and we're pretty sure, certain that they can put a stop in for the sports complex. So there's not going to be the big issues that they're making up.”

Horseshoe Bend Funds

Money taken in at Horseshoe Bend can only be used for Horseshoe Bend. It's an enterprise account like Page Utility Enterprises. Think of it as a separate entity, a separate business. The city can bill Horseshoe Bend for services provided, like accounting, police or maintenance staff. But the funds can't be used for projects not related to Horseshoe Bend. “They are definitely restricted,” said Leightner. “We can't take a million out of Horseshoe Bend funds and go do infrastructure over by the Marriott or up by the airport. Because that has nothing to do with Horseshoe Bend. So those are totally different budgeted items.”

Housing

Under the current City Council, City Manager **Darren Coldwell** and staff, 122 new homes were added in Page since January 2023. “That's 122 keys, brand-new doors that have been opened in the city of Page,” said **Coldwell**. “So I think there is a misconception that nothing is happening on housing out there. There is stuff happening.”

Currently, the city is working with Coconino Community College (CCC) on new housing. Apartments for students and workforce below CCC are in the works with a developer. “It could be in three phases if they go all the way with what they're talking about,” said Leightner. “And it'll be a pretty nice, pretty large development. Really, really nice. So we're working on housing. And I can tell you that all the present council members are dedicated to housing. We've got to get that done.”

Talks are also in progress with Habitat for Humanity for a cluster of small homes. Reaching out to Habitat for Humanity was suggested by Page Unified School Board President Sandra Kidman at the April 24 council meeting. Councilor Brian Carey and Leightner began talking with Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Eric Wolverton shortly after and gave a public council meeting presentation June 12.

Uptown Revitalization

Uptown revitalization and Lake Powell Boulevard are at the center of the most divisive and costly misinformation circulating in Page. A small group of citizens circulated a mixture of facts and misinformation through the community. They circulated petitions with misleading and false claims in an effort to block changes to Lake Powell Boulevard and to recall city councilors. Page Action Committee (PAC) leaders repeatedly claim 6,000 people signed their “survey” petition. What they leave out is that multiple people circulated the petitions within a 50-mile radius of Page. No attempts were made to verify if signers were Page residents. The signatures weren't verified. When they did ask if signers were registered voters on a second petition for a ballot initiative, less than 800 signed and 18% of them were rejected in a random sampling.

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Misinformation about the cost of Phase One of the “Streetscape” project is often two to three times the actual cost. “There’s a rumor that the current project is \$36 million,” said **Coldwell**. “It is closer to \$11 million and we have nearly \$5 million already saved and are very confident that we will receive a federal grant for an additional \$5 million.” The city began setting aside funds for the project three years ago. A letter dated June, 11 from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) notified Planning and Zoning Director Zachary Montgomery that the city’s grant application was reviewed and selected for further consideration. “I have also heard we are going to get rid of the Town House and Community Center,” said **Coldwell** “That is untrue! We are actually putting nearly \$200k into improvements for the Community Center this year.”

While reasonable arguments against some of the proposed Lake Powell Boulevard changes were made, they were tainted by misinformation and the combative behavior of a few PAC supporters in council meetings and social media. Possibly the most harmful and misleading action taken by PAC members was the recall petition used against Councilors David Auge and Mike Farrow. The Chronicle interviewed PAC chair Debra Roundtree Sept. 16, 2023 when talk of a recall began. “To me, until they take a stand and there's a vote, I don't feel like we should start removing people from office yet,” said Roundtree.” Otherwise we're just making assumptions as who will or who won't vote for it.”

Auge and Farrow voted against proceeding with Phase One of the Streetscape project. They learned the same night of the vote that they were the only councilors on the recall ballot. Auge and Farrow are the only ones not running for reelection because their terms don’t end until November 2026, so it could put PAC members in a position to take over the city.

Not one of the petition’s three sentences citizens were misled to sign were true.

Sentence 1: “For refusal to acknowledge constituent's over 1,550-signature opinion petition presented on September 27, 2023, to a regularly scheduled city council meeting where they were included on a public agenda concerning lane reductions to Lake Powell Boulevard thereby affecting citizens' daily lives and businesses.”

The statement is false. Roundtree was acknowledged at the Sept. 27, 2023 City Council meeting. Council allowed her to give a 27 minute presentation on why Lake Powell Boulevard should not be changed. The city also assisted Roundtree, projecting her stock slides to accompany her presentation. Farrow said the city clerk recorded it, therefore acknowledged it. The meeting including Roundtree’s presentation is available on the City of Page YouTube channel.

Sentence 2: “For refusal of allowing all his constituents the democratic process to vote on a matter potentially costing the citizenry 15-30 million dollars and making drastic changes to the major Main Street-Lake Powell Boulevard and choosing to represent therefore a fraction of his constituents by refusal to allow discussion or consideration allowing citizens to vote on proposed lane reductions to Lake Powell Boulevard during City Council meeting on October 25, 2023.”

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The statement is false. The PAC ballot measure to stop Lake Powell Boulevard development was not blocked by the city council; the petition did not meet Arizona constitutional requirements. It was never a council decision. Coconino County Superior Court confirmed the Page City Clerk’s determination and ruled against PAC. PAC filed an appeal and the Appellate Court ruled against PAC.

Sentence 3: “For refusal of allowing his constituents the democratic process by accepting their initiated ballot measure that had enough signatures and allowing his constituents to go to the ballot box in July 2024 to voice their opinion about Lake Powell Boulevard being reduced to 3 lanes.”

Sentence 3 is redundant. It repeats false accusations stated in sentence 2.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Darren Coldwell** is listed below. Omitted was the detailed information about other small towns/cities in Arizona.]

Arizona Daily Star, The (Tucson, AZ)
May 1, 2024

Rural communities struggle to keep young residents

Author: Sarah Lapidus and Lacey Latch

San Luis native Armando Esparza did what many young people in rural Arizona do: He left his hometown for the big city. Esparza moved from the agricultural community on the Arizona-Mexico border to study at Arizona State University and lived in Phoenix to build his career. Ten years later, he moved back to San Luis to work as the director of the city’s economic development department. “I was able to find a job opportunity where I can apply what I have learned in my years of economic development, and most importantly, I am able to grow,” he said about why he chose to move back. “This is not the case for a lot of people, but I was lucky.”

Esparza’s experience a decade ago is still common. That’s illustrated in a recent report gathered by Local First Arizona, a rural economic development nonprofit. The organization in 2023 surveyed 440 young people up to 25 years old, with more than 70% of participants under 18 years old. In the report titled “Perspectives from Youth and Young Adults of Rural Arizona,” eight out of 10 respondents said they must leave their hometowns to find a quality career opportunity. Young people pointed to job quality and the lack of affordable housing as detractors in their small communities, the majority of which have populations well below 10,000 people. Rural city and town officials also stressed the lack of affordable housing, which they see as the primary obstacle forcing young people to leave. But the consequences of that familiar story were upended when the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

Rural communities see pandemic boom

At the state's other end lies Page, with a population of 7,400 people who live just a handful of miles south of the Arizona-Utah border. It’s renowned for its access to famous outdoor attractions like Lake Powell and Horseshoe Bend. Closure of the Navajo Generating Station in 2019 was a major employment and economic loss. But the city doubled down on its destination marketing during the pandemic to attract visitors. Page has seen 24 consecutive months of tax growth, City Manager **Darren Coldwell** said. “We have spent the money to chase the buck, and it's paid off,” he said.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows the population of small cities and towns across Arizona was largely unaffected by the pandemic. While each of the municipalities in this story suffered a dip in population at the outset of the pandemic in 2020, they each stabilized in 2021. In most cases, that stabilization led to growth in 2022, according to the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program. But leaders across northern Arizona also acknowledge they can’t rely on tourism forever, especially as the allure of Historic Route 66 fades from memory. “Eventually there's going to be a time where no one knows what ‘Standing on the Corner in

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Winslow, Arizona' is,” said Winslow city manager David Coolidge, and the city needs to prepare for that. City leaders are trying to highlight the unique opportunities presented by Winslow’s location in northeast Arizona — access to Interstate 40, the BNSF railway and a regional airport that could propel it into a future as a trade hub for the southwest. Construction on the I-40 trade port, a nearly 4,000-acre advanced logistics and manufacturing park, has recently begun in the city.

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[CB&A Note: **Darren Coldwell** is not mentioned in this article, however because he was the City Manager at the time of the lawsuit filing, we have included it.]

Lake Powell Chronicle
April 17, 2024

PAC sues Page over rejected petition

By Bob Hembree

The Page Action Committee (PAC) filed a lawsuit against the City of Page. The PAC attempted to stop proposed improvements to Lake Powell Boulevard with a ballot petition. According to a response letter sent to PAC chairperson Debra Roundtree, the rejected petition didn't meet constitutional prerequisites.

During the public comment period of the April 10 Page City Council meeting, Roundtree said, "The next suit that we'll be filing will be an injunction. So that's what I'm here to talk to you about tonight, is that we have a list of concerns that we've been bringing to you as board members. We've been trying to convince you that we're concerned about open meeting law violations, other violations that are going on. And then if you would look at the record for the past seven to 10 years, as I have, of the open meeting Freedom of Information Act, you would see that there are some glaring inconsistencies. And our lawyer originally worked for the Attorney General's office, so he's helped us be able to identify some open meeting law things that we have concerns about right now."

Roundtree made multiple claims and accusations that were refuted by city officials, including one that a contractor bid was awarded for Lake Powell Boulevard improvements. The bidding period was still open at the time. A winning bid must first be approved by council in a public meeting. That didn't happen. She also claimed landlords were "being told not to rent to somebody," but offered no details.

Then she complained about a Facebook post. "Our biggest concern," said Roundtree, "And I don't know if the rest of you are OK with this, but Councilman Carey chose to post the letter and part of it that you guys sent to my PAC on Saturday." She explained she was out of town and didn't immediately receive the notification. "Before even 24 hours was up, you had a council member who was posting the letter that you sent us on social media," Roundtree continued. "I don't see how that's OK. My legal team didn't have time to look at it. Our donors didn't have time. Our PAC didn't have time to meet it. But social media already had that letter. So we know that there are some legalities there. Those things are not OK."

Carey acknowledged the post reply and explained to Roundtree that the documents she referred to are public records and he had quoted from the rejection letter to provide information that was left out of social media posts. "Miss Roundtree brought up a response I made to a post by Chuck Straub, who I assume is affiliated with the PAC," said Carey. "And the comment that I made was to give the reason that the city had rejected the PAC request for an initiative that was referred to

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the PAC in a letter from the city. That is a public document. I asked for permission to quote from that public document to make sure that the post on a particular Facebook group was accurate, and I did so. And so that's the facts of that matter. Public document, a public post in response to a post by a member of the PAC, which left the reasons out. So I just wanted to throw the facts out. It's a pretty simple reason for the rejection, as has been referred to here. So just want to clear the record on that.”

Coconino County court documents verified Debra Roundtree, Steven Kidman and PAC are taking legal action against the City of Page. Both parties are running for Page City Council seats next election. Their legal counsel is asking the Coconino Country Supreme Court to compel the City of Page to process a rejected petition. The political action committee is represented by Jim Barton of Barton Mendez Soto PLLC in Tempe, Arizona.

A hearing presided by Judge Cathleen Brown Nichols is scheduled for 2 p.m. April 18.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Powell Chronicle
March 20, 2024

Page Police to provide safety officers to PUSD

By Bob Hembree

On March 13, Page City Council approved an agreement between the City of Page and Page Unified School District (PUSD) to provide school safety officers. PUSD received an Arizona Department of Education’s Stronger Connection Grant to cover the costs for the 2023 - 2026 school years. Page Police Department doesn’t have the staff to provide PUSD a full-time officer, so the agreement is flexible. Officers can work extra-duty hours on their time off to make extra money.

“This opportunity, is a fantastic especially for some of the new officers,” said City Manager **Darren Coldwell**. “I’m almost embarrassed what a starting salary is for a man who puts a bulletproof vest on every single day. So this will give them an opportunity to bring in some extra cash.”

The city will bill PUSD \$85 an hour for the service. Part of the rate covers administrative, vehicles, insurance and other expenses. Page Police Chief Tim Lange told the Chronicle officers receive a flat rate of \$64 per hour for extra duty services. “The kids will get to know our people,” said Lange. “If the opportunities arise where our officers can teach classes or even sit in classrooms while certain subjects are being taught, that's going to be a benefit for us. It's a benefit for the kids. It's a benefit for the school.” When Lange was approached by the school, he thought it was a great idea. The flexible agreement is based on officer availability. It’s understood an officer may need respond to an off-campus emergency. “At the end of the day, our primary job is to answer those calls for service and respond to public safety issues,” said Lange. “All this other stuff is extra, and yeah, it's going to give our guys the opportunity to make some extra money, but what's important to me is it's going to enhance school safety.”

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Lake Powell Chronicle
March 20, 2024

Page Business grants are back on the table

By Bob Hembree

Page City Council discussed bringing back a revised version of its facade improvement program. Little interest was shown by local businesses in applying for the 50/50 grants to update their storefronts. City Manager **Darren Coldwell** believes the amount of red tape and qualifying conditions made the process too troublesome and expensive for businesses. an “It's daunting, to say the least, for the applicant,” said **Coldwell**. “I would like to put a lot more responsibility on Zach and Brett to do some of this rather than a licensed engineer and you know that they have to spend more money than what the money is they're going to spend on the project.”

Coldwell referred to Planning Director Zachary Montgomery and Building Official Brett Slavens. In **Coldwell**'s proposed plan the city would match the cost of store improvements up to \$20,000. The previous plan was only available to uptown businesses along Lake Powell Boulevard and Block 17. All businesses in the city limits can apply with the new plan. Another change is the scope of qualifying projects. **Coldwell** suggested going beyond exterior improvements. “I think it should be both inside and outside and I think it should be every business,” he said. “I don't think it should just be Main Street. Anybody who wants to improve their setting should have the opportunity.”

Councilor Richard Lightener indicated at least two businesses he's familiar with are “highly interested” in the program. If an overall dollar amount is approved by council, the funds will likely be available in next year's budget

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Lake Powell Chronicle
March 6, 2024

Council increases city manager spending authority

By Bob Hembree

On Feb. 28, Page City Council voted 6-1 in favor of increasing city manager spending limits from \$20,000 to \$100,000 for budgeted items. The move follows the Jan. 10 council decision to increase Page Utility Enterprises (PUE) board and manager spending limits to \$600,000 and \$300,000 respectively. The central arguments for the increases were rising prices and increasing management efficiency. In the past, items preapproved by council in the city's budget would require a second approval if manager spending limits were exceeded.

Counselor Theresa Lee cast the dissenting vote, citing long term concerns. "It's nothing against **Darren**," said Lee, referring to city manager **Darren Coldwell**. "It's for (the) future, because we all come and go, and then we look at it after somebody's already had access to it. I have a problem jumping \$80,000. I really do. And I realize we're seeing things that we've authorized. However, as things are increasing in price, we want to see that the \$20,000 lawn mower that we approved in June of last year is now \$50,000. We want to see that. So I have a problem jumping 80 grand. I'd be more comfortable at 50."

Counselor David Auge, countering Lee's argument, said "I'm sorry, but it boils down to trust. We hired **Darren** for his past accomplishments, what he's been doing for us. And I'm sorry. If we don't trust him now, then he needs to pack his bags and be gone. And as far as I'm concerned, I trust **Darren** and have faith in him, his track record for us. And going forward, as I say, I trust him." Vice Mayor John Kocjan, supporting Auge's comment, said, "It's in the budget or it's not. It's that simple."

Coldwell reassured Lee, "Theresa, I'll be very responsive to your concerns, even if it's just going to you." "Thank you," said Lee. "And I know you would. That's why I said it's not against you."

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Lake Powell Chronicle
March 6, 2024

Council caps Emergency Reserve at \$12 million

By Bob Hembree

On Feb. 28, Page City Council voted to cap the city’s emergency reserve fund at \$12 million. On July 24, 2019, six months before COVID-19 shook the world, the fund was established to keep the city running in an emergency.

The fund, following Finance Director Linda Watson’s recommendation, began with \$8 million, \$6 million in an existing reserve and \$2 million from the general fund. In 2019, council wanted enough in the reserve to run the city government for one year. Watson, addressing the council, said, “Our expenses for the last 12-month period were right about \$12.2 million for the general fund so this amount is inclusive of operating and personnel cost but it does not include interfund transfers. At this point there are various motions; as you can see on this council communication, it would be my recommendation if it is the council’s pleasure to increase that \$3.5 million reserve to \$8 million as one option.”

At the time, Watson said setting aside the full \$12.2 million would stress the city’s finances and recommended gradually building up to the full amount. Council agreed and the fund was established with an important stipulation: Accessing the money would require a 75% council majority.

Currently, the fund is \$11.2 million, according to City Manager **Darren Coldwell**. He anticipates reaching \$12 million by the end of the year. “I mean, we went through COVID and we never touched it,” said **Coldwell**. “We made some hard choices.” He pointed out that the city makes adjustments in spending when needed.

“We’ve had a few ups and downs, but we continue to grow,” said Mayor Bill Diak, then asked **Coldwell**, “How many months in a row?” **Coldwell** replied, “Forty-six months in a row of increased tax revenues, even through COVID.”

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Darren Coldwell** is listed below.]

Targeted News Service (USA)
December 1, 2023

Arizona Public Service Co.: Arizona Electric Utilities Provide Grants to Support Economic Development, Operations & Training in Coal Plant Communities

Author: Private Sector

Arizona Public Service Co. issued the following news:

Five organizations serving Arizona communities impacted by the transition away from coal-fired power plants were selected this fall to receive a cumulative total of over \$134,000 in economic development grants from the Utilities' Grant Funding Program. The program provides critical support to communities near impacted coal plants to develop new, sustainable economic strategies for their residents and other stakeholders. Funding is provided by Tucson Electric Power (TEP), Arizona Public Service (APS) and Salt River Project (SRP). This is the program's second round of grant awards made in 2023.

The City of Page will receive \$25,000 to help cover the costs of hiring a grant-writing consulting firm to prepare applications for larger federal grants. The firm is also identifying additional grant opportunities to support transportation and economic development efforts, including broadband and community facilities and business incubators. "I want to thank our Arizona utilities that so generously contribute to this grant so that small communities like Page can do good work for their residents," said **Darren Coldwell**, City Manager. "Without the generosity of the Utilities Grant Funding Program, we would never be able to partner with such a firm."

TEP, APS and SRP pledged a combined \$1 million in awards available through the Utilities' Grant Funding Program. Area-specific tribal, state and local governments, public schools, economic development groups and nonprofit groups are eligible to apply. More details about submission eligibility and requirements are available here (<https://www.srpnet.com/grid-water-management/grid-management/improvement-projects/coal-communities-transition>). The third grant application cycle is now open. Applications are due by Friday, Dec. 15, 2023.

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Lake Powell Chronicle
September 27, 2023

The City of Page awarded Best 2023 Cybersecurity Score
By Bob Hembree

The City of Page belongs to many organizations geared toward better governing and management, including Arizona Municipal Risk Retention Pool (AMRRP). One of the benefits of an AMRRP membership is a Bitsight testing, evaluation and security rating.

Speaking at the Sept. 13 City Council Meeting, City Manager **Darren Coldwell** said that Page has the “highest score in the AMRRP pool.” “Basically, they tried to attack Kane two years in a row, and he was the best in the state,” **Coldwell** said, referring to City of Page Information Technology Director Kane Scott. “Page was No. 1, most efficient, couldn't get through.

There are 70 members in the AMRRP pool. In fact, Page is better than 90% of the government agencies nationwide.” “This is really, really a big deal because, I don't know if you see how everybody from Russia to China to Asia, they attempt to attack local agencies and then hold them for ransom,” **Coldwell** said. “They just attacked Phoenix hospitals, and I still don't know what they're going to do, if they're going to pay or what they're going to do. To be able to deflect those guys that know what they're doing is a pretty big deal.”

There were over 263 million ransomware attacks worldwide in the first half of 2022. A whopping 71% of organizations worldwide were affected by ransomware attacks in 2022.

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Lake Powell Chronicle
September 27, 2023

Page’s Streetscape plans under fire
Part Two: When citizens start to object late in the process
By Bob Hembree

“It’s hard to back that train uphill and not have costs involved with it.” – City of Page Mayor Bill Diak

The Streetscape project, after of years public notices, open house presentations and gathering community input, is the talk of town. Some are hearing about it for the first time, and judging comments at the Sept. 13 city council work session, some are outraged.

City of Page Mayor Diak told the Chronicle that Page Lake Powell Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in reaching out to local businesses about Streetscape in the exploration stages of the project. “[They were] saying, hey, this is what’s going on. This is when these meetings are. Please participate, because the city and [those] doing the legwork for us are seeking information on what they’re proposing and your input,” Diak said. “When that plan started, there was nothing for that street [Lake Powell Blvd]. It was developed out of those meetings, and there [were] people in City Hall up and down. The whole hallway was filled with charts and everything. Matter of fact, we ought to get those charts and just paste them up before the next meeting.”

Streetscape became the project title once J2 Engineering was hired in 2020. The city took its first steps in November 2018 under the name Downtown Revitalization Plan. The first public meetings were held Dec. 3 and 4 from 5-7 p.m. at the Page Community Center. Lake Powell Chronicle covered the story in their Nov. 28, 2018, issue. According to the Steven Law’s reporting, “The downtown revitalization area includes North Lake Powell Boulevard from highway 89, block 17 (which is the block containing Mesa Theater, Boston’s Hardware, Pow-Wow Trading Post and other businesses), the Safeway block, the businesses along 6th avenue and John C. Page Park. “One of the city’s strategic priorities from fiscal year 2016/17 was initiating a master streetscape plan which identified strategies, policies and feasibilities for improving the aesthetics and appeal for Page’s downtown and block 17.”

In the 2018 article, Levi Tappan, Page’s mayor at the time, said, “I hope to get the businesses on board and excited about this and together turn it into a real nice, walkable downtown.” “The people who built this town also built a dam and a power plant,” he said. “They are men and women of industry. I’d like to find a way to honor that history and heritage and incorporate that as we re-brand and revitalize the town.”

Tappan hoped the design would reflect Page’s modern-industrial heritage. The Chronicle spoke with the Tappan again on Sept. 15, 2023. He still likes the modern industrial theme for Page. The former mayor is also considering another run for the office in 2024. Residents objecting to Streetscape at council meetings voiced a wide variety of concerns, many based on

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misinformation. The most common complaint was the proposed changes for Lake Powell Boulevard. The owner of R D's Drive-In is worried about parking and delivery truck access. According to Debi Roundtree, Antelope Canyon tour companies are concerned about traffic congestion slowing their tour shuttles. “Our major players on the mesa, who are probably bringing more tax dollars than anybody else, can't continue their tour businesses,” said Roundtree. “If they do what they're doing, they have to move off the mesa. And the reservation's been trying to convince them to put businesses out on the reservation so they get the tax dollars. And so they're angry enough now that they could do that. And this isn't going to just hurt the City of Page a little. It's going to hurt it huge if they do that. One company says they won't be able to operate the buses correctly and how they have to enter and exit their business. So, he said I won't have a choice. He said I will have to move off the main street.”

The Chronicle asked Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell** about how the changes in Lake Powell Boulevard would affect the tour companies. “Streetscape is designed to create and incentivize business,” **Coldwell** said. “It's not being created to hurt business whatsoever. Our traffic study, which there were some misconceptions in a way, there were some misstatements Wednesday evening [at the council meeting], and the traffic study was done June 29 and June 30 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. So the week basically before the fourth, one of the busiest weeks of our year. It found that it was going to slow traffic down about 4.8 seconds from North Navajo to South Navajo compared to what it is now. “[The tour companies] come out with two stoplights left, and so you got a block and a half that they have to go. It shouldn't really affect them. If it's that bad for a block and a half, then we really will have a problem, but it's designed not to.”

Coldwell stressed he is willing to listen to concerns and that adjustment are possible if warranted. He's said this at all public hearings regarding Streetscape. Executive Administrative Assistant Robin Crowther is frequently seen handing out contact information at city council meetings. “I've spoken to three people. Three people have, after all of these comments, 1,100 signatures, three people have come in to speak with me,” **Coldwell** told the Chronicle on Sept 16.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Powell Chronicle
September 5, 2023

New Code Red alert system helps Page residents stay informed

Bob Hembree

The City of Page is making it easier for residents to stay informed and to receive Page-specific emergency alerts. City Manager **Darren Coldwell** first announced the new system at the June 14, 2023, city council meeting. “Kane has been working on, under my direction and under the police and fire, a new alerting system for the City of Page in case there's ever an emergency,” **Coldwell** said.

The new Code Red system is now operational. The online software, in addition to sending emergency alerts, enhances the city’s efforts to keep Page residents informed about events and public meetings.

The Chronicle met with Page’s information technology director, Kane Scott to learn more. “What we want the citizens to know is if they go to the cityofpage.org website now, right below the main picture, is this emergency notification system,” Scott said. “And what this new system is doing is it's allowing them to not only get an alert if there’s something big emergency-wise, but it’s allowing them to sign up for community meetings – i.e., council meetings and whatever meetings and also events that are coming up. So the event people will be sending out reminders that the balloon regatta thing is today or we’re having July 4 or movies in the park or stuff like that. Simply by clicking on that, it takes them to an explanation page that tells them all about it.”

Page residents who don’t go to council meetings, read the local newspaper or visit the city’s webpage regularly are sometime surprised by city projects in the works and protest. Uninformed citizens often hear development news long after advertised public meetings were held, long after months or years of time and public funds were invested. In other words, uninformed citizens potentially waste public resources.

Page’s updated website demonstrates its transparency and its efforts to keep community members informed on every aspect of city government. Online visitors can browse the city’s finances, read the minutes of council and board meetings, or read the discussion and action agendas scheduled for upcoming meetings.

“People are still saying that we're not getting enough information out, but we’re trying very hard to put this data everywhere,” Scott said. “We're trying to do more ‘instant.’ So something that goes in the mail, you might not get or you get late. This will do even more. So they’ve just got to sign up.”

Code Red is free, and users have the option to receive notices by text, voice or email. The basic setup includes emergency alerts like unsafe water warnings or building fires. Emergencies in Page might be rare, but citizens can also choose to receive event and public meeting reminders.

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The system is still new to Page, and more data will be loaded for upcoming events and meetings. Scott said the alerts and reminders will be brief and include links for additional information.

City Council meetings provide downloadable “PDF Agenda Packets” that are often quite large. The Aug. 23 packet, for example, is 139 pages of text, images and diagrams – too large for a text, phone or even an email message. “Everything is based off the website,” Scott said. “You can easily get to all of the public meetings. And the other button we made even better, ClearGov, which is a revenue project, expenditures and your tax dollars at work. If you click there, then you can get in and see – I mean, you can literally go to our checkbook and search.”

Scott wants all Page residents to go to cityofpage.org homepage, “click on the emergency notification system and sign up.”

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Arizona Daily Sun, The (Flagstaff, AZ)
May 4, 2023

Recycle pickup to resume Monday as city occupies facility, pays Norton \$75,000

Author: Adrian Skabelund

As of 8 a.m. Thursday, the City of Flagstaff occupied the recycling facility on Butler Avenue that had been operated by Norton Environmental for more than two decades. Hours later, city employees in reflective vests and hard hats could still be seen milling about the grounds, assessing the condition of the space and preparing to turn it into a transfer facility.

The move came after solid waste section head Evan Tyrrell and public works director Scott Overton informed Flagstaff City Council the city would be looking to bring recycle pickup back online as soon as Monday. At that same special meeting, Council voted unanimously to approve the termination of the lease and contract with Norton Environmental and to transfer control and ownership of the facility and equipment back to the city. The termination agreement approved by city council came with a \$75,000 payment to Norton for transfer of the facility and termination of the original contract. "This payment, we feel, is justified as it is very expensive and costly to not have a home to take our recyclables to," Overton told Council.

The president of Norton Environmental, Joseph Balog, said the payment is in lieu of what could have been an estimated \$250,000 payment from the city this year. Estimates from city staff had that payment closer to \$450,000 for this year. That payment would have been for failing to meet the minimum amount of recyclable material the city agreed to deliver Norton within the original contract. Throughout the contract with Norton, the city has only ever been able to collect and deliver a fraction of the recycled material promised within the contract. Bolag said Flagstaff routinely owed Norton for undelivered material at the end of each year.

"Under the terms of the contract, Flagstaff had a minimum amount of material to deliver to the plant yearly. Typically Flagstaff owed Norton over \$350,000 at the end of each contract year under the contract minimum," Balog wrote. "In an agreement made with the city, Norton accepted \$75,000 to terminate the contract, and each party agreed to release the other party with no further liability between Norton and the City of Flagstaff." Under the original contract, Norton had control and ownership of the facility, but that would have reverted back to the city when the contract ended in September. Balog also confirmed that the combination of the facility fire last week and the weak market for recycling led to the sudden closure of the facility, which employed eight people at the time of its closure.

Several councilmembers and City Manager Greg Clifton applauded the work of city staff in working so quickly on the matter. "It's been around-the-clock involvement," Clifton said. "I find it remarkable to say the least that we are now occupying this facility as soon as [May 4]. I would not have thought that was within the realm of possibilities here." The city is now working to convert the facility quickly into a transfer center so materials can be collected, brought to the site and loaded onto a truck and brought to Phoenix. Converting the facility into a simple transfer

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station won't take much, Overton said. Because sorting through the recycling will all take place in Phoenix, the only equipment they really need is a scale to weigh the truck and recycled materials, and heavy equipment such as a front-end loader to move the materials from the collection vehicles to the semi truck. Those operations will likely be contracted out as well, although city employees might be onsite to oversee the operations, Overton said.

That facility, operated by the City of Phoenix, has already agreed to begin taking materials from Flagstaff, despite the current lack of a signed intergovernmental agreement between the two municipalities. A signed agreement is expected within the month. With the question of where recycling materials will go solved, the remaining question is just how to get it there.

Overton said the city is quickly looking to find a company to begin trucking the materials down to the Valley. He said that will likely be a shorter-term contract as a stop-gap measure just to get service back up and running. Once that is achieved, the city will seek a longer contract to get a better deal for the city and taxpayers. This short-term solution is expected to be in place for three to four weeks, bringing recycling pickup back while giving city staff time to draw up longer-term contracts.

Overton said it was too early to tell what the price tag on a short-term contract for such a service would be. If a company to bring materials to Phoenix can't be lined up, recycle pickup will still resume on Monday, but materials will be brought to the landfill. Overton and Tyrrell, however, seem confident that transportation could be located in time.

Even so, Tyrrell said in that circumstance, the city might be able to store the materials until they can be brought to the Phoenix facility at a later time. But is Flagstaff unique in its recycling woes in terms of northern Arizona communities? It's a mixed bag. The City of Williams doesn't offer its residents residential recycling pickup. Residents can opt to drop recyclables off at the transfer facility in Williams themselves. Those materials are then delivered to the company Waste Management in Flagstaff to process, a Williams sanitation manager said.

Up in Page there are currently no recycling services available to residents or commercial businesses, said Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell**. That city contracts with the company Republic Services to collect trash. Republic Services had offered recycling services to residents as well, but **Coldwell** said after industry changes forced the company to truck all recyclables to a facility near Las Vegas, the company removed the recycling service. The city has been without recycling services for about a year and a half. It should be noted that both communities, as with most across northern Arizona, are significantly smaller than Flagstaff.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Powell Chronicle
March 13, 2023

Page City Council mulls cost of recreation center

Douglas Long

Support for the construction of an indoor recreation and aquatic center has been growing in recent months among many residents of Page. Last week, City Manager **Darren Coldwell** led a discussion by City Council that sought to address one of the biggest questions pertaining to establishing such a facility in Page: How will it be paid for? The March 8 meeting, which was open to the public, was attended by around 25 local residents.

Coldwell provided an overview of the recreation and aquatic center but also, more importantly, the financial aspects of the project. He made it clear that the meeting was just the first step in the process of deciding whether such a facility could or should be built. “Even the drawing that you’re going to see is literally just myself and a couple other people working with an architect to project what we were thinking might be an asset to this city,” he said. “It’s going to take a lot of time and a lot of effort from staff to make this thing go, and if it’s not something council is sincere about or wants to pursue, we don’t want to put in the time and effort.”

The “drawing” **Coldwell** referred to was an architect’s rendering of what the recreation and aquatic center might look like, based on suggestions from community members concerning what they would want included. The 44,000-square-foot facility was designed in three separate squares so that it could be built in sections. The first section includes offices for working staff, a gymnastics and dance room, a weight room, a babysitting room, a climbing wall and a room available for social functions or for teaching classes. The second section encompasses two racquetball courts, four batting cages and two basketball courts, with four locker rooms that would enable the facility to host basketball and volleyball tournaments. The third section includes a six-lane, Olympic-size lap pool where swim meets could be held, as well as a kiddie pool. The plan also includes an outdoor lazy river, the only portion of the facility that is outside and therefore seasonal.

The cost of building the facility as presented would be at least \$37 million, **Coldwell** said. He added that Page’s budgeted excise tax revenues for the 2022-23 fiscal year were around \$16.9 million, far short of the funds necessary to build the facility. On top of this would be annual operating costs, estimated to be around \$2.5-2.8 million, for necessities such as liability insurance, staff and maintenance. The only option for coming up with the funding would be for the city to go out to bond and into debt, **Coldwell** said. “This is where, as a city manager, I start to worry and potentially can’t sleep at night. Page is one of the few cities, probably literally in the United States, that has zero debt,” **Coldwell** said. “This, going forward, is going to commit for probably 25 years the people on this dais and the people that sit in my chair to quite a bit of debt and how to pay for it going forward.”

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

A \$37 million bond for 25 years would mean about \$2.5 million taken out of operating funds each year. This could also be paid for by increasing city sales tax – in which case, costs would be shared by the city’s 5 million visitors as well as its citizens – or through a general obligation bond, in which the residents of the city pay would through an increase in property tax. “The problem that council has is, can you sell that? Can you sell to the residents of Page that every single home here is going to get that amount of value out of this facility?” **Coldwell** asked council members. “It all depends on how much you guys support this facility and how well you sell to the people in the audience. The senior citizen is going to have to be shown they they’re going to get their money’s worth out of this project.” After presenting the financial data, **Coldwell** said he wanted the City Council to give directive for him to create a citizens committee comprising six to eight people “who are sincerely interested in the project and sincerely are willing to give their time to this.”

Reactions to the city manager’s presentation were mixed. Councilor David Auge said he thought that going out to bond would not be “very palatable” for the city, especially considering current inflation rates and the likelihood that the city’s electricity rates will increase by 40% between July and January. “You said raise your hand and raise the sales tax,” Auge said, referring to the ability of City Council to vote on a sales tax increase, but “the other hand is going to be grabbed by the citizenry and we’re going to be ... tarred and feathered, probably.”

Mayor Bill Diak suggested that other funding sources could be tapped to minimize the financial damage, including philanthropy, donations and grants. **Coldwell** said the grant process has already begun, with funding for rural communities offering the best prospects for the proposed facility.

Councilor Brian Carey said he totally supported having a recreation center in Page, and his priority would be building the aquatic section first. “No question, this is a passionate project, number one on my list. It’s what I ran on, and I will support it until someone kicks me off the council,” he said. “The reason we added to the pool concept is because our current city’s facilities are not supporting what we want to do with our youth programs and our adult programs. And the school, through their own set of pressures, have been unreliable partners in sharing facilities.” He suggested that money could be taken from the city’s current emergency fund to reduce the amount of debt needed to build the facility. “In my opinion, we’re sitting on an emergency fund that’s continuing to grow by over half a million dollars every year, is not going to be needed because I can’t anticipate a worse situation to affect our tourism than the pandemic,” Carey said. “There is more money that could be removed from that emergency fund if we capped it at the original concept of \$8 million, which is about 60% of our operating budget and would handle any issues.” Carey agreed with **Coldwell** on the need for a citizens committee to help “mine all of the ideas and the sources” that could help steer the recreation center project in the right direction. “I do think the citizens are going to put some skin into the game for that. I also think that this council needs to decide. If we’re going to have this, we need to pay for something because it’s not going to be free. There’s no question,” he said.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
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Councilor Mike Farrow said the recreation and aquatic facility would help the city establish structured youth programs, which he believes are necessary, but he added that he didn't think the council was at a point where it could say "yay or nay" to the project. "We don't understand the footprint yet and how do we wrap the cost to the footprint. I do believe that a committee should be started, and it should have more homework done on it. They should look at a broader area of funding, they should look at getting a broader area of services," he said. "I'm concerned because we're still looking at our water supply, we have other contingencies that are not COVID-based, but we do have to weigh the overall – where's our water, where's our power?"

Since the March 8 meeting was not scheduled for any action or direction, Diak adjourned after an hour-long discussion with the expectation that the issue will return as an agenda item at a regular City Council meeting in the near future.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City of Page, Arizona
FY2023 Budget
Last updated October 31, 2022



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For the Fiscal Year Beginning

July 01, 2021

Christopher P. Morill
Executive Director

Budget Message **Darren Coldwell**, City Manager

Mayor Diak and Members of Page City Council: The annual budget assures the efficient, effective, and economic use of the City’s resources, as well as establishing that the highest priority objectives are accomplished. Through the budget, the City Council and staff set the direction of the City. The budget is expected to keep in mind both the positive and negative events happening within the City of Page. This document gives the City Council an ability to allocate resources and establish priorities. The Fiscal Year 2023 Budget is respectfully submitted to Mayor Diak, the City Council, and residents of Page, Arizona. This budget represents the City Council’s commitment to strong financial management practices and a strategic plan for continued growth and a sustained future. This budget document has been a collaboration between the City Manager, Department Managers, City staff, and members of the Page City Council to be used as a tool to identify funding priorities, reflect the needs and desires of the community, and to guide management throughout the year by clearly setting forth the goals and objectives of the Council for the coming year. As a whole, the City of Page is in a strong financial position considering the economic challenges that are currently in Page. The authorization of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act has helped stabilize funding for specific funds such as Emergency Services and Page Airport, albeit a temporary x to a complicated problem. Several problems have played a role in the economic future of our City including:

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

- High unemployment due to decreased tourism numbers and other tourism related jobs.
- The closing of the Navajo Generating Station.

Although these problems will take several years to overcome, there are signs of an improving economy, such as:

- Page’s tourism numbers have begun to increase, especially on the weekends.
- Many community groups are working to improve the economic situation in the City.
- A noticeable increase of interest in corporate leaders in the City of Page.
- An uptick of developers expressing wants to begin new planned communities.

The recovery process has already begun, which will enhance the goal of being a stable economy and consequently predictable steadfast revenues. The City of Page’s taxable revenue for the General Fund has been on a steady incline since the COVID pandemic eased in the last couple of years or so. Last fiscal year (2022) the City sales tax revenue increased by \$2.4M from the previous year (2021) where we received \$11.1 in Sales Tax Revenue. The City of Page has seen a record increase in sales tax contributions to the General Fund as of FY 2022. We closed the year with the highest number in sales tax revenue being received in one year thus far with a total of \$13,609,435. The City of Page once again saw a substantial increase in health insurance costs this year of around 12% that was added to this year’s budget. In reviewing the past performance of our policy, Page has been very lucky to be able to keep this cost down. For over the last five years, an increase of just over 2% was passed on to the General Fund budget. With this ever increasing expense, the City Council may need to consider a greater contribution from the employees. I will continue to review our policy and continue to entertain new options for employee health insurance coverage.

This fiscal year we re-evaluated our staffing needs, working with department directors, positions were added, or revised based on the department's needs. A reorganization of departments to increase efficiency has been implemented. The departments that have seen changes are Fire, Police, Public Works, Horseshoe Bend, Recreation, Library, Finance, and Lake Powell National Golf Course. In fiscal year 2022, the City budgeted 148 FTEs, a decrease of 3 FTEs from the prior year. This current FY 2023 shows our FTE’s of 161, an increase of approximately 13 FTE positions that were reduced in the last two fiscal years. It is of the utmost importance that the City Council continues to review all salaries and staffing needs for future budgets.

The City Council looked outside of the box and made creative thinking a must for the success of the entire City of Page this year. It is my opinion that with continued changes the City of Page will achieve its goal of being fiscally sound and revenue positive.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Arizona Daily Sun, The (Flagstaff, AZ)
December 31, 2021

Economy Year in Review: Airport fees, government grants and flooding fallout in Flagstaff
Author: Daily Sun Staff

This year marked an up-and-down endeavor for individuals, businesses and governments alike in trying to recover from the economic damage caused by the pandemic over the last 20 months. Here are the top economic stories for 2021:

Airport fees

Just this week, the Flagstaff City Council voted to approve an ordinance that would eliminate free parking at the airport and instead require travelers to pay up to \$8 per day and \$48 per week starting early next year. According to airport director Barney Helmick, charging for parking is necessary to pay for the \$4.9 million borrowed from the city's general fund to cover the construction of an additional parking lot and other improvements to the existing parking lot. The airport long outgrew the existing 385-space Terminal Lot. The airport has expanded significantly in recent years with multiple routes and more than 124,000 passengers departing from the airport in 2019, Helmick explained. The new lot -- dubbed the Terminal Economy Lot -- is currently under construction. It will more than double the number of parking spaces by adding 413 spots, ideally alleviating the parking overflow during the peak spring and summer seasons. The lot will also feature internal walkways and a sidewalk to the terminal. The addition of the new lot will also allow for further expansion of electric vehicle charging stations, bike paths and improve bus usage.

ARPA relief funding

Flagstaff City Council spent time addressing how more than \$13 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding should be spent, coming to a consensus on the budget in October. The budget includes \$1.9 million toward housing; \$2.5 million to alternate response services and a care center; \$1.5 million toward cyber security and other government infrastructure; \$1.4 million to nonprofit support; \$635,000 toward small business recovery; and \$600,000 to pre-K and STEAM education. The federal funding was allocated to the city from the State and Local Recovery Funds, which is a subset of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act and sets aside \$350 million intended to support state and local governments.

Flooding fallout

In its ongoing attempts to mitigate post-fire flooding in the Museum Fire area, Coconino County received two different \$3.5 million influxes of funding in the span of a week in November. First, Forest Service Chief Randy Moore announced the agency would provide funding for several flood mitigation projects below the burn scar. The announcement came after Moore and several other federal officials toured the Museum Fire burn area along with local county and city officials and Rep. Tom O'Halleran. Then, the Natural Resources Conservation Service approved the Coconino County Flood Control District's request for federal aid to help restore the Spruce Watershed and construct flood mitigation infrastructure below the Museum Fire burn scar. The

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money will allow the district to build infrastructure in several areas of private property, largely in the area of the Elden Estates neighborhood, as well as one section of property owned by the City of Flagstaff.

Canyon entrance reopens

After almost a year of being closed, the Grand Canyon National Park reopened its east entrance to the South Rim in April. It had been shut down to limit travel and the spread of COVID-19 across the nearby Navajo Nation and other northern Arizona communities. That decision had been long sought by local business leaders and city officials in nearby communities including Page, who have pointed at the closure of the east entrance as one reason local economies are struggling. Page Mayor Bill Diak and Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell** told the Arizona Daily Sun that the closure cut off the city from the largest draw for tourism in the region. With the east entrance closed, tourists were forced to drive a roundabout way through Flagstaff if they wanted to visit Page, Lake Powell or Horseshoe Bend, so many simply opted not to, **Coldwell** said.

Electric vehicles

The City of Flagstaff continued work on its Sustainable Automotive Rebate Program in 2021 to promote sustainable practices in the community and to support the city's vehicle industry. As the rebate program takes its roots in the city and more electric vehicles hit the market, Jack Fitchett, Flagstaff business attraction manager, said dealerships will be supported in their efforts to bring electric vehicle models to consumers. It is one of a few strategies the city has implemented to encourage electric vehicle use. Fitchett said some local automotive dealerships have told the city they struggle with locals purchasing vehicles at dealerships in other cities, whether that's due to lower prices, tax incentives or a greater selection of fuel-efficient vehicles. The Sustainable Automotive Tax Rebate program looks to provide a level of support for these dealerships.

Great American Outdoors Act

Arizona projects got \$110 million last year and will get another \$159 million in the fiscal year that started in October, or more than 9% of all funding nationally under the Great American Outdoors Act for those two years. The money, dedicated largely to national parks but also to federal lands and tribal schools, has been welcomed by tourism and environmental groups, who said it is long overdue. For national parks, the backlog of deferred maintenance totaled \$11.9 billion in 2018, according to data from the National Park Service. More than \$507.4 million of that was for projects in Arizona, with \$313.8 million needed in the Grand Canyon National Park alone.

A boost to the arts

Rep. Tom O'Halleran announced in September that several entertainment venues across northern Arizona, many of which have struggled as COVID-19 forced events to be canceled, would be receiving federal aid through Shuttered Venue Operators Grants. "As a lifelong lover of music, I know that live performance and art have the power to heal, to bring us together, and to expand our world view, as well as the power to stimulate the economies of growing states like Arizona. Independent venues were some of the first places to close and the last to open; when we push

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forward again as a nation, we cannot do so starved of the experiences that bring us together," O'Halleran said in a statement. In terms of Flagstaff organizations that received aid, the Flagstaff Symphony Association got \$19,100. Greenhouse Productions got \$148,917, Hullabaloo Festivals received \$108,099 and Peak Events was given \$208,317. Red & Black Productions received \$52,240 and the Orpheum got \$383,720. Lastly, Theatrikos Theatre Company is receiving \$68,594. Organizations in Page, Tusayan and Sedona also received federal grant money.

Construction projects

In an effort to stimulate a pandemic-stricken northern Arizona economy, the Coconino County Board of Supervisors approved a plan in February to move \$3 million of county projects to construction in the spring. The Public Works Stimulus Plan featured civil capital improvement road projects, almost 7 miles of pavement preservation projects, road maintenance equipment procurement, and crushing and blasting at the county's operated pits to produce road surfacing material. In addition, Public Works secured approval from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to resurface 10 miles of county-maintained school bus routes on the Navajo Nation as part of the stimulus plan.

NAU's impact

Northern Arizona University has long had a significant effect on Flagstaff's economy as a whole, and the university is currently navigating a decline in the number of students who are attending. NAU reported an enrollment loss of 4.2% (or 1,066 fewer students) in fall 2021 compared to the previous fall. Since the fall of 2017, the university's enrollment has decreased 10.8% (or 2,977 students). The report shows undergraduate enrollment increasing at the university from 2012 through 2018, and then declining since 2020. NAU's statistics in the ABOR Fiscal Year 2020 College Completion Report were similar to overall trends for Arizona public universities. The university saw a slight rise in undergraduate degrees, a continuation of its growth since 2010, the earliest data in the report. A total of 6,259 students graduated from NAU with a bachelor's degree in 2020, and 1,489 received a graduate degree. Degrees in health and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields had the greatest increase.

State jobless rate

Arizona showed several straight months of decreased jobless rate in the second half of the year as the state tried to shake off the economic effects of the pandemic. Job gains were spread across almost all categories, with the biggest increase in the leisure and hospitality industry that was battered last year by pandemic shutdowns and travel bans. Jobs in that sector grew 17.6% from a year earlier, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The most stark contrast to last year happened as the holiday shopping season began. The Arizona Department of Economic Security said there were 19,067 total jobless claims the week before Thanksgiving, compared to 404,748 in the same week in 2020.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Navajo Times
November 4, 2021

Page-Navajo aid agreement ends

By Krista Allen

An agreement to provide public safety services to Western Navajo ended on Sunday, leaving the large area near Page-Lake Powell vulnerable to potential criminal activity.

Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell** in September sent a letter to Navajo Police Chief Phillip Francisco saying the city would terminate the 2016 Mutual Aid Agreement between the Navajo Nation Police, the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, and the Page Police Department, if concerns were not addressed. **Coldwell** said neither Francisco nor Tuba City Police District Capt. Leonard Williams and Jesse Delmar, the executive director of Division of Public Safety, reached out to **Coldwell**'s office to resolve issues.

“The (Sept. 8) letter outlined some worries relating to emergency response by the city into Navajo Nation territory and the lack of appropriate agreements for the city response or requests for mutual aid,” **Coldwell** said in a follow-up letter to Francisco last Thursday. **Coldwell** said, “At the conclusion of the (Sept. 8) letter, it was politely requested that a meeting to discuss concerns and potential solutions be considered.” Rather than responding to his office, **Coldwell** said, Francisco talked to the Navajo Times. “The city was very disappointed to see that Chief Francisco chose to speak to the media instead of reaching out to the city directly,” **Coldwell** explained. “The city was further disappointed, and frankly confused, to see that (Francisco) publicly stated that Page resources ‘have rarely, if at all, in the last year or two, come onto Navajo Nation to take calls or assist us,’” he said.

Coldwell wrote in the Oct. 28 follow-up letter that the Page Police Department received 754 public safety calls for Western Navajo, 269 of which are calls within the last 24 months. The Page Fire Department and the EMS responded 910 times since 2016. “Had (Francisco) bothered to reach out and discuss the matter with the city as requested, the city could have shared these statistics and others that highlight the need for a change in the current practices,” **Coldwell** said. He added, “The city truly does not want to see our friends, family members, and neighbors on the Navajo Nation suffer due to lack of emergency response. “Nevertheless, the good people of LeChee, Coppermine and Kaibeto, among other (communities) are exasperated at the lack of public safety response to those areas of the reservation,” he said.

Working with chief, not city manager

Francisco said his police commanders are working with Page Police Chief Tim Lange to resolve issues, not **Coldwell**. Lange, who's Bilagáana, is a former Navajo Police officer. “We have a good working relationship with the chief (Lange),” Francisco said in an interview with the Navajo Times on Wednesday morning. “We’ll come to a resolution between the captain (Tuba City District Capt. Williams) – because he’s responsible for allocation of manpower and addressing issues in (Western). “And directly with (Lange),” he added. “We also have fire and

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

EMS from the Navajo Nation, and they're talking directly with their counterparts in Page also." Francisco said his team is trying to find a resolution for public safety in Western that works. "I don't think the Mutual Aid Agreement is in place anymore," Francisco said. "They would have to renew it. "But either way, without the agreement, we're still dedicated to protecting the citizens of both sides and co-responding – the police departments on both sides," he said, "to provide emergency services the best we can and work together in that area."

The Oct. 28 letter included a 53-page report of emergency service calls the Page police officers responded to in Western. "The concerns came from the two chiefs (Lange and Page Fire Chief Jeff Reed)," **Coldwell** said in a follow-up interview with the Times on Friday. "Their concern being the limited manpower that they have on their forces."

Coldwell said the Page police and EMS personnel have responded to emergency service calls in Western because if his staff doesn't do it, no one will, placing the city in a precarious moral position, which leaves the city without adequate resources for response. "We discussed it for a quite a while and kind of let it go," **Coldwell**. "With the antiquated mutual aid system that we had, I figured it was time to reach out to see if we could do something that was a little better for both of us. "The response time from the Navajo PD, it can take quite a while," he said. "We're hoping that maybe some of those services can return to the neighbors and we can start off on a fresh foot."

Coldwell said Francisco needs to send resources to Western. "There's an amount of frustration coming from our emergency services," **Coldwell** said in tears. "When we're not getting halfway, after a while you start getting frustrated. "As of Sunday (Oct. 31), our services won't be rendered up to the Navajo Nation any longer," he said. "Trust me, it's kept all of us awake at night, hoping Sunday never came. I hope the people of the Navajo Nation realize it was a very tough decision."

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Navajo Times
October 7, 2021

Page threatens to stop responding to police calls from nearby rez

By Krista Allen

Threatening to stop responding to public safety calls in Western Navajo, the Page city manager wrote in a letter to the Navajo Police chief that the city will terminate an agreement made between the two agencies. Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell** last month sent the letter to Navajo Police Chief Phillip Francisco saying the city is terminating the 2016 Mutual Aid Agreement between the Navajo Nation Police, the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, and the Page Police Department. The purpose of the agreement is to provide mutual law enforcement personnel and resources in the event of a disaster, disorder, emergencies, or special requests for events in the respective jurisdiction. The agreement went into effect under then Page Police Chief Frank Balkcom Sr.

But **Coldwell** said, “The practical application of that agreement has proven to be unworkable for Page and does not provide adequate protections to the city or its law enforcement officers.”

Coldwell said the city intends to terminate the mutual aid agreement on Oct. 31 when Page police officers would no longer respond to calls in Western Navajo. “Despite our concerns over the years, the city has responded to life threatening situations in an effort to assist people in need,” **Coldwell** wrote, “but without mutually beneficial modifications to the current circumstances.”

Coldwell said this has been an ongoing issue for years. While there has been some progress with law enforcement, **Coldwell** said the current practices and state of operations are not working for the city. “Currently, both police and emergency medical services personnel from the city are regularly dispatched to respond onto the Navajo Nation,” **Coldwell** wrote. “Historically, in an effort to be a good neighbor, the city has done its best to assist and respond.”

Coldwell said Page police and EMS personnel have responded because if they don’t do it, no one will, placing the city in a precarious moral position, which leaves the city without adequate resources for response. “Although we sincerely desire to be good partners and neighbors, the burden that the historic practice has placed upon the city’s resources is significant and unsustainable,” **Coldwell** said, adding that finite resources are not the only concern with the current practices.

Coldwell said city medical personnel often encounter dangerous circumstances, such as violent crimes, while responding to calls in the Nation. “In these circumstances, the patient either goes untreated or city law enforcement must assist because typically, the Navajo Nation law enforcement is unavailable to respond,” **Coldwell** said.

Navajo Nation Police Chief Phillip Francisco said the Page police officers though don’t quite respond to the calls in the Nation. “Page resources, which are fire and EMS, come out to help,”

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Francisco explained in an interview with the Navajo Times. “They have rarely, if at all, in the last year or two, come onto Navajo to take calls or assist us. “A lot of those were taken by our (Navajo police) officers,” he said. Francisco said the letter was written without research, and if the city of Page and the Page Police withdraw from the agreement, it will hinder the ability to help them. “And that’s what these agreements are really for,” Francisco said. “It’s not for them to come do our job or come out and take calls, or we take calls for them. It’s mutual aid. “If anything major happens ... we want to be able to go out there and provide assistance and more officers to help out, and vice versa,” he said. “That’s what those agreements are for, so we have the coverage and authority to help each other but not do each other’s job.”

Coldwell’s letter says that Page police are regularly dispatched to respond to calls on the Nation. Francisco said that’s untrue, according to Navajo Police’s statistics. “Some of our police calls do get routed through (Page’s) 911 center but they’ll refer to our dispatch and our officers respond,” Francisco explained.

Francisco said while **Coldwell**’s letter is a little hostile, it shows cooperation from **Coldwell**. “From my staff – the police department is cooperative,” he said. “The (Page) Police Chief (Tim Lange) has a good relationship with my commanders. But I think this really came from the city manager without really helping anybody else.” Francisco’s police commanders want to maintain a working relationship with Lange and the Page Police Department.

The letter was copied to Page Police Chief Tim Lange, Page Fire Chief Jeff Reed, Tuba City Police District Capt. Leonard Williams, and to Jesse Delmar, the executive director of Division of Public Safety. Lange and Delmar did not respond to an interview request. **Coldwell** agreed to a follow-up interview but pulled back because of health reasons, said Robin Crowther, **Coldwell**’s executive administrative assistant.

LeChee Chapter has a police substation but it was temporarily closed because some officers had to be reallocated in Dilkon, Arizona. Francisco said the reopening of the substation is underway. There are 21 patrol officers in the Tuba City Police District. Francisco said TCPD rarely gets help from Page Police.

“Although the city is terminating the 2016 Mutual Aid Agreement, I’m requesting a meeting between our organizations to craft solutions for all interested parties,” **Coldwell** said. “I am optimistic that we can work together and find ways to provide needed services to the residents of both the city and the Navajo Nation,” he said.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Arizona Daily Sun, The (Flagstaff, AZ)
April 13, 2021

As eastern Grand Canyon Park entrance reopens, Page leaders breath a sigh of relief

Author: Adrian Skabelund

For the first time in just over a year, tour buses sat outside hotels in Page this weekend. Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell** told the Arizona Daily Sun he thinks that has a lot to do with a decision by Grand Canyon National Park last week. On Thursday, the Grand Canyon National Park reopened its eastern entrance to the South Rim of the park. That entrance had been closed since April 2020 as a measure to limit travel and the spread of COVID-19 across the nearby Navajo Nation and other northern Arizona communities. But with vaccination efforts in full swing across Arizona and on tribal lands, Park Superintendent Ed Keable made the decision to reopen the east entrance.

In a media release, Keable said he made the decision after consulting with both Navajo Nation leaders and the nearby Cameron Chapter. Previously, park officials had said the entrance wouldn't reopen until May. "As vaccine rollouts continue, we recognize the need to normalize our operations and allow for visitors to have a drive-thru option on Hwy 64," Keable said in a statement. That decision had been long sought by local business leaders and city officials in nearby communities including Page, who have pointed at the closure of the east entrance as one reason local economies are struggling.

Page Mayor Bill Diak and **Coldwell** told the Arizona Daily Sun last month that the closure cut off the city from the largest draw for tourism in the region. With the east entrance closed, tourists were forced to drive a roundabout way through Flagstaff if they wanted to visit Page, Lake Powell or Horseshoe Bend, so many simply opted not to, **Coldwell** said.

Page officials had been pressuring elected leaders and Keable to reopen the east entrance. "It's really good news for the city of Page. It has already made a difference, believe it or not. Our numbers at Horseshoe Bend increased drastically over the weekend," **Coldwell** said. "Foot traffic in town has increased. So, you know, I think we're going see some of those weekend people that we weren't seeing before." **Coldwell** said he believes several significant factors played a role in Keable's decision.

On March 31, the Navajo Nation Council voted to reopen tribal roads on the Navajo reservation to tourists and other visitors. That resolution was vetoed by Nation President Jonathan Nez, who cited the danger posed by new strains of the virus as a reason roads should remain closed. But **Coldwell** said he thinks the message carried by the council's vote was significant. Additionally, **Coldwell** said the Cameron Chapter supported the reopening of the entrance.

Last month, Gov. Doug Ducey also significantly pulled back on COVID-19 related restrictions, ending municipal mask mandates and eliminating occupancy limits for business. "I think [park officials] saw with Gov. Ducey dropping his restrictions and opening up the state, I think that

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they realized that they were maybe a little bit behind the times for Arizona," **Coldwell** said. Mask wearing is required at all locations on the Navajo Nation. And not everything is back to normal at the park's east entrance. No services -- including food, gas, and the campground -- will be available at Desert View until further notice as staffing at the park is still a challenge. The nearest services available to Desert View are in Cameron, about 30 miles east of the Desert View developed area. Other services are currently available on the South Rim in Grand Canyon Village. Credit cards, Your Pass Now, and America the Beautiful passes will be accepted for entry. Cash will not be accepted at this time.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Associated Press State Wire: Arizona (AZ)
March 18, 2021

Push on for reopening of the Grand Canyon's east entrance

Author: Daily Sun Staff

Grand Canyon National Park officials tentatively plan to reopen the park's eastern entrance in late May, but there's sentiment in a small northern Arizona city that depends on tourism that sooner would be better. "Our sales tax for this year is down nearly 30% from last year," Page city manager **Darren Coldwell** told the Arizona Daily Sun. "Our Horseshoe Bend visitation is down 80%. So when we say that our numbers dropped off the face of the earth, they really did."

The Grand Canyon's eastern entrance and the highway leading to it, State Route 64, were closed last spring as a courtesy to the neighboring Navajo Nation, which was hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. The tribe's vast reservation in the Four Corners region has reported nearly 30,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 1,219 deaths as of Tuesday, when only two new cases and one additional death were reported.

A nightly curfew to help curb spread of the coronavirus remains in effect on the reservation but slowing of the outbreak has prompted the Navajo Nation to begin a partial reopening of some businesses and other facilities. Two of the tribe's four casinos will reopen Friday. Navajo Nation roads remain closed to visitors, but the Navajo Nation Council is considering a bill to rescind those closures — which don't affect the highway into the park.

Meanwhile, Page Mayor Bill Diak worries the highway's continued closure will do lasting damage to the city's economy and small businesses. For years, Diak said Page has marketed itself as part of a loop route for tourists visiting national parks and monuments in the Southwest. But with State Route 64 closed, the loop route has been disrupted. "People come out of Vegas, and they come in one way through I-40, and do the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, continue on up to do Page, Lake Powell, or they go on over to Monument Valley, come back in the other way," Diak said. "Both Utah and Arizona have marketed that for years, and then finally it has taken hold over the last three years. Now we're going to lose all that. For now, many campsites at the Page-Lake Powell Campground sit empty.

"Starting from spring break in March, for the last five or six years, our campground has been sold out every single weekend all the way into Thanksgiving," said Ron Colby, who manages the campground and a nearby bait shop. Colby said business has been down 78% compared to 2019. There were a few weeks last summer that approached normal occupancy levels, but that eventually dropped off. Diak and **Coldwell**, the city manager, have been lobbying park officials to reopen the highway.

Park spokesperson Joelle Baird said Superintendent Edward Keable is considering reopening the eastern entrance on May 21, before Memorial Day weekend. Baird said the final decision will be made only after careful consideration and consultations with tribal leaders. Other factors that

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must be weighed include park staffing needed to reopen the entrance and the possibility of changes in the pandemic, Baird said. The stretch of State Route 64 through the Navajo Nation outside of the park is a popular spot for roadside vendors trying to capitalize on tourist traffic, but those services remain prohibited by the tribe's public health orders. Jared Touchin, a spokesman for tribal President Jonathan Nez, said those restrictions could be revisited soon if the number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths on the reservation continue to drop.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Powell Chronicle
September 16, 2020

Substance Abuse Task Force appointed

By Bob Hembree

The Page City Council took further actions to help ensure success for the Substance Abuse Task Force. Previously, the board was limited to five members. Following city staff recommendation, council amended the code, increasing the task force to seven members.

Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell**, referring to the Aug. 6 meeting between the City, Chamber, health professionals and the Navajo Nation, said, “We actually had more than expected participation.” **Coldwell** informed the council that Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez requested representation on the task force. **Coldwell** said “[There’re] a lot of resources out there that might be left on the table if we didn’t give them an opportunity to participate. It’s such a rarity that we get a chance where people want to step up and help. Why say no. They were all great candidates.”

Councilor Rick Yanke voiced concerns about the increased size, citing poor attendance at city board meetings, often not meeting the number required for a quorum. City Attorney Josh Smith, who was also instrumental in bringing the task force back to life, said, “I think [with] this board now, they definitely have a purpose and a lot of buy-in, so hopefully we can keep that going.”

Councilor Dennis Warner was active in the early stages of solving the city’s problem. He supported the change and said, “In the meetings that I’ve attended, I think that this has the potential to be an extremely powerful resource to approach this problem. These representatives, for the most part, are associated with organizations that are in that world that deal with this and can help us deal with the problem “These are people that represent organizations that have impact and decision-making authority to move this thing forward.”

Councilor David Auge, who attended the Aug. 6 meeting, said, “They’re also several who are in the trenches day in and day out so have a lot of buy-in.” After amending the code to allow seven members, council approved seven applicants, and encouraged others to stay involved. The new task force is well-rounded.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lake Powell Chronicle
September 5, 2020

Help for the Homeless, Stranded and Addicted
'The problem the City of Page faces is a daunting one'

Bob Hembree

Page summers and winters are brutal for the homeless and stranded, sometimes deadly. Couple extreme weather with alcohol, the danger increases. Page Chief of Police, Drew Sanders said there were four deaths this summer exhibiting signs of alcohol poisoning, overexposure to heat or both, including a 50-year-old man found in the Page City Park July 20, and a 43-year-old man found in the desert July 26 near U.S. Route 89.

Sanders said helping people get medical treatment or to the emergency room, is always an ongoing concern. Arrests for substance abuse related crimes are routine in downtown Page. Page has tried for decades to solve the downtown problem, and now, vigorous efforts have ramped up again. A task force has formed, and it's got the backing of people and organizations with experience and resources to get it moving. Before the pandemic, meetings were underway with representatives from local medical and mental health professionals, the police department, city officials, and council members. While the regular group meetings were on hold temporarily, it didn't stop discussions and making essential contacts through networking.

Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell** told the Chronicle, “problem the City of Page faces is a daunting one, and one that has been facing the residents and the affected for as long as most can remember.” **Coldwell** said the decision to help was the concern for safety. He said, “It was our fear that with the continued heat we could potentially see an uptick in hospitalizations and even deaths. Those have both come to fruition this summer.”

Coldwell said about 40 percent of all emergency service calls involve intoxicated individuals, “We have seen three deaths in three weeks from alcohol poisoning and exposure.” The Page Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services reported 338 calls for intoxicated individuals over the last six months. Page Hospital said 231 ethanol and alcohol patients were admitted to the emergency room in the last three months. Police, fire, courts and medical services see the same people week after week, month after month. Over 80 percent of court prosecuted cases involve alcohol. Encompass estimates they serve between 1,000 and 2,000 patients annually.

Sander's presentation on the subject said arrests only add debt to poverty. “It's not solution-based. No solution plan will be complete without robust treatment plans.”

So, what is being done?

Coldwell said, “It was the decision of city staff to attempt to make a difference in the problem, be it successful or not we were going to at least try. With myself, (Page City Attorney) Josh Smith, (Police) Chief Sanders, Chief (Jeff) Reed, (Community Development Director) Tim Suan, (Economic Development Coordinator) Gregg Martinez, and direction from Mayor (Levi) Tappan

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we decided to re-establish the Substance Abuse Committee. With this core group we then decided to extend invitations to Banner Health, Coconino County, Canyon Lands, Encompass, Page Unified School District, Catholic Charities, and the Navajo Nation.”

A significant step forward grew from a group teleconference. Gregg Martinez spoke with Sandra Flores, Sr. Programs Director for Catholic Charities. From there, concrete plans began. Catholic Charities was granted funds through the CARES Act. This put them in a better position to extend a helping hand to Page. **Coldwell** and Sanders welcomed them with open arms. The city is providing Catholic Charities office space and utilities. This will give their two employees assigned to Page a place to work from near the city park. Sanders told the Chronicle, "It's not a silver bullet. We've got to have treatment options. We can't arrest our way out of the problem."

Coldwell said, “Catholic Charities will play a very important part in the outreach to those that are most affected. They will be seen daily working directly with the individuals affected. They will offer food, water, a ride home or even short-term hotel rooms to get them out of the extreme weather our area faces daily. They will be working directly with Encompass to get them the necessary help and hopefully long-term care.” Short-term care is available, but **Coldwell** said long-term care is something Page has never had. He’s working to make this happen with the help of Encompass and Catholic Charities and he’s pursuing permanent funding through the Governor’s Office. **Coldwell** said, “Currently we have had verbal commitments from all of those to help, we now are in the process of providing the documentation needed to be eligible for the funding.”

What makes this latest attempt to solve the problem different?

Page City Council committed \$25,000 to get it started. The driving force is **Coldwell** and team. They’ve managed to gather influential leaders together to discuss and join forces. An historic meeting took place at city hall Aug. 6. It was a mix of face to face in the council chambers and video conferencing. **Coldwell** led the meeting that included Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Arizona Rep. Arlando Teller, Coconino County District 5 Supervisor Lena Fowler, Encompass CEO Joe Wright, and representatives from Banner Health, CareFirst, Catholic Charities, Page Lake Powell Chamber of Commerce, Health Choice Arizona, and Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services. Page is also introducing a drug court to Page. **Coldwell** said, “The court will include a combination of probation, mental health, substance abuse counseling, and social services to make a long-term commitment to the addicted individual. The goal of the court is continuous treatment for individuals who need it. We are hoping this will end the never-ending revolving door that the court currently sees. This is a model that has been used very successfully in other communities such as ours.”

Coldwell said, “I do want to mention Rep. Teller and the commitment he has made to the success of this endeavor. It is because of him that the Navajo Nation, led by President Nez, has decided to come to the table. I can’t stress the importance of the working relationship that is needed in order for this to succeed. For President Nez and his staff to attend the initial informational meeting was of the utmost importance to begin to solve this problem.”

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Teller said, “Our people, our constituents, our families. our friends, some people we know personally are in our streets and may feel like there is no other way to get out of the situation that they’re in.” Teller continued, “With this group of folks, professionals, we can do something today, if not continually, in addressing not only this homelessness issue and the substance abuse issue and the resources that we are all limited by, we can work together in addressing this as a team, as a coalition.” Teller offered to work with stakeholders to address drafting appropriation funding for legislation. This includes collecting data and evaluating past efforts to learn where improvements can be made.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
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Lake Powell Chronicle
July 11, 2020

Mayor Tappan: New Industry, Mask Mandate, and the Facebook Post
Bob Hembree

Author's note: This story was written Monday, July 5. On Tuesday, July 6, Mayor Tappan rescinded the Page City's Council's face-covering mandate, replacing it with an emergency proclamation. A 2/3 majority is sufficient to pass the mandate, however, it would take 30 days before it would go into effect. State law requires a $\frac{3}{4}$ supermajority for an emergency order to go into effect immediately. The council vote was 5-2 in favor. The mayor's emergency order enabled the city to mandate face-coverings in indoor public spaces and businesses immediately. The penalty for noncompliance is not to exceed \$50.

Mayor Levi Tappan spoke with the Chronicle Monday. The interview touched on three topics: new industry, the mask mandate, and his Facebook post that led to national media attention. All three topics focus on the search for solutions to problems.

New Industry

When this reporter interviewed **Darren Coldwell** shortly after he was chosen as Page City Manager, the conversation focused on creating new industry in Page. **Coldwell** cited examples from his time as a Mayor and a County Administrator in Montana. His idea was to diversify Page's income streams, to strengthen the economic base with micro industries. He said businesses could develop from within rather than from outside the community. These could range between 30 and 40 employees in size.

The current pandemic highlights the pitfalls of reliance on a single industry. It also suggests the business of tourism could change dramatically for years to come. While some will adapt, finding creative ways to reinvent their businesses and stay solvent, others won't. In order for a city to continue to provide public services, there must be a supporting tax base. This points to developing new industries in Page with markets beyond its borders, ideally recession and pandemic proof. Mayor Tappan said the city is, "looking at ways to help small mom and pop businesses get started in Page, like small manufacturing, kind of like Yamamoto. We're focusing on our industrial park to get small manufacturing and things like that." In another example, Tappan said, "The airport has a lot of office space upstairs, but it's not ADA compliant until we get an elevator. We're working on getting some kind of elevator so we can unlock all the office space and use the airport as kind of an incubator space." 'Incubator space' is a term used to describe facilities for startup companies trying new ideas. This could include software development, online services, or completely new innovations. Tappan, looking at the potential of the airport, adds, "We want to get more people flying into it, obviously, and also cater to private planes as a stopover. They can stop in and get lunch in Page, then go about their flights." "We've been throwing around a lot of ideas," said Tappan.

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The Mask Mandate The mask mandate was brought up by counselor Warren at the June 24 City Council Meeting. Governor Ducey had authorized local governments to enact their own pandemic safety measures on June 17. At that time, only two of the seven council members voiced support for the mandate, Warner and counselor Auge. The following week, after seeing huge spikes in the state, an emergency meeting was called. The possibility of a mask mandate was still alive. This time, only two voted against it, counselor Lee and counselor Davis. Vice Mayor Kocjan and counselor Yank both changed their views and supported the mandate. Tappan, who seemed on the fence at the June 24 meeting, cast the deciding vote needed to pass the order. The Chronicle asked Tappan, “What changed?” He said, “I started getting a lot more feedback, emails. About 75 percent wanted masks and 25 percent were against it.” “Kocjan said something that really struck me: if this can save once life, it’s worth a little inconvenience.”

Kocjan, in the emergency meeting, said a statement from the Whitehouse helped change his mind about the mask mandate. He said, “This thing’s been debated all over the world. The white house has changed, and like they said yesterday at the white house, that if it saves one person’s life it’s worth doing the right thing for your fellow man.” Tappan said, “I heard arguments on both sides, and the majority of the public wanted masks. So, we did it the way that would be the least intrusive.” In regard to renewing the mandate Aug. 1, Tappan said, “We’re following the numbers. We’ll do what the data says.”

The Chronicle asked if he received pressure from fellow employees at Banner Hospital. He said most are pretty good about not pressuring him one way or the other, though a few have cornered him. Tappan said, “Even in the hospital, health care employees are opposed. Most want masks, some of them don’t. There’s not a consensus within the hospital.”

The Facebook comment about Navajo Nation President Nez

Page residents are familiar with the groups of seemingly homeless people who congregate in the parks and the breezeway on block 17, the center of town. Police and emergency medical staff are called frequently, either because of intoxication, fighting or someone passed out on the sidewalk. They’re arrested or taken to the emergency room, then released. The arrest cycle repeats, most often with the same offenders. It’s been a concern for the city and local businesses for many years. Hospitals, public safety officials, and city representatives have met and discussed solutions. They were having regular meetings and developing plans of action. Then came COVID-19. It is in this context that Mayor Tappan made a one-sentence comment on Facebook, one which received national media attention in early May: "I wish he would battle alcoholism as hard as COVID19." The comment included a photo of a small group of people gathered in the breezeway of block 17. This, along with the intoxication, ambulances, and police responses, is a familiar scene for businesses in the area, including the Chronicle with its main entrance located on the same breezeway.

The Chronicle asked Mayor Tappan to provide his own context for his comment, which some interpreted as having racist underpinnings. He said, “My first state of the city address, I said we need to work on substance abuse in town, and we need to do it without pointing fingers and calling names at each other -- because I knew that would happen and that is exactly what

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happened.” Tappan said, “People that live in Page know that there’s a problem we need to work on. I tried to explain the context on that post, but no one wants to listen to facts anymore,” adding, “Alcohol kills one in ten people on the reservations. It’s much higher than COVID. And the only way we’re going to solve this is working together because President Nez closing down the reservation is causing more problems for border towns.”

When asked if he’d had any interactions with President Nez recently, Tappan said, “Two weeks before that comment I had emailed him and mailed him letters trying to work with him and we’ve never heard from him. We’ve never gotten a response from him.” Tappan said, “I talked with several of the tour companies, and they say they can’t get a response from him either. So, I’m guessing Facebook is the way to get ahold of President Nez.” The comment did get the attention of President Nez. He wrote a widely published response to the mayor’s comment. It essentially asked for the same cooperation Tappan said he’d been asking for in solving the substance abuse problem. Tappan, looking at the positive side of the incident, said, “So, I started the conversation. Eyes are opened. Kaibito Mental Health has contacted us. They have resources and want to help us out, partner with us. There’ll be a lot of good that comes from this.”

Liquor sales, mental health, and drug court

The mayor outlined the city’s approach to solving the problem. “We want to cover it from three angles. One is the supply side. We want to cut off the supply side. So, if they know that can’t get it, they’ll stop coming. We’ve had great success. Styx Liquor is reporting great success on that. We want to help educate the clerks. It’s actually illegal to serve inebriated people. “We also want to work on the mental health side. Catholic Charities is coming in, and Lake Powell Medical Center. “The third side, I think we’re going to get it this year, is setting up a drug court. So, we’re putting more in the budget for the court side so it’s not just a revolving door. We’re actually helping them find the help they need.”

Tappan says this will happen in the municipal court with the help of the county for services. In addition to city and county involvement, he said, “Catholic Charities is doing fieldwork, hanging out in our parks to find out what people need.” The city of Page is providing office space and utilities for Catholic Charities to work from. Tappan, referring to his 2018 campaign promise, ended the interview with, “And we’re still working on a pool.”

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Associated Press State Wire: Arizona (AZ)
April 18, 2020

Arizona cities retrenching to cope with coronavirus outbreak

Author: The Associated Press

Arizona cities are tightening their belts and revising previously rosy budget forecasts as the coronavirus outbreak's financial impact takes hold in metropolitan areas and mostly rural counties alike. Steps already being implemented or under consideration include freezing hiring, putting projects on hold and foregoing planned equipment purchases. Cities laying off or furloughing workers include at last two Phoenix suburbs and Page in northern Arizona.

State budget analysts project significant drops in tax revenue, including sales tax collections that are a major source of funding for cities. Meanwhile, fuel taxes that help pay for transportation projects also will be reduced as Arizonans drive fewer miles. "We don't know how much yet, but we are going to see a reduction of state-shared revenues," Colleen Haines, Kingman public affairs coordinator, told the Kingman Miner. "We are going to see a reduction in our budget. Those are the facts." Kingman is delaying the planned purchase of a new \$1 million fire truck and putting off building remodeling projects. Phoenix now faces a projected \$26 million shortfall instead of a \$28 million surplus. "And that's after accounting for spending reductions and a hiring freeze instituted on March 19," City Manager Ed Zuercher said.

Additional options being considered include selling surplus land, not replacing aging vehicles and trimming payments to the pension fund for city workers, azfamily.com reported. "I believe we have even more difficult decisions in front of us," Mayor Kate Gallego said during Monday's City Council meeting. Zuercher has asked each department to list cuts adding up to 25% in case they're needed, Gallego noted. "We are trying to tighten our belts along with everyone."

Prescott officials also are redrawing their revenue forecasts and spending plans, The Daily Courier reported. "We are definitely in the middle of a recession now, with these jobless rates," said city Budget and Finance Director Mark Woodfill. Prescott has already frozen many expenditures and vacancies while halting employee travel for both cost and health reasons. Woodfill plans to present the City Council with a revised budget proposal with "a lot of contingencies," and he suggested leaving open the possibility of a property tax increase. Publishing a notice of intent wouldn't require the council to take the step, he said, but it would leave the option open until June when a final decision would have to be made and more is known about the economy.

The economy has already cost hundreds of municipal workers their jobs, at least temporarily, as Mesa and Tempe close facilities and shut down programs, the Arizona Republic reported. Tempe on Monday furloughed 495 temporary employees, most of whom work for departments that operate the library, arts and culture facilities, community centers, recreation programs and volunteer services. "This was a heartbreaking decision because our part-time, temporary employees are the face of Tempe for many people in our community," City Manager Andrew

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Ching said. Tempe anticipates having to make other budget cuts as restaurants scale back operations and other businesses close temporarily, reducing sales tax revenue. Mesa is laying off 23 full-time workers and 455 part-time employees and not filling 35 vacant positions as it shuttered libraries, parks and recreation facilities and arts center.

City Manager Chris Brady recommended that Mesa keep the facilities closed until October for both cost and health reasons, but some City Council members said they'd like to open the doors again earlier if possible. "The impact will kill the downtown area to go much beyond the summer," Councilwoman Jen Duff said of the closures,, the Republic reported.

Page laid off 25 of the city's 175 employees as officials said they expect revenues to drop 33% due to lost sales tax, the Arizona Daily Sun reported. The layoffs were focused on several parts of city government, including the public works department, summer recreation programs, the library and the parking operation at Horseshoe Bend, a sightseeing area along the Colorado River. Page's revenue depends heavily on people visiting Horseshoe Bend, Lake Powell or national parks in the region, but City Manager **Darren Coldwell** said few such visitors are expected during the pandemic. At most, **Coldwell** said, Page may still see people visiting from within about a 500-mile (805-kilometer) radius, such as families who might be looking to get away for just a few days.

Tucson has frozen hiring for most departments, but City Manager Michael Ortega said furloughs and layoffs would be "the last option," the Arizona Daily Star reported. "We're going to do everything we can to keep us from having those discussions," Ortega told the City Council. Preliminary projections show Tucson's revenue decrease could last through August and plateau through the end of the calendar year before incremental increases restart in 2021, Ortega said. "But keep in mind we would still be below where we started," Ortega said of the city's overall budget.

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Arizona Daily Sun, The (Flagstaff, AZ)
April 17, 2020

City of Page lays off employees as sales tax revenues fall

Author: Adrian Skabelund

As projected revenues plummeted, the city of Page laid off about 14% of its municipal staff this week. Page City Manager **Darren Coldwell** said as city officials have been speaking to local business leaders, they now expect revenues to drop about 33% due to lost sales tax. That essentially puts the city back at the level of funding it had in 2015, **Coldwell** added, prior to the growth the city has recently experienced. The layoffs, which equal 25 of the city's 175 employees, essentially eliminated everyone working in the public works department, at Horseshoe Bend, in summer recreation programs and at the Page Public Library. The directors of the four divisions were not let go, but all are now working at the library, **Coldwell** said. That should mean, despite laying off staff, the library will remain in operation. Horseshoe Bend also remains open, although it will no longer be staffed with parking attendants and other workers. **Coldwell** said the city decided to make cuts in those four areas after looking at the budget and determining which departments had been most affected by the crisis.

Making the decision to let employees go was not an easy one **Coldwell** said, although at this time he is hoping they will be able to rehire many of the staff members that were laid off. Every year, **Coldwell** said about 4.5 million tourists pass through the city either to visit Horseshoe Bend or Lake Powell, or simply on their way to one of the surrounding national parks. And many of those tourists are coming from places such as Europe, Asia or the east coast of the United States. But given the fear around the coronavirus and the travel restrictions in place, **Coldwell** said they likely won't see nearly any of those tourists. As a result, the city would see a significant drop in the city's sales tax revenue. **Coldwell** said at most, they may still see people visiting from within about a 500-mile radius such as families who might be looking to get away for just a few days.

Leaders at the city of Flagstaff, which was already looking at a tight budget prior to the crisis, may be faced with similar challenges as the city sees revenues fall. The city council and staff are set to discuss the upcoming city budget later on in April. Robert Maxim, a research associate at the Brookings Institution, said local governments across the state and the nation are likely to experience similar funding gaps because of the economic shutdown caused by the coronavirus. "A lot of cities, and especially those that rely on sales tax, are going to have huge budget holes blown in them, and so it's going to be difficult for municipalities to respond [to the crisis] on their own," Maxim said. "That's where, in my opinion, the federal government needs to be doing more for states and localities." So far, Maxim said the majority of the money the federal government has approved to send local governments is dedicated specifically for coronavirus response. But in Maxim's opinion, more money needs to be sent to help mitigate the effects of all the lost tax revenue caused by the economic shutdown.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Darren Coldwell** is listed below.]

The Montanian
January 22, 2019

Fun and games at Libby 2019 Chamber’s fundraiser
By Tracy McNew

Friday, Jan. 11 marked the Libby Chamber of Commerce’s annual award and fundraising banquet. The event was themed “game night,” and a crowd packed the Memorial Center to enjoy not only awards and games, but also a game themed dinner catered by Mandy Bell’s Gracious Table, complete with domino shaped brownies for dessert. Chamber president, Scott Beagle started the evening with a recap of the Chamber’s many activities over the past year, and then introduced the board of directors which includes Kim Peck, Jamie Paulsen, Liz Whalen, Bruce Vincent, LeRoy Thom, Amber Holm, and Alissa Ramirez. The event was emceed by Liz Whalen, and awards were presented by various people during dinner. This year’s winners included:

Lincoln County’s person of the year- **Darren Coldwell**

Most winners gave a short acceptance speech, and the final award for Lincoln County’s person of the year was presented to **Darren Coldwell**’s mother and sister since he was out of town for healthcare reasons during the event. **Coldwell** connected by video conference though, along with his wife Barbie, and despite technical difficulties with sound, a banter ensued between **Coldwell** and award presenter, Mark Peck, that was touching enough to garner a large round of applause and even a standing ovation by some attendees.

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Darren Newell Coldwell
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Flat Head Beacon
July 11, 2018

Copper, Silver, and Frustration

By Justin Franz

In a warehouse on the edge of Libby, Theodore Montgomery can supply you with just about anything you would ever need to mine copper and silver. Need a hard-rock drill bit? Sure thing. What size do you want? How about hard hats? How many do you need? What about boots, miner's gloves and safety vests? Yes, yes and yes. "We've got everything from toilet paper to jumbo drills," said Montgomery, who runs F&H Mine Supply's Libby warehouse. "If a mine needs it, we can deliver it."

A few years ago, when the Troy Mine was still producing millions of pounds of copper and silver annually, it wasn't uncommon for Montgomery to make two or three deliveries a day out to the mine. But that all came to an end in 2015, when the mine was shuttered due to a drop in demand for copper. Despite the loss of its biggest local customer, there was reason for F&H Mine Supply to keep a warehouse in Lincoln County. Two months after the shutdown, Coeur d'Alene-based Hecla Mining Company announced it was purchasing Revett Mining Company, including the shuttered Troy Mine and the proposed Rock Creek Mine near Noxon. The following year, Hecla expanded its Montana operations again with the acquisition of Mines Management, which had proposed the Montanore Mine project just south of Libby.

Hecla — which has more than a century of experience in operating mines in Alaska, Idaho and Quebec and considerably deeper pockets than the previous owners — promised to fully develop both mines in Lincoln and Sanders counties, two areas stricken with some of the highest unemployment rates in the state. "There was a lot of optimism locally that Hecla was a company with the resources and skills to push both of these proposed mines to the finish line," said Libby City Administrator Jim Hammons. But two years later, that optimism is starting to fade after the state of Montana designated Hecla President and CEO Phillips S. Baker a "bad actor," a move that some locals worry could kill both proposed mines. "I have no problem with strong mining regulations," said Libby native and Lincoln County Commissioner Mark Peck, "but this 'bad actor' designation against Baker goes too far."

After the Troy Mine closed, Montgomery and his colleague Jason Lucas started to reduce their inventory by moving supplies to other F&H warehouses across the region. They also updated their website in an effort to increase online sales. Montgomery and Lucas figured online sales would help the Libby warehouse stay afloat until the Montanore and Rock Creek mines finally opened. The search for copper and silver underneath the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness began in the early 1980s, when U.S. Borax acquired old mine claims there. A few years later, Canadian-based Noranda Minerals Corp. purchased the Montanore Mine claims and started constructing a 14,000-foot exploratory mine shaft — also known as an adit — 16 miles south of Libby, just outside of the wilderness boundaries. At about the same time, Asarco — which had opened the Troy Mine in 1981 — began work on the proposed Rock Creek Mine project near Noxon in

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Sanders County (about 40 miles south of Troy). Both projects were put on hold in the early 1990s after a drop in demand for copper, which also shut down the Troy Mine from 1993 to 2005. But that pause turned out to be short-lived. In 1999, the Sterling Mining Company, which later became Revett, purchased the Troy Mine and the Rock Creek project and restarted the permitting process. In 2005, Spokane-based Mines Management acquired the Montanore project and started the same permitting process south of Libby. Taken together, both Montanore and Rock Creek have the potential to produce more than 500 million ounces of silver and 4 billion pounds of copper in their lifetime. The two deposits are separated by about 7,000 feet of earth and a fault line, suggesting that at one time it was actually one ore body. Many consider the combined deposit beneath the Cabinet Mountains to be one of the largest untapped copper and silver resources on Earth. If opened, each mine would likely employ hundreds of people, a potential boon to the local economy. In May, Lincoln County's unemployment rate was at 6.6 percent, far above the state average.

For generations, Lincoln County's economy was propped up by logging and mining, but the 1990s and 2000s brought hard times. In 1990, the W.R. Grace & Co. vermiculite mine closed north of Libby. In 1993, Asarco Mining closed the Troy Mine. That same year, Champion International sold its Libby operations to Stimson Lumber Company, which closed all but one of the mills. The downsizing left more than 800 workers unemployed. The one remaining lumber mill limped on for another decade, before closing in 2003. At about the same time, it was discovered that asbestos contained in the vermiculite mined by W.R. Grace had sickened thousands of people in the community. Libby and the surrounding area was designated a Superfund site by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, kicking off one of the largest environmental cleanups in American history, but also creating a stigma that has stuck with the town ever since.

Darren Coldwell has owned a sporting good store, been mayor of Troy and is currently the Lincoln County administrator. He's had a front row seat to the community's decline over the past few decades. He said that the 1993 closing of the Troy Mine took the "life" out of the little town just a few miles east of the Idaho border, and in some ways it's never fully recovered. "There are just no working-class jobs here anymore," **Coldwell** said. "If you're an 18-year-old who does not want to go to college or join the military, there is really nothing to do for work here."

With the arrival of Hecla in 2015, some locals believed that Lincoln County's luck was finally starting to turn. Since then, the company has continued to work to get approval from a number of state and federal agencies to begin extensive exploration work to get a firm idea of just how much copper and silver is beneath the Cabinet Mountains and set the stage for the eventual opening of both mines. Most recently, in November 2017, the U.S. Forest Service announced it would likely give Hecla approval to begin exploration at Rock Creek sometime this year in a final record of decision on the project. But Rock Creek and Montanore are not without their opponents. A number of environmental groups — including Clark Fork Coalition, Earthworks, Montana Environmental Information Center, Rock Creek Alliance and Save Our Cabinets — have all come out against the project over concerns that the mines would drain and pollute mountain streams and harm the local grizzly bear population.

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The environmental groups were also among the first to raise concerns about Hecla President and CEO Phillips S. Baker, who prior to working for the Idaho company was a vice president at Pegasus Gold. Pegasus went bankrupt in 1998, leaving the state of Montana with a \$32 million cleanup bill at a gold mine in the Little Rocky Mountains of north-central Montana. The state also spends about \$2 million annually for water-treatment systems at the site. In March, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality announced that Baker had been designated a “bad actor” and would not be able to engage in mining until he reimbursed the state for the gold mine cleanup. Environmental groups praised the decision. “Montanans have spent decades and millions of dollars cleaning up rivers and streams contaminated by irresponsible mining, and the work is far from over,” said Karen Knudsen, executive director of the Clark Fork Coalition. “The ‘bad actor’ law simply requires full responsibility from mining executives for their previous messes. In the case of Pegasus, it’s long past time these polluters are held accountable.” The bad actor law, passed in 1989, is meant to hold those who fail to clean up polluted mine sites responsible. Since then, it has only been used once, according to Kristi Ponozzo, public policy director of DEQ. Ponozzo is quick to note that only Baker has been designated a bad actor and that no action has been taken against Hecla. However, as long as Baker is at the helm of the company, it cannot pursue mining projects in the state.

Luke Russell, vice president of external affairs for Hecla, said the state’s interpretation of the bad actor law is “wrong” and that Baker is innocent of any wrongdoing. Baker has said in previous interviews that he was not a principal at Pegasus and that “decisions affecting the reclamation, including the bankruptcy settlement and the decision to cease mining operations at Zortman (gold mine)” were made after his departure from the company in early 1998. Hecla has sued the state in an effort to remove the bad actor label from its CEO. The ongoing lawsuit between Hecla and Montana adds a layer of “uncertainty” for the future of the Montanore and Rock Creek projects, Russell said, although he is optimistic that the company will eventually prevail. But locals in Lincoln County are less optimistic, viewing the recent turn of events as yet another example of the area’s long history of bad luck. Montgomery said he was not surprised that state officials in Helena decided to designate Baker a bad actor, in part, because as he see’s it, the state has never supported Montanore or Rock Creek. “I have no idea why the state is against these mining projects,” he said. “It seems to me they would have so much to gain if the mines opened. There would be more jobs and more taxes.” Montgomery said he’s worried that eventually F&H Mine Supply will decide it’s not worth waiting for the mines to open and close the Libby warehouse.

Just down U.S. Highway 2, LeRoy Thom, owner of Montana Machine and Fabrication, is also frustrated with the bad-actor designation. Before the Troy Mine shutdown, repairing pieces of mine equipment made up a sizeable chunk of Thom’s business. “It’s like every time they get over one set of hurdles with these mines, they face another set of hurdles,” he said. “It’s never ending.” Thom, who before opening his machine shop worked at the W.R. Grace vermiculite mine, said it’s particularly frustrating because the world needs copper and silver for everything from smartphones to buildings. He said if it’s not mined in the United States, it will be mined in other countries. “Unless the state of Montana gets behind these projects, I don’t think they’ll ever open,” he said.

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Coldwell, the county administrator, said in recent months local officials have gotten more vocal about supporting Hecla by writing letters to state officials and even traveling to Washington, D.C. to make their pitch directly to federal agencies about the importance of the projects. “I think everyone is starting to see that if we want to save our community, we need to band together and be vocal about it,” he said. “I think we’ve seen how low we can go, and now it’s time to start digging ourselves out of this pit.”

Coldwell said he understands the dangers of having an economy so dependent on one industry and that mining is an especially cyclical business. However, as he sees it, having two mines supporting hundreds of jobs in the community would help “rebuild” the local economy and hopefully attract other businesses. “Success breeds success,” he said.

Not only would opening the two mines help rebuild the area economy, locals say, but it would also help Lincoln County rebuild its reputation into one that’s not centered around the stigma of being home to one of the largest Superfund fund sites in the country. Peck, the county commissioner, said he supports strong mining regulations to protect workers and the environment. However, he believes Hecla can mine copper and silver responsibly. “If any community should be hyper-sensitive to what bad mining practices can do, it’s this community,” he said. “We’ve been living with the consequences (of W.R. Grace) for more than 20 years, but does that mean we should never mine in this community again?”

Thom has a sign that proclaims “I Support Hecla” outside of his machine shop just south of Libby. It’s one of many signs you’ll spot around Libby and Lincoln County supporting the development of the Rock Creek and Montanore mines. “The idea is to learn from the mistakes of the past and make sure it’s done right in the future,” Thom said. “Hecla has a good track record and I don’t think they’re going to cut corners ... I think they can do it the right way.”

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Denver Post, The (CO)
September 17, 2017

Crucial area posts remain vacant - Openings range from the EPA to criminal justice

Author: Jesse Paul and Mark K. Matthews

Eight months into the Trump administration, a slate of top federal jobs in Colorado and the West remains unfilled -- a hiring delay that touches everything from the environment to criminal justice and one which local leaders and activists said hampers their ability to work with the White House. Full-time administrators have yet to be installed in the Colorado regional offices of the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Health and Human Services, among others. The state also has an acting U.S. attorney and a vacant seat on the federal bench. A jurist nominated in June to replace U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch on the 10th U.S. District Court of Appeals only recently was given the green light to appear before a U.S. Senate panel for vetting. The slow pace hasn't gone unnoticed by either Democrats or Republicans, though the two sides often disagree on its primary cause -- the White House or Congress.

Research by CNN and the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan good-government group, indicates that Trump has fallen far behind predecessors Barack Obama and George W. Bush in nominating federal officials and getting them confirmed. "We certainly have noticed it, but our hope is that they are going to fill those slots quickly and we're beginning to see some motion there," said Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, who added that the biggest impact was on government-to-government communication. "When you have things that need (an) explanation or a decision ... sometimes you have to wait," said Hickenlooper, a Democrat. "If you don't have the people on the ground, it's often hard to get that information or those decisions as quickly as sometimes you'd like." Asked about their progress, White House officials couldn't put an exact figure on the number of open federal jobs in Colorado or what the government calls Region 8, which includes Colorado and several nearby states. One member of a committee tasked with vetting local candidates said the panel had forwarded dozens of names to the administration since January. "We've tried to weigh in on the key positions that either can have a significant impact on Region 8 or the key positions where we were able to identify somebody who we thought could really make a difference," said Robert Blaha, who chaired Trump's Colorado campaign and is part of that vetting panel. He blamed the hiring delay on several factors, from the slow pace of the Senate to the time needed to conduct in-depth background checks. "I'd be a liar if I said the entire process isn't a bottleneck," Blaha said. As for the administration's own responsibility, Blaha suggested it could do more. "I don't know everything that's going on inside the White House, but I will tell you that I think it's time to pick up the pace," he said. "Anything the White House can do to encourage legislation ... to accelerate it, that's a possibility. To look at temporary assignments, that's a possibility." Also something to consider, Blaha added: Trump may not want to fill every position, in an effort to reduce the size of government.

According to a census of federal workers published after the election, there are about 9,000 federal jobs in which Trump could install his own people, although more than half of those

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positions don't often change when a new president takes office, putting the figure closer to 4,000. But the turnover does have an impact, even if the basic function of government continues. "Without permanent leadership in place, these regional offices lack clear direction, are unable to develop new partnerships and can be forced to delay things like processing permit applications, grant requests and more," U.S. Rep. Ed Perlmutter, D-Arvada, said in a statement. One notable vacancy is the Denver-based EPA spot for Region 8, which covers Colorado, Montana, the Dakotas, Utah, Wyoming and 27 Tribal Nations.

Former Regional Administrator Shaun McGrath, who oversaw the Gold King Mine spill response, left in January. Since then, Deb Thomas has been filling his job in the interim. Several names recently were floated for the job, including Patrick Davis, who served as Colorado state director during Trump's 2016 campaign, and Doug Benevento, recently a Douglas County School Board member. Joni Teter, who retired three years ago after 25 years at the EPA, said an office can do routine work without a full-time leader but can't move forward on bigger items. "But when we get to the point where there are decisions to be made, whether that is decisions about a phase at a particular Superfund site or a permit or an enforcement action, that doesn't happen without an appointed person," said Teter, who pioneered Save EPA in response to the Trump administration's policies. The oil and gas industry isn't happy either - though for a different reason.

"What we are seeing is that Region 8 is acting like the election never took place," Kathleen Sgamma, president of the Western Energy Alliance, said about the local EPA office. She didn't cite specifics in Colorado -- other than an issue dealing with air regulations -- but Sgamma said she sees the "need for adult supervision in Region 8." The Department of Housing and Urban Development declined to comment about its search for a new regional administrator. But advocates for the homeless said filling the job is essential. "That role serves as the liaison for us and Washington, D.C., and in these incredibly uncertain times, we need to have a local contact that can provide policy and program guidance," said Cathy Alderman of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. "It would be much more comforting to know that there was a leader on the ground that would be available to help us navigate and plan for any potential budget cuts."

Similar concerns surround the U.S. attorney's office in Colorado, which has been spearheaded by acting top federal prosecutor Bob Troyer for about 13 months. That time period isn't necessarily unusual, officials say, though it still can put the state at a disadvantage. "The work of the U.S. attorney's office is carried out by dedicated career staff whose efforts continue full-force, even in the absence of a presidentially appointed U.S. attorney," said John Walsh, who held the role until leaving in July 2016. "But a presidential appointee's voice carries added weight in Washington, D.C., to make sure the office and its people get the budget, staffing and mission support they need to protect the public here in Colorado," Walsh added. Also in the justice realm, Colorado lacks a U.S. marshal to lead the agency that handles law enforcement for federal courts.

Records show Judge Robert Blackburn has yet to be replaced since taking senior status on Colorado's U.S. District Court bench -- which has a crowded caseload -- and there is no nominee to replace him. Colorado Supreme Court Justice Allison Eid was tapped in June to replace

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Gorsuch. Her nomination hearing was just set for Sept. 20. Another agency lacking a full-time regional administrator for Colorado and the region is FEMA. But so far, coming off a mild wildfire season in the state, no major problems have been reported.

Darren Coldwell, county administrator in Lincoln County, Mont., praised the agency for its response to the fires burning tens of thousands of acres in the area he oversees. More than a dozen structures -- including homes -- have burned there, and FEMA has been quick to respond. "We did just get approved here in the last couple of days for FEMA assistance," he said Monday. "They have been very responsive. I don't know if not having that person in there made a difference."

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Darren Newell Coldwell
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The Montanian
August 15, 2017

Commissioners declare state of emergency

In a move designed to make the county eligible for state funding assistance, the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners last week passed a declaration of emergency for Lincoln County.

Lincoln County Administrator **Darren Coldwell** said the move makes the county eligible to file for reimbursement for firefighting expenses in excess of two mills, should the county spend that much during the fire season. Two mills equates to roughly \$70,000, **Coldwell** said. “The approval of the declaration is in response to the expected costs that the County may incur, because of the Gibraltar Ridge fire in Eureka,” he said. “It basically is to protect the taxpayers of Lincoln County. There is no reason for people to read more into the declaration than a precaution that the County has to follow by law.”

The two mill threshold to qualify for state assistance only applies to the county’s responsibility in relation to the fire, **Coldwell** said. The state and federal shares of the cost are not included in the eligibility calculation.

Lincoln County, the City of Libby, the Kootenai National Forest, and the state lands in northwest Montana are currently under Stage II fire restrictions based upon current drought and fire danger conditions. **Coldwell** said residents should not panic, but should also exercise extreme caution in helping prevent additional fires.

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Independent Record (Helena, MT)
July 4, 2017

Annual Troy Fourth of July brings families together

Author: PERRY BACKUS

John and Lori Lark-McBride had their patch of shade staked along the busy Old Fashioned Fourth of July parade route in Troy. Waving their own small flags, the Libby natives relived their childhoods, watching their grandchildren do whatever they could to encourage candy to come flying their way.

The couple now live in Oregon, but the trip to Troy to celebrate the nation's birthday has become a tradition that they rarely miss. "It's our old stomping grounds," said John McBride. "We come home to see family. We make it a point to get here for this celebration." And a celebration it is. People started marking their spots along the parade route several hours before the first trailer load of veterans came by, waving to the crowd and throwing handfuls of candy to hordes of anxious children waiting with plastic bags in one hand and a flag in the other. "It's so beautiful here," McBride said. "We're always glad to get home." Before the parade got underway, Jeremiah Folker and his daughter, Claire, took a seat on the step on his logging truck and waved to friends as they drove by. There was the time when the parade had a large contingent of logging and mining machinery. Those days are long gone. "This is still our way of the life," Folker said. "We want it to be represented in the parade. Nobody really does it anymore."

With almost every part of her body covered in red, white and blue, including a pair of Elton John-like glasses and a pair of flags pointing skyward like elves' ears, Folker's daughter was anxious for him to fire up the truck and get moving. "I love to throw candy," she said. "How much longer?" Just across the street, the Women of Troy drill team gathered with their old-style webbed beach chairs they chose as props this year.

Hildy Johnson was feeling a bit nervous when she woke up Tuesday morning, but everything was just fine once she was surrounded by the women who have marched up and down the dump road with her over the past couple of weeks while learning their routine. "The road is straight and nobody uses it after 6 p.m.," Johnson said. "It's the perfect place to practice." This is the third year the 18 or so women offered their show to an appreciative crowd lining the streets. Last year, they chose umbrellas as their prop and the year before that, it was cordless drills. "We were kind of like Rosie the Riveter that year," Johnson said. "The crowd response has always been amazing. It is a little bit nerve-wracking. We're just a bunch of housewives or retirees, for heaven's sake. This is probably pushing ourselves a little bit beyond our limits, but we certainly do have fun doing it."

Up in the very front of the very first trailer filled with veterans sat 101-year-old Homer Davis with a young neighbor boy named Davie Joe sitting on his knee. Davis couldn't quite remember just how many of these parades that he's ridden in, but he knows it's been a lot. He's been part of the Troy community since the 1970s when he and his brother moved to town to open a bar. The

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town was different then and so was the parade. For one thing, folks who got to know Davis also had the opportunity to sample some of his famous moonshine. "I used to make some good moonshine back in the day," he said, with a twinkle in his eye. "It was a lot better than what they have to drink today." Davis served in World War II and helped direct traffic at the famous Battle of the Bulge. He can still remember General Patton's booming voice when he wanted something to happen fast. "He was kind of an orangutan, but he was a good soldier, too," Davis said. While Troy has its own set of orangutans, Davis said it's also filled with a lot of good people. "There will always be orangutans no matter where you go," he said, as he pushed the flag hanging on the side of the trailer back behind his head. "It's a good town. I have a tremendous number of friends here, but now I can't remember all their names."

Most of the men that he knew who fought in WWII are gone now. "There's nobody left that I can sit and tell my stories to," he said. "I can lie all I want and no one even knows." Troy's mayor for now — he's giving up the job after finding a new job in nearby Libby — raced around on a four-wheeler to make sure everyone in the parade found their place.

"This is the one thing every year that Troy does really well," said **Darren Coldwell**. "We've been doing this pushing 100 years or more. It's a good hometown event that requires everyone to come together to make it happen." It ends with a \$10,000 fireworks display. "When you consider that there's only 900 people in town, that's \$11 a person," he said. "It's just a great day for Troy."

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https://lincolncountymt.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Clerks_Corner_May-17.pdf
May 2017

Clerks Corner

Clerk & Recorder: Robin Benson

Budget FY 17/18: Lincoln County has restructured the county budget and its process under a Finance Department which includes payroll and accounting personnel. With this change, we welcome County Administrator **Darren Coldwell** as the Finance Director. This is a positive adjustment and creates an improved budget process for county government and the taxpayers.

We are again starting the budget process early. FY 17/18 budget work sessions began in February and are ongoing every week throughout the budget process. I am in full support of establishing a Finance Department. With more eyes on the budget, there is more attention to detail; all services are being looked at and everything is on the table.

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The Western News
February 3, 2017

Coldwell hired as county administrator

By Bethany Rolfson

As of Tuesday afternoon, Troy Mayor **Darren Coldwell** is the new county administrator. **Coldwell** will assume the position on Feb. 20. The announcement also comes with the news that **Coldwell** has recently sold his store of 25 years, Booze N' Bait, which is in escrow. "When this became available, I felt really confident that I could help out," **Coldwell** said. "It's a whole new chapter for me." District 1 Commissioner Mark Peck has been serving as interim county administrator since Aug. 1, 2015 after Bill Bischoff resigned as the county's administrative assistant. The commissioners told **Coldwell** that he could finish out his term as mayor of Troy. The county administrator is in charge of getting bids on projects, budgets and putting commissioners' meeting agenda together. He also deals with internal, administrative issues, and deals with the public when an individual has something they want to put on the County Commissioners' agenda.

In terms of conflicts of interest, **Coldwell** doesn't believe there will be any, because the mayor position is volunteer. However, he said that if there's any conflict at all he will step away and let another city council member handle it. His budget experience, he said, comes with the volunteer time at the school board and the last three and a half years with the City of Troy. **Coldwell** was sworn in as mayor in January of 2014. **Coldwell** also holds a bachelor's from the University of Montana in Interpersonal Communications. "I'm just excited to have a new challenge and I'm hoping that I can help them out with a fresh set of eyes looking at it from a different perspective," **Coldwell** said.

During the course of the last two months the County Commissioners had held two different application cycles for the administrative position and the final wrapped up earlier this week. In total, the county received 38 applicants, and six different individuals were interviewed earlier this week. Commissioner Mike Cole noted that each of the individuals were very qualified, which made the decision that much more difficult. Out of the six, four were Lincoln County natives. Cole said that two stuck out of the individuals they interviewed, The hiring committee was comprised of Robin Benson, Nancy Trotter-Higgins, Victor White and the commissioners Cole, Peck and Jerry Bennett. "I think the committee did a great job of evaluating all of the candidates," Cole said.

Mark Peck said he was impressed with **Coldwell**'s track record in Troy, and the commissioners concurred that **Coldwell** stuck out the most as a candidate because of his leadership and budget experience. "I think I was clear all along, that if I had to choose between a financial guru or a good leader — give me a good leader," Peck said. "You can learn the financial piece, but you can't teach someone how to lead." County Clerk and Recorder Benson said, and Peck agreed, that with **Coldwell** they got both financial and leadership skills. "I think all you have to do is look at his track record in Troy and what he's done financially with the City of Troy" Peck said.

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Flat Head Beacon
September 16, 2015

Community of Troy Hits Century Mark

By Justin Franz

The history books that chronicle the life and times of Montana are littered with towns that didn't quite make it; communities that fizzled out before putting down solid roots. For many communities, their prospects were tied to the boom and bust cycles of the mineral industry. When prices were good, miners from across the country would rush to an area hoping to strike it rich. But when the mineral deposits were gone or the values dropped, prospectors would pack their wagons and hit the dusty trail. That is very much how the story of Troy could have ended. The first miners arrived in 1886 and set up a tent camp at the mouth of Lake Creek, just south of where the town is today. But unlike other mining camps that disappeared into the pages of history, Troy survived and this month it celebrated its 100th anniversary with a series of events on Sept. 12 and 13. After those first miners set up camp near where Lake Creek meets the Kootenai River, they found their mineral claims were bountiful and more prospectors beat the path to the area. That path to Troy was soon widened in 1891 when the Great Northern Railway built its rapidly growing transcontinental line through town. The construction of steel rails cemented the community's future and the following year the city's first lodging house, the Windsor Hotel, was built. In June 1892, the town of Troy was created within the boundaries of Missoula County, which at the time encompassed most of western Montana. A few months after the hotel went up, Libby postmaster J.P. Bowen built the first house there.

The town grew even faster beginning in September 1892, when the Great Northern built a rail yard in Troy, complete with a station, roundhouse, coal chute and living quarters. The combination of rowdy railroaders and mischievous miners made Troy a hot spot for those looking for a good time. A visitor once described the scene in detail, writing, "Such sights and sounds that met the eyes and horrified the ears of this young woman from the east, were spectacular to say the least. Fifteen saloons gaily lit filed to the doors with 'wild men and wild women' yelling, singing, dancing, and cursing, with glasses held high, such was Troy." Troy's rowdy ways would continue for another two decades until 1915, when it decided it should and become a real town. In July of that year it voted to incorporate and on Sept. 9 the city council met for the first time. U.S. Highway 2 was also constructed to Troy that year and by the end of 1915 more than 350 people called it home. By the 1920s, the timber industry began to grow and within a few years its population grew to over 1,000 residents. By 1923, Troy was the richest town in Lincoln County. Its population peaked a few years later at 1,300 residents. The Great Depression and a series of fires took a toll on the town in the 1930s, but through the years it has persevered and today about 950 people live there.

Mayor **Darren Coldwell** said considering all the other communities that have come and gone, it's amazing that Troy has made it more than a century. He attributed that success to its people. "The people make this place special," **Coldwell** said. "There have been many ups and downs over the years."

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Flat Head Beacon
December 23, 2014

Libby, Troy Replace City Attorney with Law Firms
Lincoln County communities hire lawyers out of Helena and Whitefish for their legal services

By Justin Franz

Two towns in Lincoln County have turned to law firms for their legal services instead of employing a single city attorney on contract. In early December, Libby and Troy's city councils voted to hire law firms out of Helena and Whitefish after both towns' attorneys left their positions. Libby contracted with Doney Crowley P.C. in Helena where Allen Payne will cover civil issues and Marc Buyske will cover criminal prosecution. Troy is contracting with Hedman, Hileman & LaCosta in Whitefish where Clifton Hayden will work on civil cases and Caleb Simpson will serve as the city prosecutor. The vacancies occurred earlier this year when Troy city attorney Heather McDougall and Libby's James Reintsma announced they were both stepping down from their city council-appointed positions.

Mayor Doug Roll said Payne had approached him earlier this year about his Helena firm taking over for Reintsma. Payne is a Libby native and has been involved with numerous legal issues in the community before, including helping get a settlement from International Paper a few years ago and representing the Lincoln County Port Authority in its lawsuit against Stinger Welding. Payne's firm was hired by the city council in a three-to-two vote earlier this month. "We've known Allen for years and he has done a lot for this community," Roll said. Payne's firm, Doney Crowley P.C., will be paid about \$5,600 a month or about \$67,000 annually. That is significantly more than what the last attorney was paid, but Roll said the city will get more services and there is too much work in Libby for one attorney to handle. "It was a heck of a lot of work and you need more than one attorney," Roll said. "Even if we have to pay a little more, I'm tired of having the city underrepresented."

Troy will be paying considerably less for its new attorney, although the workloads between the two jobs are considerably different. Troy Mayor **Darren Coldwell** said the attorneys at Hedman, Hileman & LaCosta in Whitefish would be paid an hourly rate of \$100. He said the new agreement should save the city \$4,000 to \$5,000 annually; the previous attorney was paid about \$20,000 a year. When the contracted city attorney needs to appear at a city council meeting, they will be able to appear through videophone.

In the past it was common for communities to have a single city attorney, but David Nielsen, interim director of the Montana League of Cities and Towns, said more towns are now working with larger legal firms. He said the larger firms often have more resources and more attorneys that specialize in different aspects of the law. "It's a better deal for the cities and towns," Nielsen said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Flat Head Beacon
March 1, 2014

After Mathematical Error, Lincoln County’s Budget Under Scrutiny
By Beacon Staff

Almost a month after Lincoln County officials stood before a packed meeting room and told their constituents that a mathematical error resulted in county residents being overtaxed to the tune of \$2.1 million, the commission is looking at how it can trim costs and pay people back. Among the suggestions is a plan to close the Troy Area Dispatch and combine its services with the Lincoln County Sheriff’s dispatch in Libby.

But Troy Mayor **Darren Coldwell** said closing the dispatcher’s office would detrimental to the community. “I would hate to see Troy lose that service,” he said. “A lot of people think that Troy Area Dispatch just dispatches emergency services, but it’s a lot more than that.”

The error that has worsened Lincoln County’s already tight budget was found late last year, when someone noticed the county had allowed 56.86 mills to be levied for the Troy Area Dispatch, when it should have only been 31.91 mills. The mills are supposed to rise with inflation. Instead, upon further inspection, the county realized that taxes were inflating above and beyond that level. During the 2010–2011 fiscal year, dispatch received \$8,526.36 more than it should have; in 2011–2012 it received \$43,213 too much; in 2012–2013, \$111,278.10; and in 2013–2014, \$216,915.30; for a grand total of \$379,932.76 over four years. Additional mistakes were found in how the Troy Parks District and the Lincoln County Campus District received funding. In all, Lincoln County over-taxed its citizens by \$2,112,597.25, according to preliminary and unverified figures offered by the county.

L. Harold Blattie, executive director of the Montana Association of Counties, said the error happened sometime around 2009 when the county clerk and recorder was calculating tax data that determines how many mills can be levied in each district. Instead of entering the gross proceeds money received from the Troy Mine, the clerk entered the taxable value of that money and that mistake resulted in the mill levies exceeding their limits. On Feb. 7, the Lincoln County commissioners and Tammy Lauer, the clerk and recorder responsible for the mistake, met with citizens to inform them of what happened.

In the weeks since, officials have been combing over the books and have hired an independent auditor to look at the Troy Area Dispatch’s budget and audit all of the mill levy worksheets from the last three years. Once those reviews are completed, the county will figure out how to reimburse taxpayers. Commissioner Tony Berget said the county had hoped it would be able to simply issue a reimbursement check, but that turned out to be cost prohibitive. “It looks like we’re just going to have to reduce taxes for the next two or three years and we’re now debating how long that will take,” he said. “But we want to do it as quickly as possible.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Berget said the county is looking to make cuts anywhere it can, and one option is closing the Troy Area Dispatch, which is at the center of the mathematical mistake. Lincoln County Sheriff Roby Bowe has been hosting a series of public meetings about the matter and said consolidating the dispatch with the one in Libby would save money. “It would be just as effective as it is now,” Bowe said. According to Bowe, the Troy Area Dispatch’s budget is about \$250,000 annually. He argues his dispatchers could do the same job for \$10,000 every year, following an initial cost to update area radio towers that would cost \$300,000.

However, Mayor **Coldwell** and Troy Area Dispatch board member Gene Rogers said closing the local dispatching center doesn’t make sense, especially since it was recently refurbished. Besides dispatching police and fire services, the Troy Area Dispatch organizes school bus drivers, utility workers and even occasionally helps reunite people with a lost pet. If the dispatching center were to close in Troy, six people would also lose their jobs. “That’s six families impacted by this,” he said. “That’s not good for Troy.”

Berget said it would be up to the people to decide if the Troy Area Dispatch should close and it may be put on the ballot in June. “It was voted in by the people and so we think it’s right that they decide what happens,” he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Western News
February 25, 2014

Troy Council votes to pay Chief McLeod's legal expenses

By Phil Johnson

What a difference an election can make. A few months after the previous Troy City Council balked at the idea of accepting donated exercise equipment, citing concerns of insurance liability should someone fall six inches off a balance beam, and hesitated to cover the payment of Police Chief Bob McLeod's legal fees for an incident in which he used a stungun on a handcuffed man in the back of a police car seven years ago, the panel voted to approve both matters at Monday night's meeting.

The approved fitness trail will be a donation from Troy Park and Recreation. First entered onto the council's agenda near the end of former Mayor Tony Brown's tenure, the fitness trail will include more than a dozen unique stations providing instructions and equipment for stretching and exercise. Concern about potential liability issues, voiced by former Councilman Phil Fisher and supported by Brown, stalled the proposal last year. Before taking office, Mayor **Darren Coldwell came** out in support of the donation. During Monday's meeting, **Coldwell** led the movement to accept. "I talked to (Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority) and they have no problem with it," **Coldwell** said of the city's insurer. "I talked to the boys at the shop, and they have no problem with it, either."

After the donation was unanimously approved, **Coldwell** said he expects the installments to be placed beyond the fishing pond in Roosevelt Park. "I think it will be a great addition to the dead space back there," **Coldwell** said. Except for maintenance, which is expected to be minimal, **Coldwell** said installation will come at zero cost to the taxpayer.

Moving onto the heavier agenda item, payment of McLeod's legal fees, **Coldwell** prefaced public comments by saying he understands the diverse feelings on the topic. Former councilwoman Fran McCully, sitting in the audience, stated her continued disapproval of the payment. "If a person cannot admit their mistake, they are more likely to commit that mistake," McCully said. "If we pay this, we should pay it all now and not pass on a debt."

Brown, also in the audience, followed McCully's statement by questioning the city's fiduciary responsibility and Councilman Joe Arts' ability to separate friendship and civic responsibility. "I think Joe should recuse himself," Brown said. "I think he's defending Bob on a personal relationship and overlooking his elected duties to the citizens of Troy." Arts responded. "The fact that Bob is a friend of mine does not mean I do not respect my duty to the city, either," Arts said. "I am not going to vote yea or nay because he is a friend of mine."

Coldwell followed with a report on his research. **Coldwell** said he talked to a number of legal minds including Lincoln County Attorney Bernie Cassidy, Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority CEO Alan Hulse and past Troy City Attorney Charles Evans on the matter. All were in

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

agreement that the city is obligated to cover McLeod's fees. After some negotiation between **Coldwell**, McLeod and McLeod's attorney, Pat Flaherty, it was agreed the matter would be settled for \$22,713. Of that sum, \$12,713 will be paid to McLeod to cover out-of-pocket expenses he made during his successful defense in a Public Safety Officer Standards and Training Council, or POST, hearing. The hearing stemmed from a complaint filed against McLeod for using a Taser to subdue A.J. Haflich in November 2007 after a drunken-driving arrest. Payment of McLeod's fees passed unanimously. Payment will be made upon the signed agreement by McLeod and Flaherty that the matter is settled. The money will be paid in full during the current fiscal year.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Flat Head Beacon
January 10, 2014

New Mayor Sets Positive Tone in Troy

Author: Beacon Staff

Two years after a recall election split the community and its city government, the town of Troy has elected a new mayor who is trying to set a positive tone at City Hall. **Darren Coldwell** was sworn in on Jan. 2 as the town's third mayor in just as many years.

Coldwell replaced Mayor Tony Brown, who served for a year and a half after Donald Banning was ousted in a recall election in May 2012. **Coldwell** was elected in November with nearly 70 percent of the vote, taking 225 ballots compared to Brown's 98. The new mayor said he had thought about running in the past and finally decided to take the plunge in 2013. He has run Booze N' Bait, a liquor and sporting goods store in Troy since 1992. "I want to put a positive foot forward," he said. "I hope to set the tone that we are going to be a positive force."

Rumblings of political unrest begin in Troy during the winter of 2012, two years after Banning was first elected mayor. In January, city councilor Fran McCully began circulating a petition to recall Banning. Among the reasons she gave were that Banning had tried to fire then-City Attorney Charles Evans without consent from the city council; that in March 2011; the mayor had cashed a check to cover travel expenses that were never approved; that Banning had gone ahead with the construction of a picnic area at a local park and never consulted the council; and that Banning had gone forward with the codification of city ordinances but never told anyone. Banning maintained that he was only doing his job and that McCully was trying to grab more power for herself. Election officials accepted the petition and, after Banning tried to fight the effort in court, a recall election was held in May. Banning lost by 67 votes and on June 8 the council selected Brown to finish out Banning's term. But even with a new mayor, councilor Joe Arts said infighting persisted. He said he was hopeful about having new faces on the council. Along with **Coldwell**, Dallas Carr and Kimberly Rowse were elected to the board. "I think this will be a great improvement over what we had," Arts said. "We want to heal the city government after the past four years."

Coldwell said he is excited about getting Troy residents involved with their local government. He said he wants to tap into the town's rich community spirit that is most often displayed when neighbors need a helping hand. Most recently, that outpouring of support was shown to the victims of an apartment fire in December. Following the blaze, local residents donated everything from clothing to furniture to help the victims.

Coldwell has quickly made changes at City Hall. Soon after being sworn in, he created two committees; one to look into purchasing a new excavator and another to review the city's outdated drug policy. "I want to make improvements, I don't want to be a rubber stamper who just shows up once a month," he said. He said he hopes to go out and attract new business to the area, saying that while recent layoffs have been hard, it also means that there is a large workforce

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

ready to work. He touted Troy and Lincoln County’s quality of life and inexpensive cost of living.

Coldwell invites anyone to stop into City Hall if they have grievances or want to meet with him. He plans on being available on Monday morning and afternoons and Tuesday through Friday, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., “unless it’s sunny out and there’s a potential for golf,” he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Western News
November 8, 2013

Coldwell wins Troy mayor; Carr and Rowse claim seats
by Phil Johnson

Out with the old and in with the new was the theme in Troy's elections as challenger **Darren Coldwell** handily defeated incumbent Tony Brown and two challengers were elected to City Council.

Coldwell claimed the mayoral election 225-98. The owner of the popular Booze N' Bait store, **Coldwell** is the son of former long-time Troy Elementary School principal Bobby K. **Coldwell**. The mayor-elect praised his predecessor minutes after learning of his election. "I want to say what a great job Tony did getting Troy back together," **Coldwell** said. "I look forward to sitting down with him and working together."

In the City Council race, challengers Dallas Carr and Kimberly Rowse were elected with 205 and 148 votes, respectively. Incumbent Phillip Fisher earned 129 votes, and challenger Donna Lee Rugani earned 107. Current City Council member Fran McCully did not run for reelection.

The election of a new mayor and two new council members completes a transformation of leadership that began when council members Joe Arts and Crystal Denton began their terms in January 2012. In June 2012, Mayor Donald Banning was recalled following allegations of attempting to fire City Attorney Charles Evans, cashing a check for travel expenses and approving construction of a picnic area without consulting with or getting approval from City Council. Brown, Troy's mayor from 1974-1979, filled the vacant seat left by Banning.

"I am happy for **Darren** and am sure he will do a great job," Brown said. "I plan to enjoy some more free time outdoors. We will sit down and talk policy. There is a lot to learn."

Rowse is a retired registered nurse who now owns and operates Hotel Montana.

A retired logger and miner who now coaches high school football and fast-pitch softball, Carr won on a simple campaign based on a willingness to compromise and listen to city's wishes. "I'm ready to get people back to getting along," Carr said after learning from a reporter of his election. "If the people elected me, I said I'd be ready to serve. I just wasn't too caught up in it. I was just watching a concert on TV."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Western News
October 19, 2012

People Profile: Darren Coldwell

Author: Not Listed

Occupation: Owner of Booze 'n' Bait, Troy.

Tenure: Has owned Troy business for 21 years.

If you were not doing this job, what would you be doing? Traveling the world.

Family: Wife Barbie, children Donny, Billy and Allie.

Recognitions: President of Rotary, Director of Troy Chamber.

Hobbies: Golf, gardening, cooking, anything outdoors.

Darren was asked to complete these sentences beginning with “I am ...”:

— “I am ... happy to have a wonderful healthy family. ...”

— “I am ... lucky to be able to live in such a great place. ...”

— “I am ... thankful to be able to volunteer with such great people. ...”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Missoulian (Missoula, MT)
June 30, 2012

Troy plans special Fourth of July holiday

Author: the Missoulian

This town has always done Fourth of July up big, but this year will be something special. “The city has spent more time and money than ever to make Independence Day go off with a bang,” reports Ryan Murray of the Western News in Libby.

Darren Coldwell, one of nine volunteer organizers, said the fireworks show at Roosevelt Park on Wednesday night will be bigger. Almost \$7,000 worth of fireworks was supplemented by an additional 25 percent more as a bonus for buying so many.

But there’s much more – a quilt show the day before at W.F. Morrison School, more food vendors, a bigger car show and, once again, a couple of F-15s in a flyover at the parade. The day’s festivities, including a parade at 11 a.m., figure to draw 4,000-6,000 people, **Coldwell** said. A new rock band, Simon Sez from Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, will play from 7:30 p.m. until the fireworks show at 11 p.m. “It’s been a real community effort,” **Coldwell** said. “People should come out because it is just so much fun.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Darren Newell Coldwell
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Western News
April 14, 2010

Troy School Board to hire HS principal

By Canda Harbaugh

The Troy School Board voted Monday to vacate a proposal to cut one of its three administrator positions, choosing instead to move forward in hiring a replacement for resigning high school principal Jeff Ralston. In light of receiving information that Troy schools would not meet state accreditation standards with less than the equivalent of 2-1/2 administrators, the board chose to continue the format as-is. The original proposal involved elementary school principal Lance Pearson filling the high school principal position, and Superintendent Brady Selle delegating some of his work so that he could take on both the superintendent and elementary school principal roles. Approving additional office personnel hours or assigning a teacher a leadership role to pick up the slack would have cost considerably less than a principal's salary and benefits at \$83,000 per year. However, the superintendent cannot take on more responsibilities, the state said, because Troy schools exceed 30 full-time equivalent employees. "It was a moot point after we found out we have to have 2-1/2 administrators," Trustee **Darren Coldwell** said. "We're six teachers over."

The board discussed other ways to reorganize administration positions, since the equivalent of only 1-1/2 principals is required to lead the two schools. Trustees entertained the idea of appointing Pearson as principal of both schools, and assigning someone to assist him – a part-time vice principal or a lead teacher at both schools. "I guess I like the idea of Lance bouncing between both schools and having a dean of students at each school because we're going to save quite a bit of money by doing that," Trustee Steve Garrett said at Monday's meeting. "The bottom line is that it's easier to do this now than later." A lead teacher, or dean of students, would not meet the state's requirement of an administrator, however, unless the individual was certified and licensed to be a principal, Selle said.

Hiring a part-time principal in place of a full-time one wouldn't save nearly enough money to justify the switch, **Coldwell** said, especially if money must be spent elsewhere to make up for the cut. "When you throw in benefits, retirement – I mean, unless you get rid of one whole person, which was our original thought, then we could save \$50,000 or \$60,000," **Coldwell** said. "If you can only save \$10,000 or \$20,000, that's not worth it in a \$6 million budget. I think it's better to have a full-time principal." In a 5-1 vote, with Garrett opposing, the board chose to hire a new full-time high school principal. The hiring committee is in the process of paring 16 applicants down to four or five, Selle said Wednesday. He anticipates commencing interviews early next week.

Research Compiled by: Liliana Oberg
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 6

Robert A. Cole

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

Robert A. Cole
96000 Overseas Highway
Key Largo, FL 33037

January 15, 2025

Mayor Peggy Wheeler and Town Council Members
C/O Colin Baenziger & Associates

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Town Council Members,

I am writing to express my keen interest in the Juno Beach Town Manager opportunity. Having visited your community this past week with my spouse, Olga, I am impressed with the natural beauty and outdoor amenities. The Town feels like a place we would love to call home.

As a seasoned city management executive with approximately 30 years of municipal experience, complemented by several years of private sector quality assurance and financial services management roles, I offer demonstrated senior leadership and an extensive background in long-range and strategic planning, budgeting, and collaborating with others to promote positive outcomes. Executing on Town Council direction against a backdrop of public service ethics and community values, my team's efforts to excel will be supported by municipal best practices and quality assurance tools and techniques, such as the Plan-Do-Check-Act process, goal alignment, and use of appropriate metrics to track progress.

Having found through years of successfully working with and through others that demonstrating integrity and building trust are prerequisites for accomplishing great things, I lead with empathy and am firmly committed to diversity of opinion and respect, both of which I view as foundational elements for organizational success. On a day-to-day basis, I may be observed smiling and engaging residents, acknowledging the presence and efforts of employees at all levels of the organization, or lending a hand when one is not expected.

With an infectious enthusiasm for public service, continuous improvement, and a more sustainable and resilient future, I strive to empower and motivate others to pursue service excellence, demonstrate exemplary public and environmental stewardship, and faithfully honor our shared ethical obligations to one another, the community we serve, and the broader world in which we live.

In closing, I look forward to speaking with you more about this extraordinary opportunity and partnering with your team to serve the Juno Beach community. My resume is attached for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert A. Cole

ROBERT AUSTIN COLE

racole001@gmail.com / 630.207.1323 (c)

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Local government professional with substantial leadership experience, including strength in these areas:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <i>Budgeting for Outcomes</i> | <i>Media Relations and Communications</i> |
| <i>Complex Project Management</i> | <i>Organizational Effectiveness</i> |
| <i>Emergency Management</i> | <i>Public Education and Engagement</i> |
| <i>Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs</i> | <i>Strategic Planning</i> |

Committed to innovation, continuous improvement, partnership, and governmental excellence, Cole capably approaches his responsibilities with integrity and enthusiasm. Outcome-oriented, he pursues goals with a high degree of political acumen, being apolitical in his relationships and actions. Focused on maintaining community quality of life, stimulating meaningful and rewarding staff participation in organizational success, and cultivating positive perceptions of local government, Cole is a consummate city management professional.

EXPERIENCE AND RESULTS

Village of Islamorada, FL: 86800 Overseas Highway, Islamorada, FL 33036.
Population of 7,107; 157.5 FTEs; \$88.3M Total Budget/\$39.7M General Fund

Village Manager – March 2024 to January 2025

Reporting to the Mayor and Village Council, the Village Manager serves as Chief Executive Officer and has ten senior leadership direct reports. The following results are indicative of Cole’s performance:

- **Strategic and Long-Rang Planning** – Our team assessed gaps in strategic and long-range planning needs and initiated technical and public engagement efforts to establish community-supported priorities. Examples include initiating a Comprehensive Plan Update, Founders Park Master Plan, Stormwater Master Plan, and completion of the climate adaptation and resilience Vulnerability Assessment Report;
- **US-1 Transportation Challenges** – As a legislatively designated Area of Critical State Concern, transportation and land development in the Florida Keys are inextricably linked to one another in the regulatory and public policy landscapes. Factors including substantial tourism, globally significant environmental resources, roadway capacity constraints, and sharply divided perspectives on land development and potential traffic congestion solutions partially characterize the public policy landscape within which community supported solutions must be developed and advanced. Provided analysis and supported formulation of local

transportation policy recommendations, balancing competing interests to deliver actionable guidance and alignment with long-term strategic goals; and

- **Organizational Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement** – Public faith and trust in government rests on a foundation of transparent, ethical, and accountable governance. Maintaining legal and procedural compliance, embracing and promoting municipal best practices, and honoring organizational and community values are essential commitments that staff were encouraged to embrace and reflect in executing their many public service roles and responsibilities. Initiatives included such efforts as implementing technology to enhance public records access, modifying the annual budget process and presentation to align with Government Finance Officers Association best practice standards, undertaking a personnel policy review and update, and organizing new employee teams focused on safety, innovation, and engagement.

Village of Scarsdale, NY:1001 Post Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583.

Population of 18,253; 233 FTEs; \$92.32M Total Budget/\$69.4M General Fund

Village Manager – August 2021 to September 2023

Reporting to the Mayor and Village Council, the Village Manager serves as Chief Executive Officer and has ten senior leadership direct reports. The following results are indicative of Cole’s performance:

- **Fiscal Stewardship** – The Village of Scarsdale maintains a Moody’s Aaa bond rating, reflecting sound financials and professional management. Innovation, continuous improvement, and a deep sense of public accountability drive efforts to maintain and collaboratively enhance financial performance. To illustrate, the result of a joint effort between staff and elected officials comprising our Finance Committee identified opportunity to significantly increase interest income through implementation of a cash management program coordinated by a third-party administrator, NYLAF. Because of this initiative, interest income for 2022-23 exceeded \$2.5M, compared against pre-2020 levels of less than \$250,000 per year;
- **Governance** – To support continuous improvement and organizational excellence, Cole collaborated with the elected body and staff to establish a strategic planning process supported by clear goals, objectives, and metrics to track progress. Supported by a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, we established, monitored, and adjusted priorities and operational tactics as data and circumstances indicated necessary; and
- **Technology Innovation** – Established technology innovation team to identify capitalize on opportunities for operational and service delivery gains, including having initiated parallel strategies to upgrade and coordinate technology infrastructure enhancements. Illustrative team accomplishments include enhanced public transparency and operational efficiency in

connection with records digitization and launch of our ClearGov [Digital Budget Book](#) and [Financial Transparency Center](#), strengthening of internal financial controls and regulatory compliance through migration of disparate record keeping systems into our enterprise product, and enhancing our cybersecurity posture through infrastructure upgrades and training.

Village of Scarsdale, NY: 1001 Post Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583.

Population of 18,253; 233 FTEs; \$92.32M Total Budget/\$69.4M General Fund

Deputy Village Manager – May 2015 to August 2021

Reporting to the Village Manager, the Deputy Village Manager supports supervision for nine departments. Together with the Manager, the Deputy has responsibility for contract and project management, shaping organizational culture, inspiring and realizing service delivery excellence, and implementing elected official policies in support of the community's vision for the future. The following results are indicative of Cole's performance:

- **Communications and Engagement** – As the Public Information Officer, Cole was responsible for media relations and developing and implementing communication strategies for routine matters, public emergencies, and high-visibility projects or topics of community interest, including such examples as the COVID-19 public health crisis, State-mandated police reform and reinvention, emergency activations, and others. One of the teams Cole led completed a major website redesign, including launch and promotion of an e-News system, leading to over 39,000 subscriptions;
- **Sustainability and Resilience** – Collaborating with community volunteers, Cole was instrumental in establishing the first curbside municipal food scrap composting program in Westchester County, NY. He also engages in direct community service, having rolled up his sleeves to help resident volunteers to construct the Village's Hyatt Park Butterfly Garden, convert Village property into the Secor Meadow natural area, and undertake a multi-year wetland restoration at Harwood Park; and
- **Technology Implementation** – As team lead for a cybersecurity assessment, significantly enhanced the Village's cybersecurity posture through identification of vulnerabilities and implementation of appropriate mitigation strategies. Also led successful website redesign.

Village of Oak Park, IL: 123 Madison Street, Oak Park, IL 60302.

Population 52,524; 377 FTEs; \$124.2M Total Budget/\$51.5M General Fund

Assistant Village Manager – Jan 2010 to May 2015

Reporting to the Village Manager, the Assistant Village Manager is responsible for planning and overseeing sensitive, complex projects and has oversight of up to two direct reports, as designated by the Village Manager. The following results are indicative of Cole's performance:

- **Passenger Rail (CTA) and Freight Railroad (Union Pacific) Liaison** – Served as liaison to intercity passenger rail agencies and freight rail corporations, as well as county and state surface transportation agencies. Responsibilities included both routine operational matters and project leadership roles involving regional policy and strategic initiatives. Displayed exceptional political acumen and keen strategic awareness in building relationships and pursuing desired outcomes.
- **Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) Expansion Project** – As Oak Park’s project lead, Cole was appointed to the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) Environmental Impact Study Corridor Advisory Group, a multi-disciplinary team responsible for providing technical and planning guidance to shape a highly complex and controversial \$2.6B highway expansion project in the Nation’s first multimodal corridor, featuring passenger rail, a freight rail spur, and the Eisenhower Interstate Expressway;
- **Regional Planning and Project Development** – As an appointed member of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s Land-Use Committee, which provides metropolitan planning and economic development services to 240 municipalities and over 6M residents, Cole assisted in developing northeast Illinois’ first (and award-winning) Regional Comprehensive Plan, GoTo 2040. The plan, and the way Cole approaches many complex projects or problems, relied upon an ecosystem approach to examining relationships, identifying stakeholders and partners, and crafting a thoughtful vision of the future, accompanied by practical steps for getting there, inclusive of performance metrics to assess progress, an innovation in regional planning at the time;
- **Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs** – Appointed to the West Central Municipal Conference Intergovernmental Committee, representing approximately 50 governmental entities accountable to over 500,000 residents. Also appointed to serve on the O’Hare Airport Noise Compatibility Commission, focused on ameliorating residential sound impacts;
- **Grants and Contract Management** – Collaborated with neighboring jurisdictions to secure \$14M in federal funding to create the West Cook County Housing Collaborative, a multi-jurisdiction assemblage focused on sub-regional access to affordable housing, having also directly managed or coordinated oversight for over \$12M in transportation-related grant and member-directed funding; and
- **Sustainability and Resilience** – Administered development and operational oversight of the Community Choice Electrical Aggregation program, which resulted in community power savings exceeding 4.6M over 2.5 years. Also oversaw development of an innovative neighborhood smart grid project involving the electric utility, State of Illinois, Korean national government, and an innovative energy not-for-profit, Pecan Street, LLC.

Assistant to the Village Manager – Apr 2006 to Jan 2010

Reporting to the Village Manager, the Assistant to the Village Manager is responsible for supporting agenda coordination, research and special projects, and promoting service quality excellence by applying quality assurance tools and techniques to maximize operational efficiency and effectiveness. The following results are indicative of Cole's performance:

- **Innovation and Technology** – Created citizen request management system to enhance service delivery through improved staff tracking and follow-up; and
- **Quality Assurance** – Combined elements of the Baldrige Criteria with the University of California Irvine's Model for Sustainable Process Improvement to dramatically reduce permit review timelines while at the same time reducing errors and enhancing client experience.

Quality Services Manager – May 2004 to Apr 2006

Reporting to the Deputy Village Manager, the Quality Services Manager collaborates with department heads and their staff to promote organizational excellence through improved work relationships, enhanced policies and procedures, and alignment of departmental activities with organizational and community goals. The following results are indicative of Cole's performance:

- **Performance Metrics** – Development and implementation of a new performance measurement framework, including assisting department heads in linking resource commitments to key intended outcomes.

Permits Supervisor, and other Building and Zoning Assignments – Nov 1996 to May 2004

Reporting to the Director of Building and Property Standards, the Permits Supervisor directly supervises front office counter operations and personnel, as well as provides indirect supervision of plan reviewers and field inspection personnel.

- **Quality Assurance** – Promote citizen satisfaction and improved operations through reviewing and improving communication strategies, identifying and resolving service deficiencies, and monitoring feedback from a variety of internal and external stakeholders;
- **Supervision** – Direct supervision of front permit processing and zoning personnel; and
- **Zoning Administration** – Served as Secretary to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

EDUCATION**DePaul University** – Chicago, IL (June 2002)

Master of Science in Public Service Management, awarded With Distinction

- Concentration in Metropolitan Planning and Urban Affairs.
- 2002 Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development Scholarship Recipient.
- 2002 American Society for Public Administration Student of the Year.

DePaul University – Chicago, IL (June 1999)

Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Arts

- Dual concentration in Writing and Ethics.
- 1999 DePaul University Independent Research Award for Excellence: Externship.
- 1999 DePaul University Independent Research Award for Excellence: Capstone.

CERTIFICATIONS – NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS)

- NIMS ICS-100: Intro to the Incident Command System.
- NIMS ICS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents.
- NIMS ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents.
- NIMS ICS-400: Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff.
- NIMS IS-700: National Incident Management System: An Introduction.
- NIMS IS-800: National Response Framework: An Introduction.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- New York City/County Management Association, former Board of Directors Member;
- International City/County Management Association, former Government Affairs and Policy Committee Member; and
- American Society for Public Administration 2007/2008 Chicago Chapter President.

Candidate Introduction

Section 6

ROBERT COLE

EDUCATION

Master of Science – Public Service Management with Concentration in Metropolitan Planning and Urban Affairs, DePaul University (Chicago, IL).

Bachelor of Arts – Liberal Arts with Concentrations in Writing and Ethics, DePaul University (Chicago, IL).

NIMS FEMA Certifications

EXPERIENCE

Village Manager, Islamorada, Village of Islands, FL	2024 – 2025
Village Manager, Village of Scarsdale, NY	2021 – 2023
Deputy Village Manager, Village of Scarsdale, NY	2015 – 2021
Assistant Village Manager, Village of Oak Park, IL	2010 – 2015
Assistant to the Village Manager, Village of Oak Park, IL	2006 – 2010
Quality Services Manager, Village of Oak Park, IL	2004 – 2006
Permits/Zoning Supervisor (and other roles), Village of Oak Park, IL	1996 – 2004
Private sector financial services management and quality assurance	pre-1996

BACKGROUND

Islamorada, Village of Islands, is an affluent Florida Keys community, home to approximately 7,000 residents. As the Sportfishing Capital of the World, the local economy is largely based on tourism and tourism supported industries. Community members are actively engaged in local government affairs. In recognition of sensitive environmental resources of statewide importance, including the Florida Bay and others, Islamorada is located in a state-designated Area of Critical State Concern. Residents are passionate about environmental protection and the Islamorada team is recognized for their efforts to maintain and enhance ecosystem integrity.

The organization employs 157.5 FTEs, with 10 department heads reporting directly to the Village Manager. Islamorada’s total budget is \$88.3M, inclusive of a \$39.7M General Fund.

The three most significant issues facing Islamorada, Village of Islands, are:

- **Climate Adaptation and Resilience.** As an island community nestled between the Florida Bay and Atlantic Ocean, comprised mainly of low lying coastal plain geography, Islamorada rests precariously on the leading edge of the myriad environmental, social, and economic implications of sea level rise and other threats. Islamorada approaches this complex problem using a multi-disciplinary approach informed by best available science

Section 6**ROBERT COLE**

and rigorous studies to inform policy and budget alternatives.

- **Area of Critical State Concern (ASCS).** Designation as an ASCS in 1974 included improved access to state and federal funding opportunities. However, the regulatory framework also established maximum build-out targets, i.e., a development carrying capacity for the entire Florida Keys. Maximum build-out was reached in late 2023 and efforts are underway to legislatively seek additional development authority. The process requires cultivating community support for a proposed balance between additional development, maintaining local quality of life, honoring environmental protection commitments, and ensuring adequate hurricane evacuation times, constrained by a single evacuation route (U.S.1).
- **Affordable housing.** The median home value in Islamorada is approximately \$1.4M, while the median rent is \$5,500. Distant from the mainland and served solely by the heavily traveled U.S.1, enterprises experience substantial difficulty recruiting and retaining employees. Additionally, it has become virtually impossible to provide housing options for youth to remain in Islamorada as they transition to independent living. Efforts are underway to support existing housing relationships, including Habitat for Humanity, as well as to cultivate public-private partnerships to develop additional units.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

With approximately 30 years of progressively responsible local government experience, supplemented by several years private sector quality assurance and financial services management experience, I have a well-rounded understanding of what it takes for local government organizations to excel, as well as the exceptional ability to collaborate with others to execute accordingly. As a dedicated public service professional, I am sharply focused on leveraging my roles and authorities to support the needs of others – my staff, the community I serve, and the spectrum of partners a high performing local government organization must engage to achieve its goals.

I wish to serve Juno Beach because I strongly believe that my professional background and life experiences make me a wonderful fit for the organization and community. Recognizing the Town's commitment to organizational excellence and continuous improvement, I am prepared to begin making an immediate positive contribution toward advancement of Town Council near- and long-term objectives and goals. From a personal point of view, my spouse and I are avid outdoor recreationists, and Juno Beach is a stunning location boasting abundant passive and active recreational assets to nourish our spirits and keep us healthy.

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Regional Experience

Recognizing the multi-jurisdictional context within which local governments of all size operate, it is noteworthy that my professional background includes substantial responsibility for building and maintaining relationships at the regional and sub-regional levels.

To illustrate, I served in appointed capacities on several regional and sub-regional entities. Examples include the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Land Use Committee, responsible for supporting development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan for a six-county area comprised of over 6M residents, the West Central Municipal Conference's Legislative and Intergovernmental Committees, each representing approximately 50 governmental entities accountable to over 500,000 residents. In recognition of my intergovernmental, legislative, and project management skills, I was appointed staff lead for the Village of Oak's participation in a proposed expansion of I-290, an exceptionally controversial \$2B federal highway project traversing the southern quarter of the Village.

In Islamorada, our team collaborated with Monroe County, other Florida Keys local governments, and state and federal agencies on such critical multi-jurisdictional issues as emergency preparedness and response, land development and environmental protection, climate adaptation and resilience, and other shared opportunities and challenges.

Learning from Failure – Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

John Wooden, considered by many to be the best NCAA basketball head coach of all time, once commented, "Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be." Missing the target is an opportunity to learn and improve. I employ a Plan-Do-Check-Act model to support continuous improvement and effectively navigate change. Inherent to that cycle is learning and making adjustments while collaborating and communicating with others. I'll illustrate one such learning example below, a high-profile project that failed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Based on the understanding that communities within the CMAP planning area have varying administrative and technical capacities for executing on strategy and achieving planning objectives, a collaborative was formed between low- and high-resourced communities to pursue federal grant funding to advance a sub-regional affordable housing strategy. The socioeconomically diverse West Cook Housing Collaborative (WCHC), comprised of staff and elected officials from five municipalities, was successful in securing an approximate \$14M HUD grant to support its work.

Ultimately, however, our team underestimated the political complexity of some of the communities involved in the project. Against a backdrop of policy fragmentation, support for advancing the project began to erode once strategies came into sharper focus and decisions needed to be made. While the experience confirmed that lower capacity communities require external technical support to achieve intended outcomes, it also revealed that political interests

Section 6

ROBERT COLE

and relationships can derail an otherwise worthy effort. In retrospect, a greater advance effort at identifying all key stakeholders, educating project partners, and establishing an improved communication strategy may have changed the outcome; ultimately, the \$14M grant had to be returned to HUD.

Strengths and Weaknesses

To encourage and support public faith and trust in government, it is critical that public leaders and their staff exhibit commitments to ethical, accountable, efficient, and transparent governance. As public servants, we are obligated to work to make things better than we found them. My strengths include demonstrating integrity and respect for diversity of person and thought, leading with an infectious enthusiasm for public service and continuous improvement. I strive to empower and motivate others to pursue service excellence, demonstrate exemplary stewardship, and faithfully honor our shared ethical obligations to one another, the community we serve, and the broader world in which we live.

However, my enthusiasm and level of comfort with innovation and change can sometimes be overwhelming for others. I compensate for this potential problem by using communication, taking care to modify my approach to the intended audience. Having matured professionally through successive promotions, I've held positions ranging from a front counter building permit staff person to Village Manager. The perspectives and knowledge I've gained from each level of responsibility have helped me to listen more closely, understand more thoroughly, and communicate genuinely with persons I engage with at all levels of the organization.

Additionally, I am blessed that my life experiences, ranging from years of spending summers with my grandparents in rural south-central Kentucky, to splitting time between the Chicago suburbs, where my mother lived, and Chicago's inner city, where my father lived, have given me an uncommon ability among my professional peers to authentically engage with persons of diverse backgrounds, both within and external to the organization.

More than a skillset, I possess a deep appreciation and respect for the value everyone brings to the table and the stories that have shaped their lives. Leading with empathy, I've handled sometimes difficult decisions to terminate employees with intentional regard for their dignity and sense of self-worth.

Media and Public Communications

I've learned over the years that developing positive working relationships with the media leads to improved community and organizational outcomes. Being accessible, and as transparent and timely as circumstances allow, goes a long way toward cultivating mutually beneficial media relationships.

Section 6**ROBERT COLE**

First Six Months Strategy

Stepping into a new leadership role, the most critical initial action is to listen and learn. To that end, I would promptly schedule one-on-one meetings with staff and Town Council officials, also making myself available to community members. Additionally, I would undertake intergovernmental outreach to other entities, e.g., Palm Beach County, state and federal elected official offices, etc., to begin the important task of continuing or improving productive partnerships. Cultivating and maintaining respectful, trusting relationships is a theme that would carry through my entire tenure.

At the same time, the following would be priorities during my first six months:

- Identify and navigate any burning issues requiring immediate attention.
- Understand strengths and weaknesses of existing emergency preparedness procedures and public communications.
- Acclimate to Town policies, rules, and regulations.
- Evaluate status of Town Council priorities and assess strategic alignment, engaging staff to identify and implement opportunities for improvement.
- Examine budget fiscal trends, including consideration of opportunities to collaborate with staff to implement metrics to track organizational performance and track progress toward established goals.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Ethical
- Strategic
- Collaborative
- Approachable
- Accountable
- Communicative

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

As a local government professional, I am dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in ethically executing my roles and responsibilities as Town Manager. I firmly believe that professional management is essential to effective, efficient, and accountable local government, dedicated to serving the best interests of all community members faithfully and with a high degree of public transparency. Reflecting on the past year serving Islamorada, I determined it was in my professional and family's best interests to resign and seek new appointment. Making that difficult choice, the door has opened for me to pursue this exceptional opportunity.

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MOST RECENT SALARY

My final Islamorada compensation was \$200,000. In addition, I received a \$4,000 monthly rent stipend, family health, dental, and vision paid at 100%, and an approximate 32% employer contribution to the FRS Investment Plan (plus 3% by employee).

Section 6

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
ROBERT "ROB" AUSTIN COLE**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Westchester County, NY	No Records Found
Cook County, IL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
New York	No Records Found
Illinois	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Monroe County, FL	Results Pending
Westchester County, NY	Results Pending
Cook County, IL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
New York	No Records Found
Illinois	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
New York	December 2022 – Accident June 2020 – Accident January 2020 – Accident

Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

**Background Check Summary for
ROBERT "ROB" AUSTIN COLE**

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.

**Background Check Summary for
ROBERT "ROB" AUSTIN COLE
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Robert Austin Cole

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](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [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
ROBERT "ROB" AUSTIN COLE
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

Question 3: Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?

My wife and I received an order for relief under Chapter 7 on May 23, 1997. While the filing was necessary at the time, I then worked diligently to restore my credit and maintain my financial responsibilities, as confirmed by my present 802 credit score.

As added background, the bankruptcy occurred at a time when I had left private sector employment to pursue completion of my undergraduate and graduate degrees. While I had some savings and was also working a part-time job, the part-time income was not adequate and our savings were exhausted quicker than we anticipated. With four children and important bills beginning to fall behind, we sought relief through bankruptcy as a last alternative. Thereafter, I was able to complete my degrees and transition to a successful public sector career.

The 1997 bankruptcy was a necessary action that enabled me to be a better father, spouse, and successful public service career professional. Without the bankruptcy, it is highly unlikely that I would have completed my college degrees; my family and career outcomes would have looked much different than what has turned out to be the case.

Question 7: Have you ever sued a current or former employer?

I was engaged in a dispute surrounding the terms and conditions of my separation from the Village of Scarsdale. Mutually agreed terms were achieved without a lawsuit advancing. There have not been any other such employer disputes at any point in my employment history.

Question 4: Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?

Approximately eight years ago, the Village of Scarsdale terminated its contract with Kelvin Guevara, an African American contractor operating in support of the Village's government and public access cable television operation. In response, Mr. Guevara filed an unsupported claim of discrimination against a protected class; he simply checked the box on a complaint form without any evidence provided in support of the allegation. I believe I was one of the defendants, along with the Village Manager at that time. As the matter progressed, Mr. Guevara withdrew the unsupported claim of discrimination; the matter was concluded in the Village's favor.

Question 10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as a plaintiff or defendant.

Apart from the matter involving my current employer (Q7 response), I understand the following appear in the public record:

1. AMERICAN UNITED TRANSPORTATION INC.

This was a minor vehicle accident claim. While driving a Village of Scarsdale vehicle, a commercial livery service sideswiped my vehicle on the Bronx River Parkway at night following a Village Board meeting. The damage to both vehicles was minor, with only my side mirror

**Background Check Summary for
ROBERT "ROB" AUSTIN COLE
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

having been broken. Village risk management staff denied the firm's claim for minor repair to their vehicle, a minivan. The firm filed the lawsuit and our risk manager decided to pay the minor claim rather than engage our counsel at higher Village expense.

2. SANGALLI, VINCENT: A DISCHARGED EMPLOYEE AND MEMBER OF LOCAL 456 IBT

I discharged the subject former employee in connection with a matter involving his egregious role in cultivating a hostile work environment for a member of a protected class. The decision was upheld through adjudication.

3. CAPOBIANCO GARRETT R: FIREFIGHTER DISABILITY

This is a case that pre-dated my appointment as Scarsdale Village Manager. Mr. Capobianco was seeking a firefighter disability pension and had been denied by the prior Village Manager. According to the legal procedures, there was an appeal pathway available to him requiring my review of the facts of the prior determination. On the advice of counsel, as well as my understanding of the facts at hand, the request was once again denied, precipitating the lawsuit. I do not know if this matter was subsequently concluded.

If additional details are needed for any of the foregoing, please let me know.

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Elizabeth Jolin – Former Village Council Member, Village of Islamorada 305-393-0994

Ms. Jolin assisted in hiring Mr. Cole as Village Manager in March of 2024. She worked with him for almost a year until she left in November that same year. He had an excellent job performance during that time and was an exemplary manager.

Mr. Cole brought a real sense of moral character, accountability, and ethics to the table. With that lens, he was not only able to identify key issues but also make needed changes for the better. He was not afraid to look closely at processes and ensure they make sense in their current situation. He had a very clear and consistent communication style. He instituted a weekly update for the townspeople, which fostered a sense of trust and reduced the general wariness and skepticism toward the government that the townspeople felt. This was created by poor management of previous administrations.

In stressful situations, Mr. Cole was very even keeled. He was careful with his words and did not bring emotions or his opinion about others' personalities to the table. He was always professional in meetings and when dealing with issues. He was unwilling to play favorites or go around the rules to help his friends. He was beyond reproach. If he was asked to do something unethical, or circumventing the due process of the law, he would not do it. This, unfortunately, did not win him many friends in the Village, and is one of the main reasons why he was pressured into resigning.

Mr. Cole makes good decisions. He is a highly competent administrator, and the Village will miss him. If a City or County is looking for an administrator who will be 100% ethical and by the books, he is the best one for the job.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Honest,
- Ethical,
- Timely,
- Proactive,
- Innovative, and
- Consistent.

Strengths: Politically aware and able to manage the range of personalities and professional skills that he dealt with daily.

Weaknesses: Although he tended to micromanage to some degree, it is important to note that he came into a very poorly managed situation. Ms. Jolin does not fault him for looking very closely at operations. If he had been given more time in his position, he would have brought everyone up to a professional level and able to do their job fully, which would not have required him to spend so much time on the details. It was a temporary necessity for the time.

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Judy Hull – Executive Director, Islamorada Chamber of Commerce 305-394-3539

Ms. Hull has been the Executive Director for over 20 years. They met in 2024. She has seen several Village Managers come and go during this time. Mr. Cole is one of the very best. He did an excellent job during his short time as Village Manager. There were many items that needed to be addressed when he arrived, and he was going through the list and addressing them all. He made great progress before he resigned.

Mr. Cole was intimately involved with the community. If there was a luncheon, a fundraising activity, or a big event like the Holiday Festival, he actively volunteered. He worked at a booth and interacted with the townspeople. He put his money where his mouth is. The Village builds a 35-foot Christmas tree for the Holiday festival. After the festival they take it down, move it, and build it back up again. The tree stays in the new location for the entire holiday season. Mr. Cole was on the ladder building the tree. Ms. Hull is not aware of a single other Village Manager who was as involved in Village events as Mr. Cole was. He said he supported the Village and then went to work proving it.

Mr. Cole was methodical and organized in getting the Village back on its feet. The staff needed a great deal of supervision because they had been through several City Managers in a short time and did not have a clear direction. He brought order to chaos. The Council frequently asked for more projects than the staff could realistically achieve. They asked Mr. Cole to handle huge issues before the next meeting, which he could not reasonably accomplish. He gave them a timeline and a clear chart of what the projects were and how many they had in the air at any given time. He helped them get organized, prioritize their ideas, and develop a feasible schedule.

Mr. Cole worked well with his staff. He has a soft-spoken demeanor. There is nothing embarrassing about his conduct. He is a fantastic Manager. When the new Council came in, they brought their own personal agendas and unfortunately forced him out. His departure was a surprise for the Village. Ms. Hull recommends him for any position.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Involved,
- Smart,
- Well-spoken,
- Respected,
- Calm, and
- Organized.

Strengths: Involvement with the community.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Peter Frezza – Environmental Resources Manager, Village of Islamorada 305-393-0982

Mr. Cole was Mr. Frezza's direct supervisor during his time with the Village of Islamorada, which began in 2024. He had a great job performance and was a good boss.

Mr. Cole got things done. Some people called him a micromanager, but Mr. Frezza did not see that. He was hands-on, and an active leader, but if the Department Heads really knew what they were doing, he relied on their expertise.

Mr. Frezza recently received a phone call from a resident thanking him for something that Mr. Cole did. A neighborhood had been complaining for years about a drainage issue. When Mr. Cole heard about this issue, he organized the team headed by Mr. Frezza to adjust the landscaping in a way that improved drainage and eliminated flooding. The new landscaping was beautiful, and the resident thanked Mr. Frezza for how nicely it turned out. Drainage had been an ongoing problem, but was only resolved by a competent Village Manager.

Mr. Cole was very involved in the community, which included everything from garbage cleanups to concerts. He was innovative and thought through new solutions to problems. The City hired a contractor to trim some trees. A resident whose property was next to the public space where the trimming was to occur wanted his trees trimmed at the same time. Because his trees were on private property, Mr. Cole could not help him in that regard, but he put this resident in touch with the contractor to see if he could have his trees trimmed at the same time. By scheduling his service on his private property when the contractor was already in the neighborhood, he was able to drastically cut down on the mobilization cost. Mr. Cole finds a way to help the townspeople find solutions to their problems, even if the answer is different than what they originally wanted.

Mr. Frezza is not aware of anything controversial or embarrassing in Mr. Cole's behavior. He does not know the details of why Mr. Cole resigned. He recommends Mr. Cole as a City or County Manager for any location.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Approachable,
- Dedicated,
- Hard worker,
- Energetic,
- Vocal, and
- Charismatic.

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Strengths: Collaborated well with the public. He excelled at listening to the residents and helping them get to a resolution for whatever concern they had.

Weaknesses: He tended to talk a little bit too much, which reduced not only his productivity, but whoever he was interacting with. What could have taken just a one-minute answer, sometimes turned into an entire 15-minute conversation.

David Pope – Former Village President, Oak Park, IL 312-498-6001

Mr. Pope was the Mayor of Oak Park from 2005 to 2013, and they worked closely together. Mr. Cole worked on issues that were local and close to home as well as opportunities to pursue funding at the state and federal level. During the 2008 financial crisis the passage of TARP funding presented opportunities for shovel ready projects. Mr. Pope worked closely with Mr. Cole to put together an overview of projects to bring funding and support to Oak Park.

Mr. Cole is a very strong performer. He works collaboratively to understand the direction and then creates a strategy to achieve it. He works collaboratively and effectively with his staff. He was rated highly as an employee of the Village.

Mr. Cole, left to his own devices, will make the right decision for the right reason, which is exactly what an organization wants in an employee. He was very good about keeping others informed and he listened to the input of others. He is timely in completing assignments.

As the Assistant Manager, Mr. Cole was visible in the community and did extremely well at giving presentations and working with the community, but public outreach was not his primary role. He held meetings about a prospective development site with the City Planner to engage and obtain input from the community. They used an information gathering tool where people could express what they liked and did not like. He helped facilitate the process and answer questions. Residents really appreciated his straightforward, matter of fact approach, and he garnered trust.

When it came to finance, Mr. Cole had a stronger handling of business decisions and the budget than others in the organization. He looked at the resources and impact and made sure that they received the most bang for their buck. He wanted to make a positive impact on the community. He understood the end goal and wanted to help get there. His work was not just a job for him.

Because Mr. Cole can clearly understand and define the parameters of whatever initiative they are taking, he is able to apply the necessary level of effort while bringing the right resources to bear. Unforeseen circumstances always bring an element of stress, and he was good at anticipating the issues in advance and then collectively problem solving on the response. He never becomes rattled, rather he maintains a calm presence.

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Mr. Cole appreciates urban environments as well as natural environments and sees the interaction of them. Not only did he consider streets and infrastructure, but he wanted to enhance the natural environment in ways that supported the needs of the residents.

Mr. Cole has not been involved in any controversy. He left Oak Park to become a City Manager, and they were sorry to see him go. They would have loved to keep him. He is universally respected in the community.

Mr. Pope would hire Mr. Cole. He has been in different roles and understands both the responsibilities of the departments as well as how they interact together. Any community would be fortunate to hire Mr. Cole.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Smart,
- Insightful,
- Responsible,
- Caring,
- Good in his communication and interactions with staff, and
- Outdoorsy.

Strengths: Sees potential issues in projects that others miss, which is very beneficial in the planning process. Has a level of insight that is well beyond most others.

Weaknesses: He was the Assistant Manager in Oak Park and did extremely well. Mr. Pope cannot say how he would do as a Manager for a community because he has not seen him in that role. That said, Mr. Pope is confident that he is equipped to handle whatever is thrown at him.

Madelaine Eppenstein – Friends of Scarsdale Parks & Scarsdale Forum, NY 914-262-6656

Ms. Eppenstein has lived in Scarsdale since the mid-1980s. Ms. Eppenstein met Mr. Cole in 2015 when he was hired. She holds Mr. Cole in very high esteem and has a sense of admiration for him. He is really missed by the community.

Ms. Eppenstein is part of a 100-year-old 501(c)(3) that has been called the Scarsdale Think Tank, though its official name is the Scarsdale Forum. Its members are prominent leading citizens who look at issues of importance to residents and then provide recommendations to the Village. She interacted with Mr. Cole on community issues that are important to the residents. Mr. Cole is absolutely charming. He is very friendly and open to collaborating with everyone. They worked well with him on a variety of issues.

Reference Notes

Robert Cole

The Village has a magnificent eleven-acre piece of wetland between the high school sports field and the library. However, this green space was used as dumping grounds for contractors and the Village, it is where they dumped the plowed snow and more. Ms. Eppenstein wrote a grant and brought it to the Village. Mr. Cole participated in the process in several important ways. From the beginning of his tenure, he was active in the volunteer activities of residents which were always done in collaboration with the Village. The grant led to a community planting day in 2015 where they planted bare roots, and this became an annual tradition that Mr. Cole has always been supportive of. The land now hosts mature native oak trees, and they have successfully reforested this very important wetland. While he participated in the planting, he is almost a professional photographer, and he created a photographic record of the project which is still posted on the village website. Mr. Cole has an unbelievably collaborative personality. He also helped build raised frames for a new pollinator garden in the parks.

The Scarsdale Forum has been a tireless advocate for road safety. Since 2015 they drafted three comprehensive reports about road safety and advocated for many initiatives. One issue related to a state mandate of a 30-mph speed limit for smaller villages. Scarsdale wanted to lower the limit to 25, which is safer considering the amount of traffic they have. Mr. Cole was part of the process of lobbying with the state and they were successful in lowering the speed limit, which was a significant accomplishment.

Recently Mr. Cole was instrumental in collaboratively working with both Village and State legislators to have a traffic signal placed on the state road that basically bisects the Village. The state installed a crosswalk, but they still had several pedestrian and car accidents. While this state road runs through two residential areas, by several houses of worship, and the high school, it is more of a highway. The intersection was very hazardous. Mr. Cole gained support from legislators for the traffic signal which has improved the safety of the community.

Mr. Cole's written work is impressive and scholarly, both in his writing style and research. He has a comprehensive understanding of the issues, and his documents are a pleasure to read. His writings are very professional. His in-person presentations are equally impressive. He does extremely well in open meetings because he is very prepared, has a professional demeanor, and speaks with great clarity. His ability to convey the Village's position is outstanding.

Vines were destroying the tree canopies. They met with Mr. Cole, and he was very cordial. He spent over an hour with them and never once looked at his watch. He contacted the attorney prior to this meeting so he was already aware of what the options were. He explained that volunteers could enter public property to cut the vines off trees, but it was at their own personal risk.

Ms. Eppenstein worked with two of the previous Village Managers. One was politically well connected and pawned her off on a staff member, he had no interest in interacting with her. While most of the recommendations she made were implemented, he was just rude. The Manager after this one was more cordial. However, every interaction with Mr. Cole has been enjoyable. He gives great advice, is open to answering questions, cooperates where he can, and

Reference Notes Robert Cole

goes to bat on issues that are important to the residents. He was always very professional, truly competent, and very nice. He has that human side that is so important.

Ms. Eppenstein would hire Mr. Cole. He is very well liked in the community, and very well respected. Many of the residents feel a sense of shock that he is no longer with the Village and are trying to grapple with the loss. Whoever hires him will have a tremendous asset.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Personable,
- Collaborative,
- Dedicated,
- Supportive,
- Well spoken, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Truly cares about his work and the community, charming, collaborates with everyone, very cordial.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Joshua Ringel – Former Assistant to the Village Manager, Village of Scarsdale, NY 914-310-9371

Mr. Ringel has known Mr. Cole since 2015 and they worked closely together until 2019 on a variety of projects. Mr. Ringel reported to Mr. Cole. Mr. Cole was a good mentor and Mr. Ringel attributes his current role as a City Manager to Mr. Cole and others who gave him advice and opportunities to learn. When they worked together Mr. Cole was the Assistant Manager.

Mr. Cole was great to work with because he was prompt and straightforward. When he asked the staff to do something, they knew exactly what he wanted. He is very clear in his communications which avoids the need for multiple conversations. He kept others informed and never missed a deadline. Nothing in his job performance was concerning.

Mr. Cole did not have many hires during the time they worked together but the one hire Mr. Ringel knows about was excellent. His decisions in general are good. He made many positive changes to the budget process and the government structure. He also involved the Board in a more collaborative manner. He essentially changed the status quo as much as he could, while dealing with demanding residents who had high expectations.

While the Manager went to some of the community events, Mr. Cole was involved in Boards and Councils as the Assistant Manager. He improved the website to better communicate what the

Reference Notes Robert Cole

County was working on. Traffic safety improvements were very basic and not truly impactful, and Mr. Cole understood that the Village had an obligation to address the liability. He worked with the Board and the community and improved the safety of the Village.

Mr. Cole was the sole person responsible for putting together the capital budget, which was around \$60 million in 2019. He worked with department heads and presented information to the Board. The process was out of date, so it was a heavy lift. He was very inclusive of others and worked very hard. He was also willing to allow lower-level staff members to be part of the process so they could learn.

The Village had a cable operator that was not performing well, and Mr. Cole let him go. Mr. Cole handled the process well and never lost his temper. Mr. Ringel is not aware of any controversy involving Mr. Cole either personally or professionally. Nothing in his background or conduct would concern a reasonable person.

Knowing the players in Scarsdale, how the organization transitioned over the years, and the Board's interpretation of the charter, he was not completely surprised by Mr. Cole's departure. While Mr. Ringel agreed with the interpretation of the Board, they did not handle the process well or in the way that they should have.

Mr. Ringle would hire Mr. Cole 100%, and without a second thought. He has a wonderful and interesting background. Scarsdale is known in the region for being the training ground for Managers, and many of the quality leaders in the state are a product of the Scarsdale school of government, including Mr. Cole. He is enjoyable to work with, a good mentor to staff, and he is well respected in the community.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Mentor,
- Prompt,
- Straightforward,
- Collaborative,
- Communicates well, and
- Respected.

Strengths: Clarity in his speech, has a presence, confident, extremely ethical, good mentor.

Weaknesses: His straightforwardness can sometimes be misinterpreted if you do not know him well. Once you get to know him you see that it stems from professionalism.

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Christine Sciandra – Executive Assistant, Village of Scarsdale, NY 914-565-9106

Ms. Sciandra has known Mr. Cole since 2017. Mr. Cole is one of the best people that she has ever worked for. He is very fair, really knows the profession, and is highly respected by residents. He does not just talk about what he wants to do, he sees goals through to completion. He introduced various initiatives, like a bimonthly department head meeting to gather feedback from the staff, which had not been done before.

Everyone whom Mr. Cole hired is still with the organization. He hired their Assessor, Treasurer, Planner, and Deputy Manager among others. All employees are doing very well and are happy in their roles. He makes good decisions in general.

The Village was still manually producing the agenda, and nothing was organized. Mr. Cole created a system with proper electronic folders which are labeled clearly so staff can find what they need more efficiently. While the agenda is still not automated, he created a system that is more efficient, effective, and consistent, and information is more easily accessible to residents.

Mr. Cole is often out in the community. Everyone in the community loves him, and the residents were very disappointed when he left. He is a go-getter who got things done. He worked with the Treasurer to streamline the budget process. They upgraded a very antiquated system. He meets deadlines and never shows any stress, even though Scarsdale has a very demanding, high-end, and very educated residency.

The Village has several Homeowner Associations and Mr. Cole was good at working with the ones that needed action. He also ensured that whatever decisions were made were in the best interest of the community as a whole and not just a small group of residents. He always has the best interest of his community at heart.

While Mr. Cole has been involved in controversy due to the nature of his role, he did not create any controversy. Nothing in his conduct would concern a reasonable person.

Ms. Sciandra would hire Mr. Cole and would follow him to a new location provided it is in the same region. He was very fair with employees, and very astute at seeing the strengths and weaknesses of personnel. He was involved where he needed to be but also understood the limits of his role and stayed within them.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Friendly,
- Innovative,
- Gets things done,
- Responsive,
- Good with staff,
- Cooperative with the Board, and
- Adaptable.

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Strengths: Very personable, good at bringing a project or goal to completion, pleasant to talk to, friendly to everyone, treats everyone the same, very respectful.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Michelle Sterling – Member, Conservation Advisory Council, Scarsdale, NY 917-930-2008

Ms. Sterling chairs the Conservation Council, which is a Board-appointed environmental committee. The committee is very active, and they work closely with the Village. She has known Mr. Cole since 2015. They worked together on sustainability, facilities, and transportation.

Mr. Cole is fantastic, and he is a gem. He really cares about his work and the people he interacts with. He wants to complete the goals and do it in the right way. He does not dial it in or do the minimum. He is very knowledgeable, and he truly cares, which you can tell by his actions. Some say they care but do not follow through. He figures out a way to yes, which is what you want as a leader. He communicates well and keeps others informed.

Mr. Cole made good decisions. He always attended meetings and working sessions, even when they went late into the night. He was at the Village events. The Village has a tremendous number of Boards and Councils, and ultimately the buck stopped with him. He managed it all well. He was responsive and he was timely in his responses.

When departments were working on a project but not making progress in a timely manner, they elevated the situation to Mr. Cole. He spoke with the superintendent of that division to coordinate a resolution. He told the division leaders to let him know if something did not work as anticipated so they could try a different approach.

Mr. Cole's background is free from controversy. Ms. Sterling would hire Mr. Cole. He is an excellent manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Intelligent,
- Hard working,
- Caring,
- Conscientious,
- Transparent, and
- Honest.

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Strengths: Very smart, very hard working, cares about what he is doing, great multi-tasker, very genuine, honest, and transparent.

Weaknesses: He is a lengthy talker. However, he is very smart, and his input is valuable. When someone is impatient and wants a two-second answer, he gives it but often government work is nuanced. He is not afraid to be honest and describe all aspects of a situation before he comes to a decision. This weakness is also a strength as it helps the public understand the reasoning behind decisions.

Jim Palmer – Former President, New York City/County Manager Association, NY 914-552-2127

Mr. Palmer manages a community next to Scarsdale and they shared stories and discussions on issues that were relevant. When Mr. Palmer was the President of the NY City/County Manager Association, he appointed Mr. Cole to the Board of Directors.

Scarsdale residents expect a high level of service and a professional answer. Balancing a budget and the needs of multiple constituents gets harder to do every day. Mr. Cole can balance the needs and priorities while giving credit to his team. He is very humble.

Anyone in the region would say that Mr. Cole is a legend. He lives and breathes the profession and is very efficient. The Village is complicated, and he led many departments while having the buy in of the other employees. He not only understood the implementation aspect of what they do, but the policy implications as well. For example, when it came to speeding, he led the way in encouraging the community to reduce the maximum allowable speed limit from 30 to 25 mph, and then he took the initiative to the state where it was successfully approved. Other Villages were quick to follow his lead.

Mr. Cole makes good decisions. He is innovative, a change agent, and he maintains an organization at a high-performance level. He always followed up and communicated well, and he gained support for various initiatives.

Lowering the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph involved a large group of stakeholders, and Mr. Cole spearheaded the efforts. He was persistent in a host of other matters that were a priority, particularly involving traffic.

Mr. Cole accomplishes his work in a timely manner, even when it comes to legislation. He handles stress through physical activity as he loves the outdoors. He is a very hard worker.

Reducing the speed limit was controversial. Also, the principal roadway in the community had a traffic calming measure that the community did not perceive as being efficient enough. Mr. Cole brought stakeholders on board and worked with the state to put a traffic signal in. He is very solutions oriented.

Reference Notes Robert Cole

Mr. Palmer would hire Mr. Cole. He is the manager that everyone in this profession aspires to be. He has good experience, and he presents himself well. He has served first rate communities with high service delivery expectations, and he will help any organization get to the next level.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Professional,
- Diligent,
- Thoughtful,
- Responsive,
- Good communicator, and
- Articulate.

Strengths: Professionalism, very well spoken, very articulate, very thoughtful, great listener, ensures you understand the question and provides a professional and thoughtful response. He is very smart and well educated.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Andrew Matturo – Former Police Chief, Village of Scarsdale, NY 914-582-2065

Mr. Matturo has known Mr. Cole since he was hired in 2015 as the Deputy Manager. Mr. Cole is extremely professional and supportive of the departments and department heads. He is very knowledgeable of municipal operations.

While Mr. Cole received recommendations from department heads when hiring, he made the final appointment. His decisions, both in hiring and in general, are good. He does not make snap decisions. He does his homework and finds all the information.

Mr. Cole is very innovative and open to new approaches, but he is not someone who comes in and makes several changes. He maintains operations at a high level. He attends community events and is always transparent and prepared to answer questions. He did his research and was always very knowledgeable about the issues. He communicated well with the public.

Mr. Cole was good about keeping others informed. He steered the conversation for meetings like emergency management planning. He was timely in completing his work. Scarsdale is very demanding, and, in a positive way, he held the staff's feet to the fire. He handled the stress well and never expressed or displayed discomfort.

Mr. Matturo is not aware of any incident involving Mr. Cole that would concern an employer. Mr. Matturo would hire Mr. Cole. He was extremely supportive of the staff, held them

Reference Notes Robert Cole

accountable, and clearly communicated his expectations so the staff could meet them. He is very professional and was great to work with.

Words or phrases used to describe Rob Cole:

- Enthusiastic,
- Energetic, and
- Has a positive management style.

Strengths: Attention to detail, customer service, did his best to meet the expectations of a very demanding public, always very professional.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Amanda Jenkins & Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Keysweekly
January 9, 2025

ISLAMORADA CUTS TIES WITH MANAGER ROB COLE THROUGH A RESIGNATION-FOR-SEVERANCE-PAY AGREEMENT

By: Jim McCarthy

There were questions and accusations. Tempers flared and voices were raised as discussion ensued over the sequence of events which led four Islamorada council members to approve a separation agreement with Village Manager **Rob Cole** at a Jan. 7 meeting at the Founders Park Community Center. Before the vote, **Cole** read a letter announcing his resignation from a post he was unanimously selected to by a previous council just last February. A former manager in Scarsdale, New York, **Cole** said he decided to resign as village manager subject to the terms and conditions in the separation agreement, which was initially put on the consent agenda but later pulled by Islamorada Councilman Steve Friedman for discussion. Items on the consent agenda can be handled and implemented without any discussion among the council and public. The item was pulled and a lengthy, heated discussion began.

“This was a difficult choice for me to make,” **Cole** said as he read his letter to the council and public. “But it is the right one for me and my family.” Per the separation agreement, **Cole** will receive severance pay totaling north of \$100,000 between base compensation, housing allowance, vacation leave payout, 401k contributions and health insurance benefits. **Cole** will technically stay employed by the village until Feb. 28. However, he began administrative leave on Jan. 8 and will no longer be reporting physically to the village administrative building to perform village manager duties. Council members will need to act to appoint an interim village manager; no decision was made at the meeting’s conclusion. A discussion is expected at a Jan. 9 meeting of the council.

Many public commenters commended **Cole** for his work with the village, crediting him in keeping the residents up-to-date on various matters through his weekly newsletter. They also blasted the council for the lack of integrity and representation over the matter. “It comes to a point where I don’t want to live in this community any more. The whole thing is heartbreaking to me,” said Betsy Bullard. Beth Kamenstein said **Cole** was one of the more dynamic village managers Islamorada has seen. “This action gives the appearance of a coordinated effort to make profound changes without our input,” she said. “There’s nothing wrong with Mr. **Cole**. He’s been an exemplary employee,” said Van Cadenhead. **Cole**’s selection came after the council elected not to renew the contract of then-manager Ted Yates; the vote was 3-2 during a July 2023 meeting. Between Yates’ departure and **Cole**’s arrival, the village used the services of three Monroe County department heads who performed the day-to-day duties as village manager.

Before the separation agreement was approved via a 4-1 vote, the lone “no” vote, Friedman, attempted to provide the public with some transparency by speaking for roughly 17 minutes as to how **Cole**’s resignation and the separation all transpired. Friedman, who pulled the issue off the consent agenda, said he was troubled in how the matter of severing **Cole**’s relationship with

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the village came about. Friedman said he knew **Cole** “liked his job and was not seeking to resign.” Friedman said the matter first came to him on Dec. 18 via phone call from Village Attorney John Quick. Friedman said the call was in relation to an email Quick sent the day before to council members concerning a written complaint made by a village employee against **Cole**. Friedman said he was having IT issues setting up his village email account and didn’t receive or review Quick’s email with the employee’s complaint attached. Friedman said Quick gave him a brief summary of the email. Friedman also said that Quick was “conducting a poll” of the council members to see whether they were in favor of offering **Cole** a severance package in return for his resignation. At the time, Friedman said, he understood **Cole** was doing his job well. Friedman said he had no knowledge then and has no knowledge now of any conduct by **Cole** that would have “justified coercing him to resign in return for several weeks of severance.” Friedman said he wasn’t in favor of the proposal offering **Cole** severance when it was initially presented by the village attorney. Rather, Friedman wanted to keep **Cole**.

“I told him (Quick) I was not in favor of such action because I knew no basis to suggest that Rob be forced out of his position and because I believe every employee in the village is entitled to due process to address the merit or lack of merit to a complaint against them before being disciplined, terminated or coerced,” Friedman said. “At the time of the call on Dec. 18, I had no knowledge or evidence (and) still have no knowledge or evidence that would justify criticizing **Rob**’s job performance, much less a request for his resignation in return for a severance package,” Friedman continued. “Consequently, I was extremely uncomfortable with John’s request to state whether I was in favor of making such an offer.”

Friedman told Quick he was aware **Cole** responded to a rumor circulating throughout the village that he had some responsibility for the decision made in Tallahassee to cancel funding for a new Islamorada Fire Rescue boat. A total of \$300,000 in state funds was included in the legislatively approved budget last session. To the surprise of many local officials, however, those funds ended up being vetoed by Gov. Ron DeSantis. Rep. Lauren Mello, of Naples, sponsored the appropriation for a fireboat in Islamorada. She came before the council in December and stated that it was “vetoed at the local level.” In his comments, Friedman said, **Cole** submitted a detailed and factual response refuting the rumor in an email provided to council members on Dec. 12. Friedman said that email dispelled the idea that he had anything to do with the fireboat funds being canceled.

Friedman said on its face, the employee complaint did not appear to come anywhere near justifying a severance package. No details were provided as to the employee complaint during Friedman’s comments and throughout the duration of the meeting. Friedman said Quick told him that he was the last council member and that his vote against severing ties with **Cole** was “in the minority.”

“I asked if the minority was 3-2 or 4-1. John told me it was 4-1,” Friedman said regarding the call he had with Quick. “At no time since our initial phone conversation on Dec. 18 or to this day did John provide me with options or legal recommendations beyond asking me for my vote in favor or against offering **Rob** severance in return for his resignation,” Friedman said. Friedman

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said the matter surrounding **Cole** and discussion over a severance package should have been addressed among the full council at a public meeting. Friedman said he told Quick if severance was offered, it should be for the maximum amount, which would be 20 weeks' pay. In a subsequent phone call with attorney Alison Smith on Dec. 19, Friedman said he was informed that a decision was apparently made to offer **Cole** six weeks' severance.

“I asked how the other four council members could possibly have come up with the same number of weeks of severance offer without speaking to one another,” Friedman said. “Alison told me she could not say because discussing her conversations with other council members would violate Sunshine law. “In an email to John, I asked the following question: is it possible that the decision to offer an employee severance on behalf of the council without any prior discussion among the council members based on each council member’s conversation with you as an intermediary might violate the Sunshine law?” Friedman continued. “John responded to me in an email on Dec. 20 informing me that he did not serve as an intermediary because he did not convey any discussion between the council members.” Friedman said he attempted to call a special meeting on Dec. 20 for a discussion on matters related to the village manager’s employment and to discuss making a request to the village attorney to provide legal counsel with proposed alternative procedures to address, investigate and attempt to resolve the village manager complaints. There was no support, however, from other council members for Friedman’s desire for a special meeting. “The village has terminated nearly 20 different village managers in 20 years. Is the council to terminate village managers simply because a village employee may lodge a complaint that has not been investigated, much less verified, and for which the village manager has not been afforded an opportunity to respond?” Friedman said. He concluded by saying what occurred was “totally unacceptable.” Friedman proceeded to ask fellow council members whose idea it was to ask the village attorney to “poll the question of severance for **Cole**,” what were the reasons for wanting to sever the relationship, why they thought it was prudent to force **Cole** to resign and what was the plan for a replacement.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
November 20, 2024

Key Largo sewer treatment district maintains board makeup

Author/Byline: JILL ZIMA BORSKI

The Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District met Nov. 5 for a mere half-hour. First up was the board election, and board officers stayed the same as the past two years. Nicolas Rodriguez remains chair, Tim Maloney is vice chair and Sue Heim remains secretary-treasure. Robby Majeska and Philip Schwartz remain as commissioners. Next, the board approved a mutual aid agreement between Key Largo Fire-Rescue Department and the district for emergencies. After discussion, the district said it would extend a mutual aid agreement option to the county, too. District staff then shared reports and said Islamorada, which is the district's largest customer, was recently charged \$32,000 for its wastewater salinity being higher than allowed in the interlocal agreement to treat the village's wastewater. The village's salinity problem was attributed to high tides and/or a storm event, according to staff.

Islamorada's Plantation Key Wastewater Plant has been criticized recently for creating problems for the district including a pipe rupturing eight times near Mile Marker 93, with each repair costing village residents five-figure sums.

Islamorada Village Manager **Rob Cole** visited the Key Largo wastewater treatment plant mid-September and sent a letter that same day to Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District Manager Peter Rosasco to gauge the district's interest in taking over Islamorada's wastewater system.

"If we're potentially heading toward a logical transfer of our system to KLWTD, it would make sense for both the North Plantation Key work, pit monitoring technology and more to match-up against what you have and what will best integrate. So, let's see if we can establish a clear path forward," **Cole** wrote.

However, the district board said it would not entertain such a takeover until Islamorada corrects the ongoing problems with its collection and transmission system.

Key Largo's district has a 22-year history. In 2002, Florida House Bill 471 created the Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District and a five-member board of commissioners to oversee district business. Commissioners must be registered voters and reside within the boundaries of the district through their four-year term of office. Elections are nonpartisan and held every two years to create staggered four-year terms.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
September 18, 2024

Sewer district discusses cloud storage, Islamorada issues

Author/Byline: JILL ZIMA BORSKI

The Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District is upgrading its computer data to cloud storage and discussed the related monetary investment in training staff and in automating county land parcel information via geographic mapping software. During their meeting earlier this month, the KLWTD board heard that the cloud upgrade will include the benefits of workflow facilitation for field employees and staff due to remote accessibility, as well as increased security, resistance to ransomware, unlimited storage and decreased downtime. No server upgrades are required. With backups every 20 minutes, there is little chance of loss of data and protection for customer accounts. The upgrade expense is \$19,800 for 2024 and about \$59,000 for 2025. In August, Finance Director Connie Fazio showcased the proposed 2024-2025 budget of \$27,770,213. It shared a preliminary estimate of \$15.386 million in non-departmental revenue and \$12.384 million in capital improvements revenue. The district board also approved the yearly contracts for General Manager Peter Rosasco, legal counsel Nick Mulick and Fazio, which totaled just under \$352,000. The district also regularly reports its wastewater treatment in terms of gallons of influent per day. In July, it processed an average of 2 million gallons of influent per day and remains in compliance with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection guidelines.

The commissioners spent time discussing what they described as a lack of response from Islamorada's wastewater department, saying the village does not provide engineering data for which the district repeatedly asks. The district treats village sewage under contract. "We do one thing (wastewater treatment) and we do it right," Rosasco said. He proposed giving Islamorada a one- to two-page memorandum regarding the agreement surrounding the valve that separates the village's wastewater from the Key Largo wastewater, and the problems they have with their system. He then disclosed what he described as the eighth break in Islamorada's water main on Sept. 1 around 5 p.m. near Mile Marker 92, roughly the same place as the past seven breaks. Sixteen trucks responded to remove sludge from the roadway and bike path between 8 p.m. and midnight, and 68,000 gallons were recovered. Rosasco said this typically occurs when there is a holiday weekend, and this latest break was over the three-day Labor Day holiday weekend per the pattern. "It wasn't our break," he added.

In a prior meeting with Islamorada Manager **Rob Cole** and Wastewater Director A.J. Engelmeyer, Rosasco said they indicated they could fix the problems in their programming.

"They operate (their system) on an on-off system creating (pipe) breaks in the same area and blocking traffic," Rosasco told the KLWTD board. "They're not solving the problem. If they go forward with their new pumps, it will create problems. ... We want them to make a decision sooner rather than later. This is why we think the pipes are breaking, and this is what we think you need to do. We get promises but don't get any action. We've asked for information that hasn't been forthcoming. We've gotten (from the village) a collections system project which was non-

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Robert A. Cole
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responsive and opposite to what they had promised. ... It's very frustrating. I can put (the memo) in layman's terms and send it to the public officials."

A commissioner pointed out the two meetings Rosasco had with **Cole** and Engelmeyer, and a meeting with former village manager Seth Lawless, further indicating the problem has simmered for a while. "Seth told me five to six years ago they were aware of the problems with the sewer line and the hammer breaks," Rosasco said. "We have not received their hydrology reports ... for two years. They are withholding (information)."

Rosasco suggested looking into the interlocal agreement between the district and village "from a legal standpoint" and deciding how to move forward. "What (Islamorada) plans to do is not in the best interest of the district — and frankly, not in theirs," he said. At that point, a board member suggested adding to the memo, "If you do this, we'll bill you \$1-2 million."

Reaching the end of the discussion, Rosasco said, "They're not taking the appropriate steps to solve the problem. We offer to give them our expertise for free and then they don't do it. ... They're our No. 1 customer and we want to accommodate them, but we have to be able to address them." The district board agreed communication had to progress up to Islamorada's elected officials, characterizing the issue as "dereliction of duty."

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
July 23, 2024

Islamorada project to get second look

Author/Byline: ED PIERCE

The Islamorada Village Council decided during the July 9 meeting to hold another discussion regarding the development of affordable housing on village-owned lots at the corner of Woods Avenue and Gardenia Street. In June, the council voted to defer making any decision about the issue until staff could formulate better options for councilors about possibly linking the development there to a larger-scale project.

In 2017, the council approved a resolution awarding eight affordable unit allocations from the Building Permit Allocation System (BPAS) to create workforce housing on village lots there. The council awarded the rights to develop the site in September 2021 to Gorman & Company with a stipulation that if they chose not to or were otherwise unable to develop the site, Habitat for Humanity of the Upper Keys would be awarded those development rights.

This time, however, Councilman Henry Rosenthal, Mayor Buddy Pinder and Vice Mayor Sharon Mahoney voted to support a motion to place the Woods Avenue development item back on the agenda for an upcoming council meeting, while Councilors Mark Gregg and Elizabeth Jolin voted against the measure.

In another item, Gregg asked the council to consider directing village staff members to initiate a review of Islamorada's Comprehensive Plan build-out limit. "It seems like each year we keep selling out more and more and more to build more and more and more," Gregg said. "Pretty soon there won't be any more fish and there is no more coral. There won't be many more trees, nothing but rooftops, and so the question I would like to answer is how much is too much?"

Village Manager **Rob Cole** said the timeline to review and update the plan is in the fall of 2025. He said that several studies are underway currently looking at growth in the village, but he urged caution in proceeding in this area in order to allow staff to gather complete data and provide strong forums for public engagement about the matter. **Cole** said he would speak to the village's Comprehensive Plan consultant to see if there is a reasonable way to expedite the process to have both the plan and practical recommendations completed by next year.

The council was also briefed by Islamorada Environmental Resources Manager Pete Frezza about the feasibility of the village establishing a new vessel exclusion zone as a result of resident concerns about the emerging boater raft-up area off Sunset Drive beach on Lower Matecumbe Key. Frezza said such an exclusion zone is permitted under Florida Statute 327.46 and such a restriction may only be imposed in the interest of public safety and protection and would require the council to enact an ordinance creating the zone. According to Frezza, the exclusionary zone would be 300 feet from shore at the knee-high water line. It would be reinforced by a series of nine buoys and would potentially run about half the length of Sunset Drive. Boats, including

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

paddle boats and kayaks, would be prohibited from using the area for recreational purposes.

To create this exclusionary zone though, Frezza said a number of factors would have to be weighed by the council, including how to enforce the restriction, environmental impacts to seagrass and coral caused by drilling damage to anchor the buoys and navigating the complex permitting process to work on the project. He also estimated the costs for the creation of such an exclusionary zone at between \$80,000 and \$100,000.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
July 5, 2024

Expanded rideshare service begins in Islamorada

Author/Byline: CITIZEN STAFF

The village's rideshare service is now offering longer daily hours due to a new agreement unanimously approved recently by the Islamorada Village Council. The new agreement with the Freebee rideshare provider has expanded services to 357 hours a week, an increase of 147 hours. The service currently carries passengers at no cost to and from destinations inside the village. Service outside the village to nearby Tavernier Towne, Mariners Hospital and the Good Health Clinic was added three years ago.

However, during June's meeting, Vice Mayor Sharon Mahoney and Village Manager **Rob Cole** acknowledged that passengers could be charged a fee possibly in September as Monroe County, which recently approved its own agreement with Freebee for service in the Lower Keys, looks to create a county-wide transportation program, which could possibly reduce or eliminate the village's costs for providing the service. "We would need to get it out there sooner than later, so we don't have people freaking out over, now, you're going to be charged starting September something," Mahoney said. **Cole** agreed that the village could make the public aware before a charge is instituted.

Vehicles in the village's Freebee fleet continue to include two Telsa X seven-passenger vehicles and one XL van. As of July 1 the three are now operating simultaneously from 7 a.m. to midnight. Previously the vehicles had staggered hours, with one operating from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., the second from noon to 10 p.m. and the third from 2 p.m. to midnight.

The additional hours have increased the cost from \$342,500 annually to \$553,330; however, the council also approved accepting a Florida Department of Transportation matching grant of \$276,665, which will result in a \$65,839 annual reduction in spending on Freebee while providing expanded services.

The proposed annual agreement has an option for renewal for two additional one-year periods.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
June 28, 2024

Village defers action on housing project

Author/Byline: ED PIERCE

Actions to move forward with the development of affordable housing unit at the corner of Woods Avenue and Gardenia Street have been deferred by members of the Islamorada Village Council until staff can formulate options for councilors about possibly linking it to a larger-scale project. In 2017, a prior council approved a resolution awarding eight affordable unit allocations from the Building Permit Allocation System to create workforce housing on village-owned lots there. Councilors awarded rights to develop the property in September 2021 to Gorman & Company with a stipulation that if Gorman elected not to or was otherwise unable to develop the site, Habitat for Humanity of the Upper Keys would be awarded those development rights.

Village Planning Director Jennifer DeBoisbriand told councilors a letter was sent in May to Gorman informing them that Islamorada was going to award the development rights for the Woods Avenue site to Habitat for Humanity. She said Gorman did not respond to that letter.

During the council's June 13 meeting, a resolution was introduced to reserve the eight affordable unit allocations but after a lengthy discussion, Councilwoman Elizabeth Jolin motioned to have village staff compile all available options which could tie development of the Woods Avenue site to a larger potential affordable workforce housing project including the village-owned Machado property.

Jolin said, at the very least, staff could report back to the council with an analysis of a larger-scale project, which would provide additional information, so the council could make a more informed decision.

The council voted 3-2 to defer the affordable unit allocation resolution and have staff detail potential options at a future meeting, with Jolin and councilmen Henry Rosenthal and Mark Gregg supporting the measure and Mayor Buddy Pinder and Vice Mayor Sharon Mahoney voting no. During its June 11 meeting, the council bypassed a recommendation by the village's evaluation committee to award a \$4.8 million contract to Earth Tech Enterprises of Fort Myers for the Founders Park Breakwater Restoration Project.

Islamorada Environmental Resources Manager Pete Frezza said that the committee had received 10 proposals overall for the restoration project, which will strengthen and update the jetty surrounding the park's Plantation Yacht Harbor Marina. The jetty was originally built in 1960 and is vital protection for park infrastructure and vessels there from destructive wave energy. Frezza said the aging jetty at Founders Park sustained erosion damage from Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Wilma storm surges and evaluation committee members determined the proposal by Earth Tech Enterprises was the best. He said the company has the experience and expertise for such a project and has been used previously for project by Monroe County and Key West.

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Robert A. Cole
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Mahoney questioned why other local companies were not chosen for the project. "I just have a problem with the fact that we have companies local here who need to survive and who have done great jobs, and I've gone to some of their sites and looked at them," Mahoney said. "I just can't understand why we don't take better care of our own. We don't want them to move out of the Keys." Because the \$4.8 million in funding for the project is derived from a Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant from federal funding, a local preference option was not allowed to be included in the request for proposal for this project, Frezza said.

Village Attorney John Quick advised the councilors that they were not obliged to take the lowest bidder for the contract.

The council then voted 5-0 to award the contract to Adventure Environmental, which finished in a tie for second among companies submitting proposals, and came in \$40,000 higher than Earth Tech Enterprises among bidders. Also at the June 11 council meeting, councilors voted 5-0 to work with the Miller Legg Company of Tampa in formulating a new master plan for Founders Park.

Village Manager **Rob Cole** said four companies submitted documents as a result of the village's request for proposals for architectural consulting work on the project and the evaluation committee reviewed them and recommended Miller Legg. He said evaluation committee members thought Miller Legg's proposal had the best approach, had previously worked on similar projects, and was highly qualified and experienced.

Michael Kroll, Miller Legg president, attended the council meeting and fielded questions from councilors, including one about the growing popularity of pickleball in community recreation and if it planned on addressing it in the new master plan recommendations for Founders Park.

Kroll said Miller Legg is aware of the pickleball trend nationally and intends to use a multi-facility approach for its Founders Park recommendation, incorporating pickleball courts but also giving the village flexibility by providing other sports opportunities as well.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
May 29, 2024

Council defers permit allocations to review guidelines

Author/Byline: ED PIERCE

Members of the Islamorada Village Council had just started meeting earlier this month when a motion was introduced to defer items on the agenda regarding awarding administrative relief building permit allocations. Administrative relief is when a building permit is issued to an applicant who has been in the village's Building Permit Allocation System (BPAS) for four years without receiving one.

Councilwoman Elizabeth Jolin entered the motion asking that the administrative relief process currently used by the village be halted until Planning Director Jennifer DeBoisbriand establishes clearer guidelines that the council would need to approve for issuing the limited number of remaining building permit allocations. DeBoisbriand said that would include a thorough review of Islamorada's BPAS policy, a vacant parcel analysis and two public engagement meetings. She said she expected to have the new procedure ready for review by the council's Oct. 8 meeting.

Both Mayor Buddy Pinder and Vice Mayor Sharon Mahoney objected to the delay citing it was unfair to current administrative relief applicants, including two who were scheduled to make their case for allocations that night during quasi-judicial hearings. "It's not fair to push these people to the end of the year," Mahoney said. "We're pulling the rug out from them in the ninth inning." Pinder agreed with Mahoney and said telling people who showed up for the meeting that they now have to wait even longer is not right. "These people have been waiting and followed the system for four years," Pinder said. "To pull the plug the night they come to the meeting is wrong."

Jolin said she proposed deferring the permit process because she felt that the council didn't have enough information to make an informed decision, while Councilman Henry Rosenthal said a plan is very much needed. Councilman Mark Gregg sided with Jolin and Rosenthal. "I don't feel there's a need to rush into this. I think we need to take a step back," Gregg said. "It's time for us to stop the piecemeal approach. I think it would be nice for the public to participate in this."

Village Manager **Rob Cole** said deferring the process would allow the town to incorporate differing public viewpoints and enable DeBoisbriand to return a set of comprehensive recommendations to the council in October.

The motion to defer until Oct. 8 unless the process is expedited sooner passed 3-2, with Pinder and Mahoney voting no. The council then voted 3-2 to direct the Village Attorney John Quick to prepare a moratorium on new administrative relief applications for 120 days by the next meeting with Pinder and Mahoney again in opposition.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
April 19, 2024

Vacation rental policy to get council review

Author/Byline: SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN

The Islamorada Village Council slogged through four and a half hours of business at the first of their two regular council sessions on April 9, dominated by more than 90 minutes of discussion on one specific land-use issue related to Councilman Mark Gregg's family member. There were four quasi-judicial ordinance requests — grouped and heard together — to amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) by Windley Cove LLC from residential medium to mixed use, and another request to amend the zoning map from residential single family to highway commercial for the property on Windley Key. There were also requests made by Windley Isles LLC to amend the FLUM for its property also on Windley Key and another for requesting an approval for a zoning map amendment from residential single family to highway commercial on the subject property, located at 85331 Overseas Highway, comprising 13,300 square feet of land. At the core of the council disagreements was the overarching concern about what Councilwoman Elizabeth Jolin described "as the vacation rental problem" on Windley Key.

Gregg recused himself from the vote on the applications because the applicant, Jocelyn Tiedemann, is a family member. Even though Gregg couldn't vote on the application, he lobbied for approval throughout. While Tiedemann made her case for land-use changes that would allow the properties to become vacation rentals, Vice Mayor Sharon Mahoney and Jolin pushed back at various intervals. The properties in question are just south of Hog Heaven, and Mahoney said she's heard input from neighboring residents about the increasing rowdiness at vacation rentals in that area. Planning Director Jennifer DeBoisbriand said that any vacation rental license would still have to meet Section 6 of the village code, and that staff recommended approval of all four applications. Former council member Deb Gillis, who sits on the village's Local Planning Agency, said the LPA voted 6-1 in favor of these requests, adding "everything seems above board to the LPA." Jolin said Windley Key has the highest density of commercial property in the village and is appropriate for vacation rental use. However, Mahoney called it a "crummy situation" since the density in that area will be further affected. Islamorada resident Sue Miller said during public comment that "the one thing we don't need more of is more vacation rentals." Jolin offered a compromise of sorts, asking the council to consider vacation rental restrictions be imposed to nuance their decision.

Village Manager **Rob Cole** said code enforcement issues with other vacation rentals shouldn't be a reason for denying the application and offered to examine the possible need for additional code enforcement staff.

Eventually, Jolin asked Tiedemann if she was comfortable tabling her request so the council can address the entire vacation rental situation at a future meeting. Mahoney insisted the council "fix the (vacation rental) problem." Gregg made a motion to continue the four items until the land-use hearing on Aug. 8, which was approved.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

In other village business, Monroe County Sheriff Rick Ramsay presented a refund to the village for \$83,000, representing savings his office realized in providing municipal policing services to the village in fiscal year 2023.

Gregg touted the village's acquisition of the Glynn property near Venetian Shores in a video presentation. The environmentally sensitive area, with hardwood hammock, mangrove wetlands, 2,000 feet of frontage on Florida Bay and a natural habitat for tree snails and indigo snakes, closed on March 29 and will be preserved in perpetuity. The Glynn family recorded the property in early 1955 and the village paid \$650,000 for it.

Village lobbying firm GrayRobinson gave a summary of the legislative session. One item specifically mentioned was the bill Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law that takes homeless individuals off Florida's streets and places them in encampments monitored by law enforcement.

Councilman Henry Rosenthal asked what GrayRobinson has done specifically for the village at an annual cost of \$108,000, to which the appropriation of \$300,000 for a village fire rescue marine emergency response vessel was referenced, even though that has not yet been signed by the governor. **Cole** encouraged more council preplanning and an action list for GrayRobinson before the next legislative session.

Mayor Buddy Pinder raised the possibility of a Sister City partnership. Gillis said during public comments that several years ago, the village had such a partnership with a city in Mississippi. Village Attorney John Quick suggested the first step would be to look for cities with similar size, geography or historical characteristics, and the benefits would be learning about policy, transportation, tourism and sustainability.

Cole briefly reviewed that Public Works doesn't have a permanent place for equipment, with much of it positioned at Founders Park. He suggested as part of the overall Founders Park master plan that it would benefit the village to find an alternate site for either rent or purchase. He will start identifying properties.

A resolution for a work authorization with Avalon Gardens Inc. for the completion of a canopy planting project around mile marker 87 passed. Two ordinances on second reading failed. One that would increase the purchasing parameters for the village manager from \$25,000 to \$50,000 without council approval failed. And after months and months of discussion, a motion for a referendum vote on four-year staggered council terms narrowly failed, with Pinder casting the deciding vote.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
April 3, 2024

New Islamorada Village Manager Cole outlines goals, challenges
Author/Byline: RICHARD TAMBORRINO

Less than two weeks into his new job as the Islamorada Village Manager, **Rob Cole** is gradually navigating his way through the many issues and challenges before the council and the community. He took some time to sit down recently for a conversation about his goals, expectations and the many tasks at hand. Perhaps one of his first challenges will be to fill the open finance director position, since Maria Bassett resigned to relocate to Virginia the day before **Cole** was officially installed. Bassett has remained on staff for now.

"The finance director position is a mission critical one," **Cole** began. "Maria has been very helpful so far getting me up to speed." He added that filling the position could occur in a variety of ways. "We may seek a transitional person to fill the position for interim support in the short term, while we seek a more permanent person with either public sector experience or perhaps a former chief financial officer. It all depends on who's out there." He added that public and private sector accounting are vastly different and indicated he would take his time finding a person with the right blend of experience.

Cole was asked about having one-on-one meetings with the five council members, saying he initiated meeting requests with each member to understand the "burning issues" at hand and to make sure all are "on the same page." His initial meeting was with Vice Mayor Sharon Mahoney, who said by phone she was very impressed with **Cole**.

Cole, careful in many of his responses but equally skilled as a public speaker, understands the "politics of his position" but doesn't convey any real appetite for that arena. "I'm focused on making sure there are 'no weak cogs' in the village staff and that public safety is our highest priority. I recognize my fiduciary public stewardship role in this community."

So far, village staff has been "warm and receptive," he said, adding he intends to "model the behaviors" he expects from staff. He's also a proponent of reciprocal learning — hopeful he's able to educate staff while being educated himself. "It's all about time and behaviors" he said about his onboarding process.

Asked what his onboarding process was like — a concern raised by Councilwoman Elizabeth Jolin several months ago since that was an obvious gap for new council members — **Cole** said he's reviewing the village charter and ordinances online to get up to speed.

He was asked if he was aware that a federal investigation into village activities as well as two state ethics investigations were ongoing. While not visibly surprised by the question, he said, "Until I'm fully briefed, it would not be appropriate for me to weigh in on that," adding "there's a framework for the processes that handle that."

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Cole has a firm grasp of regulatory requirements and understands the "unique characteristics" of the village. He acknowledged that the environmental distinctions between the Keys and other parts of the country are different, but surprisingly similar in many ways. But he emphasized he understands "the boundaries of his role," adding the Florida Sunshine Law is stronger than his what he experienced in Illinois and New York and affects land use regulations more stringently.

Cole conveyed his goal for "transparency and communication" and a commitment to empowering staff to be fully informed and part of the process. **Cole** exuded a sense of confidence as he described his village manager responsibilities, emphasizing his strong environmental ethic and its relationship with complex land-use issues. But while he didn't discuss the turbulent nature of the village's challenges in achieving stability in this key role over the past several years, he appeared poised to be a strong voice for the council.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Newsbreak
March 3, 2024

Village poised to finalize new manager hire
By Richard Tamborrino

The Islamorada Village Council is set to approve the contract that would pave the way for **Robert Cole** to become the first permanent village manager in over nine months at its Tuesday, March 12, council session. With an employment contract and compensation negotiations now complete, all that's needed is an affirmative vote from the council at next week's session. Since **Cole** is already in Florida, he could conceivably start with the village immediately thereafter. **Cole** shared that he moved to Key Largo prior to the interviewing process so he could "experience the area, the environment and the community" in preparation for his interview with the council. "I've been to Founders Park several times, fished at Snake Creek and taken in as much as possible," he said.

Having done due diligence preparing for this new venture, **Cole** was also clear that his goal is "to mesh the fundamentals of city government with its people." He said preparing for this potential role requires that. **Cole** touted his strengths in financial accountability and in developing programs and policies in his 30 years in public service. "Public engagement and public transparency are my strengths," he said. "The community needs to understand the whys of decisions that are being made." He continued that he respects elected officials and the tough decisions they are charged with, and that his role is to "provide them the information they need to make important decisions," to help them "understand the implications of decisions they're faced with and to help them reach conclusion on those decisions."

Cole was most recently the village manager in Scarsdale, New York — a community of 18,253 — having previously served as deputy village manager and public information officer over his eight years there. He has a master's degree in public service management from DePaul University, which provides him with a foundation in public administration and government affairs. He whimsically shared that "as a kid I wanted to be a grizzly bear researcher," which evolved into a desire for a wildlife career and then grew toward a strong attraction toward public service. **Cole** and his wife, Olga, who have four grown sons, have plans to spend their first 30 days in an Airbnb, then transition to a seven-month rental in Key Largo, assuming his contract is approved. He is currently visiting one of his sons in Gainesville, who is completing a fellowship in hyperbaric medicine and is expected to move to the Keys and practice in that field thereafter. Their other sons work in archeology, the shipping industry and the non-profit sector.

Cole touched on his strengths in areas like budgeting, community sustainability, emergency management and urban planning. He stressed that shaping organizational culture was one qualification that he believes can be achieved through dialogue between staff and elected officials, two traits that could serve the village well. When asked what his expectations were for this potential transition, **Cole** said he hopes "I'm welcomed into the community and that

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residents feel free to share their ideas. I want to integrate their viewpoints and perspectives with the council and staff and chart a strong course for this community. I'm willing to debate (issues) to the extent debate is necessary," stressing again his goal of conveying to residents "the whys of things."

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Scarsdale10583
September 27, 2023

Who’s the Boss? Scarsdale Village Manager Rob Cole Resigns Due to Change in Definition of Role

Author: Joann Wallenstein

In a surprising turn of events, the Scarsdale Board of Trustees has parted ways with Village Manager **Rob Cole**. At the opening of the Village Board meeting on Tuesday night September 26, Mayor Justin Arest read a statement explaining the absence of **Cole** from his usual spot on the dais. The statement was difficult to parse at first, but after a closer reading we understood that the Board and the Village Manager had fundamental differences about the interpretation of Village code and the lines of authority. This came to light when the Village retained law firm Keane & Beane to review best practices.

This audit illuminated two different philosophies on Village governance. It was **Cole’s** understanding that Scarsdale had a “Council-Manager” structure giving independence to the Village Manager’s office, rather than granting the elected officials the power to govern. Keane and Beane determined that the Board of Trustees should run Village government and set priorities for the staff, rather than having the Village Manager’s office call the shots. The statement below clarifies this saying, “Scarsdale has preferred to keep its long standing system whereby the Village Manager ... works as an executive assistant to the Mayor and Board of Trustees.”

Once **Cole** understood the definition of his role, he was no longer comfortable in the position and resigned. He said, “...I learned that the Village of Scarsdale is not, and has never been, a Council-Manager form of government. I am unable to comfortably serve the Scarsdale community under this unfortunate circumstance.” During the meeting, the Board added a resolution to the agenda to terminate **Cole** without cause, which was passed with a vote of 6-1.

Cole first came to Scarsdale as Deputy Mayor in 2015 from Oak Park Illinois where he served as the Assistant Village Manager for 19 years. In 2021, Village Manager Steve Pappalardo retired, and **Cole** was elevated to the position of Village Manager. He holds a B.S. and a Masters in Public Service Management from De Paul University.

Read the statement from Mayor Justin Arest below:

Tonight, I need to address an important issue about our Village Code that has been flagged for the Board by our Village Attorney, Keane and Beane, which also may explain why **Mr. Cole** is not sitting next to me this evening. I am going to give a little background and then explain the crux of their discovery at a high level. When Keane & Beane was retained as Village Attorney in September 2022, they began a review of Scarsdale’s code to ensure that we are operating with best and current practices. With Keane & Beane’s assistance, we have made necessary changes to our Noise Ordinance, telecom laws, and laws regarding unsafe buildings and structures. This work is still ongoing, and we intend to continue making all necessary code improvements so that

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Scarsdale is a model for 21st-century local government.

To backtrack a little, I also want to share a bit from my own experience on the Board for two terms prior to becoming Mayor. As a Trustee, I understood that our code divided certain responsibilities between the Mayor, Board, and Manager. While it had been stated that we have a Council-Manager form of government, I was unaware of exactly what that meant. I was also unable to locate the section of code to evidence that. In myriad contexts, I have always felt strongly that governing is done with laws and policies not by following tradition alone. If tradition is different than our code, it is our obligation to comply with the law and discuss whether we can learn from the tradition to make the law better.

When I became Mayor, I asked the Village Attorney to research this to ensure that we, as a Village and your elected representatives, were providing the proper oversight as dictated by law; and that the Board and the Village Manager had clarity as to how their roles were defined. What I did not know until I broached this question with the Village Attorney is that independent from my experience, our Village Attorney had similar questions about the nature of our form of government and had begun to do his own research into the roles of the Scarsdale Board of Trustees, Mayor and Village Manager.

In July, as part of the firm's code review, Keene and Beane informed the Board that although Scarsdale informally had the position of Village Manager since 1942, our predecessors on the Village Board opted against a true Council-Manager form of government. When the position of Village Manager was formally defined in 1949 by the Board at that time, following the work and report of a separate commission to study the matter, it was decided that our Village's elected officials would retain their vested powers. And in regards to the Village Manager's office, they stated that "Scarsdale has preferred to keep its long standing system whereby the Village Manager...works as an executive assistant to the Mayor and Board of Trustees."

This intent is still showcased today in Chapter 57 of the Scarsdale Village Code. There have been subsequent modifications to our code and the Manager position, but none have taken the necessary steps to effectuate a transfer of authority. In fact, when additional rights or authorities were added to the Manager role by Board Resolution in 1962, the former Board was careful to note that "it is not intended that [this] resolution shall modify or detract from the statutory duties of any Village Official."

I want to thank our Attorney for the important work ensuring that we are all operating within the limits of the law. And I want to make something clear, these findings and the work ahead are not intended to interfere with the work that our paid professional staff does for this community daily. We support the longstanding tradition of deference to the experts who keep our Village running smoothly and who manage the day-to-day operations. The affairs of the Village will continue to be handled by the Village Manager's office and business will be conducted as envisioned since the role of Scarsdale Village Manager was created.

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Robert A. Cole
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We believe that this Board and future Boards should continue to focus on policy and budgetary matters. But we also understand and respect the expectations of our constituents- that they are electing the officials who are ultimately accountable and responsible for overseeing the management of the Village of Scarsdale as our code, as well as NY state law, dictates.

Before year's end, the Board will hold a public work session to discuss how we refine our code to ensure we reduce ambiguity and roles are clearly defined so we can operate in the most efficient way possible ensuring excellent governance and transparency. Thank you for your patience with us as we work through this issue methodically and carefully. There is more to be discussed and considered, and because of our Village Attorney's findings, we will revise our code to correctly define the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Village Manager. Much of this will come from the appendix, section A318, which is the codification of a 1962 Board Resolution and will be incorporated into our code. A new draft Chapter 57 is already in the works and will be part of the same transparent and collaborative process that we follow with any proposed local law. We hope that many of you in our community will participate.

I mentioned that this is also related to **Mr. Cole's** absence. In his own words, "...I learned that the Village of Scarsdale is not, and has never been, a Council-Manager form of government. I am unable to comfortably serve the Scarsdale community under this unfortunate circumstance." Therefore, the Village of Scarsdale has no choice but to separate from **Mr. Cole**. We will promptly initiate a search for a new executive to advance the initiatives already in progress, ensuring that Scarsdale is and remains a model of exceptional village government in the 21st Century.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
March 16, 2023

‘Somebody is going to die at that intersection’: Parents plead for stoplight at Edgewood and Post roads, but a solution is hard to come by

Author: Will Fritz

It’s not a new problem. And it doesn’t appear to be going away anytime soon. Parents in Edgewood are sounding the alarm about the crosswalk at Edgewood and Post roads near the elementary school — they say the intersection remains perilous for children and even adults to cross, four years after the installation of flashing lights that signal drivers to stop for pedestrians.

Those signals — officially known as rectangular rapid-flashing beacons, or RRFBs, were installed in the first half of 2019, according to Scarsdale Village Manager **Robert Cole**. Yet drivers ignore them all the time, two parents of current and former Edgewood Elementary School students say.

Christine Weston, who said she’s lived in Edgewood for 12 years, said it’s a personal issue for her. Her son, 11 at the time, was hit — though he wasn’t injured, fortunately — when a driver failed to stop for him in May 2022. “He was walking his bicycle home from playing with friends at Edgewood [Elementary School] after school, and the crossing guard was not there,” Weston said, explaining what happened. “He pressed the light, waited, cars stopped, but the car in the lane closest to the sidewalk did not stop, and it clipped the front of his wheel. He reeled [the bicycle] back, and his foot brushed the tire of the car. So he was hit, but he wasn’t hurt other than now he’s deathly afraid to cross the street.”

Realizing how much worse that incident could have been, Weston began pushing for stronger safety measures at the intersection. Weston said the problem has become more acute in recent years because there are now more children living on the west side of Post Road who need to use the crosswalk to get to Edgewood Elementary School. “After COVID, I started hearing stories from neighbors of mine who now have very little kids, and there’s more than 10 kids who are walking across now,” Weston said. “They were telling me horror stories of trying to get across and not being able to.”

One parent on the west side of Post Road, Glenn McClanan, said he’s frequently scared to walk his 6-year-old daughter across the intersection to school. “With my wife, I call it our daily brush with death,” McClanan said. “I know that’s dark humor, but it really is crazy.” McClanan said he doesn’t even think it’s a problem of drivers not seeing what’s going on — he thinks some intentionally don’t stop. “What I’ve found is, when I’m in the intersection and I hold up my phone taking a video, all of a sudden they’ll slow down,” McClanan said. “That actually makes me really sad, and it’s like you see us — I’m 6 foot 3 and I wear a bright red coat. The fact they pretend like they’re missing me is ridiculous, but it’s really sad they see me with my 6-year-old child and they refuse to stop.”

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Nancy DeGloria, the crossing guard at the intersection during opening and dismissal at Edgewood Elementary School, said drivers ignore her all the time, even with her reflective vest and large STOP sign. “They don’t want to stop!” she exclaimed in an interview with the Inquirer the afternoon of Tuesday, March 7. Not long after that remark, the driver of a Honda Accord stopped at the last second while DeGloria was trying to help a teenager cross Post Road. “It’s very hard, because I can’t cross anybody until I make sure they all stop, and they don’t even want to stop,” said DeGloria, who estimated she’s been the crossing guard there for about eight years.

Both Weston and McClanan said they know what the solution is: an actual stoplight. “I don’t understand why there isn’t one here,” Weston said. “Because even with cars turning onto Post Road, it’s a gamble as to whether or not your car is going to get hit when you’re making a left or a right because nobody slows down.” McClanan said the very design of the road makes people want to speed, and the only thing that may make any difference is a new light. “It’s a straightaway between lights, people are going from one major population center to another ... people are viewing it as a highway,” McClanan said. “I’m not somebody who wants to put a light at every intersection and whatnot. I wish you could just reduce the speed limit and that would be enough, but people are already ignoring the speed limit.”

Unfortunately, adding a stoplight on Post Road is no easy endeavor. That’s because it’s actually a state road, part of New York State Route 22. “We have been working diligently to remedy this situation. We must work with the state because we don’t control the Post Road,” Scarsdale Mayor Jane Veron said in an email.

Cole, the village manager, added more detail, acknowledging the RRFBs have not been effective in making the crossing safe. “By law, the flashing beacons do not require a vehicle to stop unless a pedestrian has established themselves in the crosswalk, while establishing oneself in a crosswalk before the vehicles stop is very dangerous for persons of all ages, but especially so for youth and those with limited mobility,” **Cole** said in an email. “The Village is continuing to press [the New York State Department of Transportation] for signalization (a red light) that, once activated, requires a vehicle to stop irrespective of whether a pedestrian has established themselves in the crosswalk.”

Cole said the state Department of Transportation initiated a study in fall 2022 on the intersection, which the village hopes will demonstrate support for a stoplight, rather than additional RRFBs, a solution the state is also considering, according to **Cole**. However, even if the village does get its way, adding a new light is still a process that could take years. “According to NYSDOT, installation of a traffic signal is a multiyear project. Regardless of the location, size of project, etc., they report that the design process, right-of-way acquisitions, equipment procurement, installation, etc., is a ‘long multi-year process,’” **Cole** wrote. “Thus, if they should decide to move forward with a red light, staff will endeavor to work with NYSDOT and our state elected officials to expedite the project timeline to the maximum extent feasible; surely not every traffic light installation is a long multi-year process.”

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cole told the Inquirer the state Department of Transportation has suggested the village conduct more traffic enforcement at the intersection. However, he doesn't think that's a true fix to the problems at Post and Edgewood roads. Increased traffic enforcement, **Cole** wrote, "is costly to taxpayers, results in police being taken away from other pressing public safety needs, and perhaps most importantly, does not result in lasting changes to driver behavior along Post due to its regional/subregional travel characteristics. It is a nonsolution to the longstanding safety issues along Post Road, constituting a red herring insofar as discussions of pedestrian safety at this location are concerned. Scarsdale PD already performs heavy enforcement along Post Road, including periodic traffic missions focused on the Edgewood crossing, yet the crossing continues to be dangerous."

Cole echoed McClanan's earlier point — the very design of Post Road simply encourages drivers to speed. "Frankly, Post Road is dangerous by design and neither flashing beacons nor a traffic signal at the subject location are going to solve the myriad safety problems in the corridor, though a red light would be a substantial improvement at the point location — Post needs corridor-level redesign," **Cole** wrote. "Addressing corridor safety needs [holistically] has potentially enormous safety and quality-of-life benefits, while continuing down the ad hoc (one-spot-at-a-time) solution path, with each point [taking] years to resolve, does little to move the needle on this unsafe stretch of state roadway."

A solution can't come soon enough, Weston and McClanan said. McClanan said as the intersection is currently, he can't imagine letting his own daughter, or any other child, walk to school alone. "She says, 'Daddy, when can I walk to school by myself?'" McClanan said. "And I want to say 'when you're 10' or whatever, but as somebody who's definitely well past elementary school and is terrified to cross the intersection, I don't want kids crossing that intersection the way it is now. Somebody is going to die at that intersection."

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Peekskill Daily Voice (NY)
December 9, 2022

Summer Bummer: Westchester County Town Deems Year-Round Pool Facility Too Costly To Build

Author: Ben Crnic

After weighing options, a Westchester County town has decided that building a pool facility that could be open all year would be too expensive to maintain. On Tuesday, Dec. 6, officials in Scarsdale decided that building a year-round pool facility would prove too costly to construct and maintain, despite many residents saying that they would prefer it to a seasonal facility, according to an announcement by the town.

The decision came after a meeting held by the committee assigned to look into the matter, which includes the town's mayor Jane Veron, and Village Manager **Robert Cole**. Officials said that a year-round pool would "impose too high of a financial burden on Scarsdale residents," according to the town's announcement.

Officials also attributed the decision to the complications that would come with building a pool facility that could be open all year, which might delay the construction process and add costs to the project. Operating the pool all year would also be difficult, officials said. In a survey held by the town earlier in the year, most respondents had said they would prefer a year-round pool, according to town officials.

Despite this, the town will now move forward with building a seasonal pool facility to replace the current one located at 311 Mamaroneck Road, which is at the end of its expected useful life, town officials said. "The Board looks forward to working with community groups and Scarsdale residents to shape and refine an appealing pool complex that best serves all members of our community, while preserving and honoring the essence of the pool experience, with its distinctive natural setting and easygoing, welcoming feel," town officials said in the announcement.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
October 24, 2022

Sump pump control to manage water flow

Author: Todd Sliss

With an increase in severe storms that lead to flooding and backed up sewage pipes and storm drains becoming more prevalent in certain areas of Scarsdale, the village board of trustees at its Oct. 18 work session discussed one potential solution among the many being taken and/or considered. With some exceptions, Department of Public Works superintendent Jeff Coleman talked about having sump pump connections be certified as up to code — either properly and legally draining into the stormwater system or being routed into the property — when a homeowner goes to sell their house and when a homeowner is doing a renovation of \$100,000 or more.

Village manager **Robert Cole** called it “a key strategy in the overall effort to reduce those impacts” that will have “a meaningful impact, but it will not preclude the types of circumstances that folks have experienced in the past.” In other words, it’s a piece of the puzzle, not a complete solution.

Coleman estimated 300 to 350 houses are sold annually and another 100 to 130 doing \$100,000 renovations — this is not counting new houses that are built in compliance — therefore, significant progress could be made over the next decade or so. “We’re not going to solve the problem overnight,” he said. Trustee Jonathan Lewis called that “reasonably fast.” The Infrastructure, Municipal Services and Sustainability Pillar Committee consisting of Deputy Mayor Randy Whitestone, Lewis and Trustee Ken Mazer met over the summer with village staff, as Whitestone called stormwater management “a continuing priority for the pillar and I believe for staff and our fellow board members.” He called Coleman’s presentation that followed “one proposed step in the continuing discussion” to deal with “long-term issues.”

Coleman said the village has spent “a lot of money” looking into the local sewer system with smoke testing to identify blockages and bad connections, in addition to following through with any necessary repairs. “Many of the homes in Scarsdale are very old and their sewer laterals, which connect their house to the main, are equally as old,” Coleman said. “Some have been maintained very well and others have not been, I surmise, maintained at all over the years to the degree they’re functioning and there’s no reason for folks to call a plumber to come out and do something.” With other municipalities enacting connection laws, the village is looking into that option as well to “ensure the sewer lateral itself — the pipe that connects the home to the public main and exists on private property — as well as connections to the sewer, the internal to the home and from the exterior, are all permitted and allowed,” Coleman said.

Coleman said this would be part of a solution to have a sewer system that is “functioning properly and without backups, backflows, surcharges and problems” and avoid getting sewer water in the sewer and stormwater in the storm system. Coleman said a plumber or specialist

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Robert A. Cole
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would certify that all connections are up to code and the village would certify those results. Trustee Karen Brew asked what legal sump pump drainage entails. Coleman said the system has to be properly buried in the property so the water can be “recharged into the soil” or a drainage system. In rare cases it can discharge into the grass for those who don’t have much flooding. Some sump pumps are illegally streamed into the sewage system.

When water isn’t draining properly, there is “more water than the sewer can handle,” Coleman said, noting the village is “doing our best to eliminate it in the public side, but the private side needs to be addressed substantially.” “The easiest way to think of it is the sewer system is a collection of pipes that are relatively small,” Coleman said. “They’re only 6 inches, 8 inches; in the larger portion of the system they are a little bit larger, but that’s all that’s in front of your home. When you look at a storm drain, we’re looking at something that’s typically 12 inches or 18 inches, much, much larger. That’s designed to carry stormwater. The sewer system is designed really to only carry sanitary sewer water and a little bit more than that.”

Lewis said it’s all “about health and sanitary management for people’s homes.” He called sewage backup “bad public policy, bad for the public health.” Brew had a “general concern with the burden that this puts on a lot of our homeowners” who might have bought a house with an illegally set up system. Brew said illegal hook-ups are “rampant in Scarsdale,” whether homeowners are aware of it or not. “I think it’s worth noting that homes that have that condition present already have a burden to remedy. Yet whether they’re told to do so as part of a pre-sale inspection or part of a major renovation and oftentimes in the context of a major renovation code-compliant issues, that should get identified by our building inspections staff” who would require the property owner to remedy that situation, “irrespective of whether this law is present or not,” **Cole** said. He also said that in any major reconstruction project homeowners are required to bring systems up to code and the village inspection team has added a checklist item to “look for illegal connections to the sewer system, and to call those out as requiring a remedy.”

Some trustees noted the same has been true over the years for underground oil tanks, asbestos and radon. “The practice of doing these kinds of things evolves over time and in theory helps to improve the overall quality of housing stock in terms of its code compliance and safety for [occupants] ... and impacts the environment,” **Cole** said. “It’s not an easy question and it ends up costing people money [when] they transfer the property.” Brew said construction laws should also be looked at and she noted much of the water issue in the village is due to the fact that there’s “no land to soak up the water and it’s a very rocky soil and we’re so built up and yet everywhere you look, there’s building and building going on, taking a larger footprint on the property; smaller houses are torn down, and bigger ones are put up and we’re just creating more of an issue,” she said. “It just seems there are bigger fish to fry here as well.” The village plans to look into how other communities are handling this issue and continue the discussion at a future work session.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
April 2, 2022

Village files \$62.3M budget plan for FY 22-23; public hearing set for April 5

Author: Valerie Abrahams

The fiscal year 2022-23 tentative village budget filed March 18 includes replacing outdated vehicles in the village fleet, upgrading to the village's aging water infrastructure, adding several staff, including a code enforcement officer, a tree trimmer, a pool maintenance mechanic, and a full-time naturalist at the Weinberg Nature Center. That translates into a levy increase of 3.7%, which for the average Scarsdale taxpayer is about \$216.67 per year, with a tax rate of \$4.9535 per \$1,000 of assessed home value. To balance the budget, the village plans to use \$1.17 million in fund balance. It also incorporated a \$1 million decrease to the library transfer, which is made possible because of the level of fund balance the library was maintaining.

“This will not in any way adversely impact the operations of the library,” according to Village Manager **Robert Cole**. The village also has \$1.84 million in federal funding from ARPA that will be used to fund some capital projects. According to a budget summary presented by **Cole** at the village board meeting March 22, the average tax levy increase in Scarsdale has been steadily declining over 20 years, while expenses continued to grow. **Cole** included a slide of the five-year rolling average of the tax levy increase since 2002, which showed that the levy increase was “kept low by continually deferring projects, which created a backlog of needed capital improvements.”

“What that’s done, in effect, is starved us for resources,” **Cole** said. “Our expenses, on the other hand, have increased and it’s created a structural deficit in terms of our nondiscretionary spending versus our discretionary spending. And what happens in those cases is we have to pay increases on things like health insurance and utility [costs] over time.” Therefore, the tax levy increase of 3.7% is “important to help catch up on these projects and curtail additional projects from piling up, which would result in additional tax burden during future budget years,” as stated in the budget document.

Cole said things like vehicles that need to be replaced on a routine cycle, as well as underground infrastructure “tend to get deferred” while the need to replace them grows. “We really are attempting to begin to turn that ship around ... to address what has happened in terms of long-term deferred maintenance, and to begin to head back into a state of good repair,” **Cole** said.

On the revenue side, 73% of the village's \$61 million in revenues comes from real property taxes. The village continues to be “heavily reliant on property taxes,” **Cole** said, but he added, “We are continuing to look at other opportunities to generate new revenues as the fiscal year continues to progress.” This year's budget process took a new tack this year, utilizing a framework for strategic and financial planning and a “vision to be a model of excellence and 21st century municipal operations and governance mission,” said **Cole**. The new approach also “supports transparency and accountability” as all budget discussions were available in hybrid

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format and recorded for replay, he said. The foundation for budget discussions was the village’s new “four pillars of government” approach, which focuses on quality of life; infrastructure, municipal services and sustainability; public safety; and economic development and land use. “Each of these pillars helps focus our energies on identifying goals and aligning the resource commitments that we’re making in this year’s budget to the outcomes that they’re intended to achieve,” **Cole** said.

Taxpayers will have a chance to comment on the budget plan Tuesday, April 5, at 6 p.m. during a public hearing — in person at village hall or online via Zoom. Following the public hearing, the village board is expected to adopt the 2022-23 budget plan Tuesday, April 26, prior to the May 1 deadline.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
January 24, 2022

Village reveals updated hazard mitigation plan

Author: Irene Li

The Scarsdale Board of Trustees held a public work session Tuesday, Jan. 11 to discuss the village's Tropical Depression Ida's After Action Report, and the 2021 Westchester County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, approved by FEMA in December with a directive for all participating municipalities to adopt the plan by Jan. 28.

On Sept. 1, 2021, the remnants of Tropical Storm Ida hit the region, pouring more than 8 inches of rain in a 24-hour period in Scarsdale, inundating multiple properties around the village with unprecedented flood waters. The storm caused flooding to the point where multiple village roadways became impassable, multiple cars were abandoned or their owners were stranded, and village-owned buildings were damaged. Recognizing this, the village updated its hazard mitigation plan for the first time since 2015 with upgrades for modern technology and systems that will more efficiently protect the Scarsdale community. "We've noted how severe weather events have changed," said Trustee Jonathan Lewis. "We have some modernization to do."

The Westchester Hazard Mitigation Plan was created in 2016 to reduce risk and future losses from natural or man-made hazards by adopting effective policies and management processes to maximize the resilience of infrastructure and minimize losses or service interruption. It was updated last year. Later this month, the board of trustees expects to adopt Scarsdale's version of the plan, developed through a team effort by Village Manager **Robert Cole**, Assistant Village Manager Ingrid M. Richards, Village Planner Gregory Cutler, Superintendent of Public Works Jeff Coleman, Village Engineer David Goessl and Scarsdale police and fire chiefs, as "the best practice emergency management process of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery," according to the draft presented to the board.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
December 5, 2021

Village launches updated, ‘more accessible’ website

Author: Valerie Abrahams

The Advisory Council on Communications (ACC) and village staff announced the launch of Scarsdale’s streamlined government website, redesigned to enhance the visitor experience. The redesigned website is intended to be “more user-friendly,” according to a statement released Nov. 29, with new “scene-setting photos” taken by former Scarsdale resident Jay Cohen to “telegraph a sense of place that is authentic and appealing, true to our hometown.” Local photographer Andi Schreiber also shared her work to enhance the site.

The communications team acknowledged the sports and recreation department registration platform “still needs improving,” and they will “continue to fine-tune the virtual experience at Scarsdale.com,” with the ultimate goal to “make it easy to find what you need on the site — whether it’s paying a bill or checking the compost pickup schedule.” ACC Chair Dara Gruenberg called the improved website “a true labor of love” for the members of the council, who worked on the project for the past year with village staff. That effort, she said, “demonstrates what good work can occur when our volunteers and paid professionals collaborate for the betterment of Scarsdale.”

The “more user-friendly” village website is designed to “encourage community engagement and to create more transparency within our government,” Gruenberg said, with thanks to the ACC Website Redesign Committee, led by Jisha Dymond, and to the village’s IT director Chris O’Brien, Village Manager **Rob Cole**, and village trustee liaison and former ACC member Sameer Ahuja, whose “help has been instrumental.”

Mayor Jane Veron said she is “exceedingly impressed” by the skills and expertise of the members of the ACC. “They have elevated our website, offering a more streamlined, user-friendly experience. The goal is to forge stronger connections with residents by making information more accessible,” Veron said, noting that the website’s “dazzling visuals” are “likely to attract” residents to the site more frequently.

Cole cited the “admirable volunteerism and collaboration” that went into the new website project, saying, “The village of Scarsdale benefits immensely both financially and operationally from the many residents who lend their professional expertise and generously donate their personal time.” **Cole** also congratulated the ACC and village staff for an “outstanding deliverable” that will “not only benefit the members of the Scarsdale community, but also serve as a refined portal through which Scarsdale is experienced by nonresident visitors, including persons contemplating making this wonderful community their home or new place of business.”

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Robert A. Cole
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The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
October 1, 2021

Village hall union employees get 2% wage increase

Author: Nicholas Perrone

In a last-minute addition to its business agenda, the Scarsdale Board of Trustees voted unanimously Sept. 28 to increase the wages of unionized village hall employees by 2%. The unionized employees' salary increase will amount to \$30,078 and will be retroactive to Sept. 15, but only for personnel who were employed between June 1, 2020 and Sept. 14, 2021.

The village's 32 unionized employees are members of the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) and work in the village in the court, police department, recreation department and others. They did not receive a wage increase in the 2020-21 budget due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which sunk village revenues and caused the village to enact austerity measures.

According to a memo to the board from village manager **Rob Cole**, the CSEA and the village had been negotiating a raise prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but couldn't reach an agreement. Following mediation and fact finding, the village and the CSEA agreed to reopen negotiations if nonunion employees received a wage increase. The board passed a resolution Sept. 14 to raise nonunion salaries by 2%. The nonunion salary increase, which totaled \$61,224, was covered by money received through the American Rescue Plan Act.

"The CSEA and nonunion employees did not receive an increase during the pandemic as we had implemented an austerity budget," said Mayor Jane Veron. "Now that we have better visibility into our finances and have received federal American Rescue Plan dollars, we will vote to make the adjustment, to recognize the hard work, dedication, professionalism and personal sacrifice of our CSEA employees."

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Robert A. Cole
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Scarsdale10583
September 2, 2021

Hurricane Ida Wallops Scarsdale: 1,100 Without Power, Schools Closed

Author: Joanne Wallenstein

After Hurricane Henri failed to pack a punch ten days ago, many ignored the forecast for Ida, which proved to have a far more powerful impact on the Northeast. The massive storm brought record rainfall dropping over 3 inches of water in Central Park in just one hour. The rains flooded all major Scarsdale roads, leaving the Bronx River Parkway, the Hutchinson River Parkway and sections of the Post Road impassable. At 10:48 pm, on September 1, the Village of Scarsdale warned residents to stay home.

Their email said, “The Village of Scarsdale is presently experiencing widespread flooding. Please refrain from travel until the flooded roadways clear -- vehicles are becoming stranded and it is not safe to be out driving -- stay inside. If you experience water in your basement, please be cognizant of a potential electric hazard and seek professional assistance in the morning. The Fire Department is not assisting with basement flooding until after the storm has passed. Please contact 911 with any life-threatening emergency and defer lesser needs until after the storm has passed. Thank you and PLEASE stay indoors and off our local roadways for your own safety.”

We later learned that several drivers had to be rescued from their cars during the night. The flooding also closed another Scarsdale artery, Metro North Railroad, leaving thousands stranded throughout the area. As of 8:00 am on September 2 service had not resumed. Water and wind has left 1,100 without power in Scarsdale, and Con Edison is still assessing the damage. The outage map shows outages in Edgewood, Fox Meadow and Heathcote. In addition, flooding at a Verizon facility has caused a widespread service interruption.

At 5:41 am on September 2, Village Manager **Rob Cole** reported, “The flood waters continue to recede from our roadways, though there may remain problem areas throughout the morning. Residents are encouraged to minimize local travel and to avoid all flooded roadways – several persons were rescued during the overnight hours after having driving into flood waters.” An email from School Superintendent Thomas Hagerman at 6 am on September 2 delivered the sad news that all seven schools have experienced flooding and are closed, for what would have been just the second day of school. Crews are working to repair the damage and the district hopes to reopen on Friday September 3, 2021. He asked parents to keep children inside away from downed power lines and flooding. Residents are reporting flooded basements, knee deep in water, with no way to clear it.

In other news, hundreds were stranded at the US Open in Flushing Meadows. Though the matches continued in Arthur Ashe until 2 am, areas outside and even inside the stadium were flooded. The LIRR and subway service were suspended. The Grand Central Parkway and BQE were flooded and those who drove found their cars submerged in water. There are reports that

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

some slept over at Arthur Ashe Stadium as they had no options to get home. As of 8:30 am, the sun was out but the Bronx River Parkway looked more like a river than a road.

At 1:35 pm we received the following update from Village Manager **Robert Cole** on the state of affairs in Scarsdale: "I am amidst trying to get the latest ConEd info. The online outage map lists the best available outage updates. Right now, it still reports over 1,100 outages." "There is a cut and clear crew in the Village and they have three more locations to clear. In addition, they have repair assessment personnel circulating. No estimated restoration times yet and no restoration crews in the Village yet, as far as we are aware; cut and clear is a necessary prerequisite in many cases." "The Verizon outage appears widespread. One of their facilities was flooded and they are working to repair the damage, as we have been advised."

The roads still inundated include Brookby, Rugby, and Greendale – they are impassable due to flood waters. Areas blocked by downed wire and/or trees include Paddington/Ogden, Madison/Carmen and the Heathcote Bypass.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
August 15, 2021

Robert Cole is new village manager in Scarsdale

Author: Nicholas Perrone

Concluding a nationwide 15-week search to fill Scarsdale's village manager position following Steve Pappalardo's retirement in July, GovHR, an Illinois-based recruitment firm, found that the most qualified candidate was already working in village hall.

Rob Cole, 57, deputy village manager since 2015, was sworn in as Scarsdale's sixth village manager at the board of trustees' business meeting Aug. 10.

In March, after Pappalardo announced his plan to retire, the board of trustees voted unanimously to enter into an agreement with GovHR to provide a six-phased three-to-five-month effort to find a replacement for Pappalardo. The village paid GovHR \$21,000 for the search. According to GovHR's chief executive officer Joellen Cardematori, the search took multiple employees 400 hours and resulted in 56 applications across 16 states and one application from Mexico.

By the end of June, the candidate pool was narrowed down to seven applicants. Interviews eventually led the board to select two final candidates who were interviewed again in July, with **Cole** being the final pick. "Through this extensive, exhaustive and incredibly complete process, there is no doubt that **Rob Cole** absolutely stood out," said Mayor Jane Veron. "Having searched far and wide, we found our new leader right in our midst. And how lucky we are for that."

Cole said no decisions had been made about filling his now vacant deputy manager position, though an internal conversation about that would be forthcoming. Growing up straddling the Chicago suburbs with his mother and the inner city with his father, **Cole** had a diverse childhood experience that played a role in his decision to pursue a career in public service. Summer trips to his grandparent's farm in south central Kentucky piqued his interest in a career in wildlife biology and he continues to be an avid outdoorsman, as well as a hiker and fisherman.

Cole wanted to research grizzly bears in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in the Flathead National Forest in Montana. When that career choice didn't quite pan out, he thought about what else he'd be able to do in the field of public service, eventually setting his sights on city management. "It really dovetailed nicely with my ability to help improve people's lives," said **Cole**.

After working a few jobs in the private sector as a quality assurance analyst, **Cole** decided to apply to Chicago's DePaul University to study liberal arts with a concentration in writing and ethics. While studying for his undergraduate degree, he got an entry level job in the village of Oak Park, Illinois, and slowly moved his way up the ladder in the municipality over 20 years to become the village's assistant manager. While working in Oak Park, **Cole** returned to DePaul University to obtain a master's degree in public service management with a concentration in

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metropolitan planning and urban affairs. During his time as assistant village manager in Illinois, **Cole** oversaw the development of a multihazard mitigation plan, managed and coordinated more than \$12 million in transportation-focused grants and was appointed the lead on a controversial \$2.6 billion highway expansion project, which he said showed his approach to analyzing and solving problems. “I try to figure out different solutions that maybe aren’t quite as evident to other people who are really focused in a sometimes myopic way of getting their particular agenda advanced or their particular needs met,” said **Cole**, who currently lives in New Castle, New York. “Sometimes it can be such a struggle within the government framework and the framework of communities that people get a little bit too focused on things to [the extent] where they don’t really look outside of their wheelhouse.”

Cole also worked on multiple committees during his tenure in Oak Park, including the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s land use board, the Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education strategic plan steering committee, the O’Hare [Airport] Noise Compatibility Commission and the West Central Municipal Conference legislative committee and intergovernmental committee. Being interested in moving up to deputy manager and eventually a manager position, **Cole** jumped at the chance to serve as deputy manager in Scarsdale.

In his six years in the position, he has been a point person for the press and the public throughout the pandemic, in addition to his usual responsibilities. He also has played a major role in preparing and presenting the village’s annual capital budget and has been a guiding voice in refining and implementing Mayor Jane Veron’s strategic and financial planning framework. Looking ahead, **Cole** said he wants “out of the box” solutions to improve the village’s internal operations. He said he wants to continue the effort to make the village paperless, which was first initiated in April when village treasurer Ann Scaglione announced plans to streamline budgetary processes and increase workflow by digitizing internal documents; she also has set up systems to allow residents to opt in to receive tax bills, receipts and reminder notices via email.

Using a surfing analogy to illustrate his point, **Cole** explained that you run the risk of falling behind if change isn’t happening. “You’ll see a set coming in and it looks like a good wave and so you’re planning, you’re watching, you’re maintaining, you’re adjusting when necessary and then you have to start paddling hard to catch the wave. You have to work hard to achieve your goals,” said **Cole**. “If you paddle hard enough and you time it just right, you catch that wave and you ride all the way into the shoreline ... the problem being if you start paddling too late or you’re not strategic enough, you can miss the wave and you’ll become irrelevant. Start paddling too early, you’ll get out ahead of the wave and the wave will crush you.”

Cole said the village is going to be more agile and strategic in how it approaches community issues and concerns by increasing communication, vetting ideas and thinking outside the box by challenging the status quo. He will also oversee many of the upcoming projects on the village’s radar including the municipal pool complex RFP, the “complete streets” traffic studies and the potential reevaluation of Freightway garage, though that isn’t yet an identified priority. “Let’s keep it maintained, not let it deteriorate further, address any issues that we encounter and then at

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the ... appropriate time I'm sure we're going to have a public conversation that really fleshes out what the best options are for that location," said **Cole**.

Sharing his excitement for his new role, **Cole** said he believed the transition to village manager would be seamless since he's well integrated in the Scarsdale community and people know him and how he operates. He accepts that there will be significant challenges, though he said the change needs to be deliberate and cooperative. "I'm going to strive to make public service rewarding for our staff, and place organizational emphasis on transparency, accountability and responsiveness," said **Cole**. "When I say responsive, I'm saying being responsive to the needs of our residents, to the community and striving in general for service excellence."

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Scarsdale10583
August 12, 2021

Rob Cole Named Scarsdale’s 6th Village Manager, Zoning Changes Enacted to Limit Home Size

Author: Joanne Wallenstein

At an in-person and virtual summer meeting of the Scarsdale Board of Trustees on August 10, 2021, Deputy Village Manager **Rob Cole** was named the sixth Village Manager in Scarsdale’s history. The mayor and members of the Board of Trustees expressed unanimous support for **Cole**, who they chose after an extensive national search.

The Mayor explained that the Village had “cast a wide net,” and interviewed an impressive roster of candidates from across the country. The Village surveyed residents to determine what qualities they sought in a Village Manager and spoke to Village Staff about their priorities. Veron said **Cole** was “undoubtedly the right person at the right time.”

Voicing her support for **Cole**, Veron said, “**Rob** embodies the values of our community and has the skills and capabilities to partner with us to shape the future of Scarsdale. It is clear that **Rob** has a deep understanding of our community, has internalized our goals and challenges, and has the insight and wisdom to chart our future course. His belief system parallels ours: collaboration, transparency, innovation; respect, dignity, responsiveness, progress. Most importantly, **Rob** knows that our Village is only as good as the people we employ. He recognizes that our department heads and staff are the best in the business. “

Joellen Cademartori of GovHR USA, the search firm that was retained to manage the process, was in attendance at the meeting and explained that 56 applications were received. After a comprehensive vetting process, 14 were presented to the Village Board, seven were selected to be interviewed and two finalists were chosen, from which **Cole** was chosen. Cademartori praised the work of the Village Board and staff, saying, “The efforts of the board and Mayor were unsurpassed. I have worked with many clients and you are probably the top five in my mind.”

In response to questions about why the Board undertook the cost of a national search when **Cole** was already in Scarsdale, Board member Sameer Ahuja said, “Had we not done a national search, I would not have been comfortable.” About **Cole** he said, “The ability to say no is as important as the ability to say yes. I have seen him push back and challenge staff. He will be a leader and a trusted manager of the day –to-day affairs of the Village.”

Looking back at Scarsdale history, Trustee Whitestone noted that the position was first created in 1941 when Village Engineer Arthur Boniface was named the first Village Manager. He added, “**Rob Cole** will continue that great tradition.” Jonathan Lewis said, “As we seek to transform our Village into a model, it’s clear that **Rob Cole** is the best candidates for this moment We aspire to nothing less than the highest standards. . . **Rob Cole** will not only meet but exceed these expectations.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

During Public Comments Dara Gruenberg of Hampton Road called in to say, “I am thrilled to congratulate **Rob Cole** on his appointment to Village Manager and I commend the board on their great selection. I have worked closely with **Rob** for the last several years through our work on the Advisory Council on Communications and in other capacities in my volunteer life and as a resident. I cannot think of a better person to take on the role of Village Manager. Rob is exceptional. He is a great listener, a problem solver and has a knack for taking creative ideas and turning them into reality. He has a refreshing can-do attitude and always makes times for residents. Congratulations **Rob!** I can’t wait to see all you will accomplish in partnership with our fantastic village staff, our hardworking village board, dedicated volunteers and residents. Michael Levine, Michael Rubin and Robert Berg also congratulated **Cole** noting his diligence and commitment to the residents and the community.

And **Cole** said, “Today marks a professional milestone for me – one of six village managers since 1941.... I will strive to make public service rewarding for the staff and emphasize accountability, transparency and responsiveness to residents. I look forward with great optimism to partner with Village staff to shape the Scarsdale of the future.... I genuinely love the Scarsdale community and cherish the opportunity to serve.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Scarsdale10583
May 27, 2021

Consultants Provide Analysis of Village's 100 Year-Old Water Distribution System: Rob Cole to Serve as Interim Village Manager

Author: Sammy Silberberg

How does Scarsdale address and manage its aging infrastructure? How does the town decide which improvements to make and how to keep up with the demands of residents? These are among the questions the Board of Trustees sought to answer when it commissioned the firm Woodard & Curran to create a Water Demand Study and examine the needs of the village's water infrastructure system. After reviewing 12 applications and interviewing five firms, the Board decided in September 2020 that Woodard & Curran was the most suitable choice to conduct this analysis. During the Board's Work Session on Tuesday, May 26, 2021, three representatives from Woodard & Curran presented their draft report to the community.

The Scarsdale water system consists of 98 miles of pipe, two pumping stations, and two water tanks. The focus of the report was the water distribution system. The firm compiled and digitized existing maps, created an updated system map, reviewed the system's maintenance history, developed a new hydraulic model, and created a capital plan for the water distribution system. To update the current mapping system, the firm reviewed over 500 paper maps, sketches, and notes and updated historic mapping information. They used this new mapping as the foundation for the hydraulic model. Using the model, they simulated and analyzed the flow of water through the system, evaluated fire flow availability, and gauged how the system responds to issues. The model accounts for friction from areas of older pipes and factors in where water is used most frequently. The standard recommended system pressure is 35 pounds per square inch (PSI), and Scarsdale's system achieves this figure except for a few spots in higher elevation areas. Pipe velocity was up to code throughout the system, and water pressure loss was worst in areas with unlined cast-iron pipes. In terms of fire protection, most of the system has greater than 1000 gallons per minute of protection, with a few higher elevation areas having less than 500.

When reviewing the system's maintenance history, the firm found several issue areas that consisted of older and unlined pipes. There were around 200 water main breaks and pipe failures between 2008-2020, which the representatives identified as a high number of issues, but said the figure was not unexpected. In developing an improvement plan, Woodard & Curran prioritized the areas of highest maintenance needs and ranked remaining pipe segments on the likelihood and consequences of failure. In total, 76 pipe rehabilitation projects were identified for an estimated total of \$103 million. The firm identified the top three priority projects:

1. Crossway: A section of unlined universal joint segment that is corroded. The proposed solution is the replacement of three-quarters of a mile of pipe along Crossway.
2. Garden Road / Mamaroneck Road: This is one of the areas of lowest pressure and lower fire flow availability. The proposed solution is a combination of lining and replacement for two miles

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

of piping.

3. Griffin Avenue: Another area of concern that the firm suggests focusing on.

Woodard & Curran and now in the phase of conducting a Rate Study to review the current rate structure and revenue. This study will include a cost-of-service assessment, a revenue and benchmarking assessment, and a rate model development and review. The firm's presentation also included information and resources for various government grants and funding sources that could be potential sources of revenue for the project.

After the presentation, Board members and staff had a chance to ask the representatives questions about the report and make suggestions for future work. Trustee Crandall inquired about putting some of the electric and cable lines underground while this construction work is happening to make the village more storm resilient. In a similar vein, Deputy Village Manager **Rob Cole** asked if it would be possible to tie in a high-capacity data line into Post Road and bring it to the Village Center to support business development. The representatives noted that different types of projects can be joined together while the pipes are already being worked on, and these are all considerations the Board will want to consider while making project decisions.

Ms. Crandall also asked about the issues the town of Greenburgh had when they replaced their pipes, and if the firm has done any studies on the toxicity of these pipes. The firm responded that Greenburgh's issue was not related to toxicity but instead had to do with conventional cement lining, which will not be an issue for Scarsdale if they choose a more modern construction material. Trustee Ahuja asked when the firm was choosing the projects for the water system, how much of the decision was based on subjective judgment versus scientific fact. The representative replied that there is a need for both when designing a plan. Engineers must evaluate where the areas of concern are based on their experience and look where the data on past pipe maintenance supports project work. He added that to develop a sensible project, subjective judgment must be applied to frame the construction in the most cost-efficient manner and to cluster groups of pipes together based on similarities and economic feasibility. Mayor Veron, as well as other trustees, also spoke about the sustainability practices that could potentially be incorporated into the project. Village Manager Pappalardo added that once funding is secured, it will be unlikely the village can accomplish more than one project every two years. He added that coordinating between the water department and the sewage department could make the whole project more effective. The Board eagerly awaits the results from Woodard & Curran's Rate Study and looks forward to the next phase of this massive infrastructure project.

Village Manager

At the Village Board meeting following the work session, Mayor Jane Veron announced that Village Manager Steve Pappalardo will leave on July 9, 2021 and that 54 applications were received for the position. The Board plans to interview some of these candidates throughout the summer. In the interim, Deputy Village Manager **Rob Cole** will become Interim Village Manager of Scarsdale. He has served here for six year and worked in Oak Park, Illinois for 19 years.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Scarsdale10583
April 21, 2020

Will Camps Be Open for the Summer? Camp Directors and Local Officials Comment

Author: Joanne Wallenstein

No one knows if school will resume before the summer, but what about summer camp? Now more than ever kids will want to get out of the house, play with friends and enjoy the great outdoors. Will day camps be open and will kids board the buses for sleepaway? We spoke to some local officials and camp directors to see what they are thinking. Will camp open on time? Will there be changes in procedures or restrictions? Here is what we learned. County Executive George Latimer said, Westchester County control a series of camps –the ones that take place at the county center that will have to be relocated. We have put county summer camps on hold for now. The decision about camp opening is part of the Governor’s Executive Order and he will make the decision.

How about in Scarsdale? Will the rec camp be open? Deputy Village Manager **Robert Cole** said, “The Westchester County Department of Health is the permitting authority for all camps throughout the County. The County has mailed out the camp permit applications, which are not due back to the County until 60 days prior to camp opening. Brian Gray, our Parks and Rec Superintendent, serves as president for the Westchester Recreation and Park Society (WRAPS). Through WRAPS, he distributed a survey at the beginning of April inquiring whether communities had made any decisions about pool and camp operations. At that time, no Westchester County communities had cancelled either pool or camp seasons, though some had delayed pool openings, as Scarsdale has; none had reported delaying their camp season(s). The WRAPS survey recently went back out again for an update, with responses due back over the next week, or so.”

Cole continued, “With respect to camp staff, most municipalities, including Scarsdale, began sending out employment offers to returning staff in December/January. We recently notified our interested team members that we are still planning on operating our summer programs, including camps; however, we also let them know that our plans are subject to the broader constraints we are operating under, i.e., they could be delayed or canceled, as conditions dictate. While we are continuing with interviews by phone, we are not making employment offers until program status can be confirmed.”

We asked Jim Libman from Camp Hillard if it was likely that Hillard would run and he said, “Camps are very optimistic, but nothing is a certain. The feedback we are getting is that parents and kids are crossing their fingers for camp this summer! The good news is all summer camps have been classified as essential childcare. Presently, The CDC is preparing safety guidelines for camps to operate and will be releasing those to state and local health departments in May. Camps are awaiting more information from State officials which should come in May. The ultimate decision to open camps will be made by the state and local health officials. After that decision is made each camp must feel that it will be safe for all their campers and staff.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

What about sleepaway camps? Will kids be boarding the buses in June? Here is the response we received from Amanda Krasnoff – Staffing and Programming Director at Camp Taconic in Hinsdale, MA. “Right now, we are optimistic that Camp will open this summer. We are working closely with other camps in Western, MA as well as the ACA, who is working closely with the CDC. There will most likely have to be some changes put into place, such as a later start date than anticipated, or the possibility of some out of camp trips being cancelled.

Ultimately, if the government and Department of Health allow us to, it is our decision on whether to open camp or not, and we will only do so if it safe for the entire Camp Taconic community. One of our biggest challenges right now is trying to figure out if our international staff is going to be able to get here. Many of our counselors and support staff come from other countries, and they are unable to get their visas until further notice, so we are hiring additional domestic staff in the event that our international staff is unable to arrive. There are definitely a lot of uncertainties at the moment, but the feedback we’ve received from our camp community is that kids will need camp more than ever this summer. Even if it’s a little different, or shorter in length, we still want to be able to provide our campers with a safe and amazing summer experience.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
April 3, 2020

County looks to enact ‘hardship’ tax relief law

Author: Valerie Abrahams

A tax relief bill introduced by Westchester County Executive George Latimer to the county board of legislators this week would defer to July 15 any late fees for payment of county taxes, which are due April 1 but payable by April 30, for taxpayers facing economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Committee on Budget & Appropriations and the Committee on Legislation are expected to meet at 10 a.m. Friday, April 3, to begin deliberations of the tax relief legislation. According to Steve Bass, the county’s director of intergovernmental relations, a group of town supervisors will work together to develop a standard set of criteria that would define how a taxpayer would qualify under “economic hardship” to delay paying county taxes to July 15 as well as any late payment penalties.

The legislation would allow a waiver if people could show by April 30 that they lost their jobs or are facing economic hardships due to the pandemic emergency. The county and the towns are expected to work out the specific criteria for affected taxpayers in the next week or so. Whether the proposed tax relief law will be passed by the county legislators after a public hearing, and whether the town of Greenburgh and Scarsdale will adopt it, is yet to be determined. Under the proposed legislation, no town is required to offer the temporary waiver. County attorney John Nonna reportedly would be available to help town supervisors and managers understand the bill’s requirements, which the county hopes to define no later than April 20.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, federal and state income tax filing deadlines were extended from April 15 to July 15. This law, if passed, would ease the real property tax burden for many taxpayers in Westchester County. Under normal circumstances, there is a 2% penalty for late payment in the first month after the April 30 due date, and a 5% penalty in June and July. Under the proposed law, the 5% penalty would begin July 16 instead. “We did have a discussion with the county executive [Wednesday] on late payments on taxes and [he] basically said that he’s ... recommending that they [the legislators] authorize the towns to waive the penalties,” Greenburgh Town Supervisor Paul Feiner told the Inquirer on Wednesday, and he said he supports the proposed legislation. “Taxpayers are suffering real hardships and local governments need to help taxpayers out.”

Feiner said he also suggested the county consider letting people pay their taxes in two parts: half before May and the balance in the fall. “That would be even more helpful,” he said. “Originally, I anticipated that the county and towns would share the financial losses. ... but county is not going to be losing any money because they still want the towns to guarantee them 100% of the taxes, whether we collect it or not. So the town would lose money [if people defer] but my feeling is that I would support doing the hardship provision.”

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

In an email sent to the Inquirer Thursday, April 2, Scarsdale Deputy Village Manager **Robert Cole** wrote: “The Village of Scarsdale is aware that Westchester County is ... developing legislation that may provide authority for municipalities to provide hardship-based waivers of penalties for the late payment of County Taxes and County District Taxes through July 15, consistent with the extended deadline to file New York state and federal taxes.”

Cole noted that the April 30 due date for the county tax would remain unchanged and Scarsdale’s local taxes as usual are due July 15. He noted, if adopted, the legislation would provide a specified late fee grace period for eligible taxpayers.

Once in final form and passed by the county board of legislators, the town of Greenburgh and the village of Scarsdale would have the option to participate or not in the late fee waiver initiative. Adopting the change would require an authorizing resolution by their respective town boards. The Town Supervisors Association is looking to work with county officials to establish a uniform policy for all towns to enact the same policy.

“We are hopeful that the final version of the legislation includes a clear hardship definition that can be consistently applied throughout the county,” said **Cole**.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Scarsdale10583
August 20, 2019

Severe Storms Knock Out Power to 1,200 Homes and Close Post Road

Author: Joanne Wallenstein

Severe storms late Monday afternoon August 19 knocked out power to almost one fifth of Scarsdale homes. Deputy Village Manager **Robert Cole** said that strong winds downed power lines and trees and left 1,200 households without power.

Here is his report:

"At the peak of yesterday's storm event, an estimated 1,200 Scarsdale homes were without power. The outages were in connection with downed trees and wires caused by wind. The Department of Public Works responded to a variety of issues up until about 9:00 pm last night, at which a majority of homes had power restored, with the balance restored during the overnight hours.

For a period of time last night, Post Road was closed near Wayside Lane, and there were other lesser street closures, as well. Finally, staff are aware of one private tree that damaged a neighboring home."

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Scarsdale Inquirer (NY)
June 15, 2019

Forum pushes village to enact pesticide code

Author: Nicholas Perrone

In an effort to convince the village to codify against pesticide use, the Scarsdale Forum’s Sustainability Committee released an update to its 2018 report on sustainable landscape management to protect public health, welfare, safety and the environment. The addition to the report — released on April 30 — outlines new policies adopted by municipalities around the country to counteract their pesticide use and recent litigation that arose due to individuals who were exposed to pesticides.

At the Scarsdale municipal pool complex, the village was using an herbicide called Tenacity for weed and clover mitigation in July 2017, according to Deputy Village Manager **Robert Cole**. According to the product label — filed with Environmental Protection Agency in 2010 — Tenacity can be harmful to both humans and animals if absorbed through the skin and can cause allergic reactions in some individuals.

In addition, the insecticide Dylox was applied to a number of local playing fields in 2015 for spot control of grub infestations. According to Dylox’s product label, the insecticide is hazardous to humans and domestic animals. The insecticide should not be used near aquatic invertebrates, where runoff is likely to occur and where birds might feed. The label further specifies that children or pets should not be allowed on treated areas until the material is sprinkled in and the grass is dry.

“These products can be directly absorbed and ingested by residents and pets on our playing fields and the grass around the pool through contact with grass that has been treated with the products,” the Forum stated in its 2018 report. “The obvious solution is for the Village to discontinue the use of chemicals such as Tenacity and Dylox at the pool complex and on Village playing fields and to find appropriate, effective alternatives.”

The village ceased pesticide and insecticide use in 2017, but a prohibition against the use of such chemicals has not yet been introduced into village law. “Since 2014, we have contracted with a firm for organic field care,” said **Cole**.

The contractor for organic field care uses humates, lime, CedarCure organics and 1-2-3 NPP organics to “strengthen the soil and make the turf grass more healthy and resilient to weed growth,” he said, which is a “key strategy of our current landscaping approach.”

The report addendum includes examples of municipalities that curb pesticide use. In March 2019 Miami banned the use of glyphosate-based herbicides (such as Roundup) by the city and its contractors. That same month, Los Angeles County enacted a similar ban on the use of glyphosate on county property. “Scarsdale can be a further leader in enacting this for our

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village,” said Darlene LeFrancois-Haber, the co-chair of the Sustainability Committee who also works as an internist. “It helps the health and safety of our public, it establishes us as a leader in a very important area.” The Forum is hoping the report will be used as an educational tool for residents, while also providing facts on pesticide use to support the need to codify against the use of pesticides. Passing a law locally might also inspire change in other Westchester municipalities, according to Michelle Sterling, co-chair of the Sustainability Committee. “We feel like we can be the domino here,” Sterling said. “You just need one town to do one of these things ... and the other towns will follow.”

Westchester County passed a pesticide reduction law in 1996. An amendment to the bill in 2000 phased out the use of pesticides on county property and prohibited toxicity Category II pesticides by Jan. 1, 2001 and toxicity Category III pesticides by Jan. 1, 2002, according to the Westchester County Department of Health. “It’s about leadership. It’s about being a positive role model. It’s about positively affecting all the other municipalities in our community,” said Sterling, who also serves on the Conservation Advisory Council.

The report does not include a provision to regulate against private use of pesticides, although the Forum would like residents to be more aware of what is being applied on their lawns. “I think it would be terrific if this report could serve as a piece of education for the entire village, residents included,” said LeFrancois-Haber. “There is no action, requested recommendation [or] statement in this report ... to mandate any kind of curb or ban on residential use.”

LeFrancois-Haber recommended using the Grassroots Environmental Education website which includes letters, calendars and contracts that residents can use with their landscapers to form an agreement against pesticide use. The co-chairs of the Forum’s Sustainability Committee also expressed an interest in being a resource for residents if they need information about pesticide use.

“Both the village board and staff are appreciative of the support and assistance members of our community display in working together toward the shared goal of a more sustainable future,” said **Cole**. “Not only are we experiencing a high level of [organic] program success, but our efforts are helping to encourage other municipalities in the region to adopt similar practices.”

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Scarsdale10583
November 15, 2018

Board of Trustees Commits to Communications

Author: Laura Halligan

In recognition of its efforts to assist the village in improving communications with residents over the past two years, the Scarsdale Board of Trustees voted to advance the ad hoc communications committee as a permanent village council. The new Scarsdale Advisory Council on Communications will continue to work with village staff in supporting public communications and promoting community engagement in public affairs.

According to Trustee Jane Veron, the move is “a tribute to the high quality and positive impact of this hard-working committee... I’ve never seen a group that has worked so hard, truly.” She continued, “The MVP is... Deputy Village Manager **Rob Cole** – and the voice of *Scarsdale Official* – enabling us to become more transparent and as open as we possibly can be.”

Mayor Dan Hochvert summarized the village’s interest in improved communications by reading the resolution: “There is substantial civic value in the effective and efficient exchange of information between village government and the public, using methods and practices that recognize the range of individual communication preferences and needs under both routine and non-routine circumstances.” He continued, “The Scarsdale Ad Hoc Committee on Communications... has demonstrated the value of resident volunteers working in an advisory capacity to shape communication strategies and promote community participation in local governance.”

Dara Gruenberg (Hampton Road), representing the committee, summarized the group’s recommendations to create a foundation for future communications activities: 1) establish a formal communications policy; 2) appoint a public information officer; 3) consider use of social media and develop related policy; 4) develop staff-generated content/communications materials; 5) continue to develop committee/council-generated content; 6) standardize a visual identity for Scarsdale/create branding policy; 7) better utilize Scarsdale Public TV in general communications; and 8) engage in proactive media relations and outreach.

Gruenberg then discussed suggested responsibilities for the group as it moves forward. First, it urges continued active village input in communications planning, “**Robert Cole** has been invaluable... the committee urges **Mr. Cole’s** continued participation,” she said. Gruenberg continued by stating that, unlike other boards and councils, communications committee members also participate in other village committees, and this practice should continue to provide a cross-section of ideas and variety of perspectives to Scarsdale messaging efforts. “Committee composition should be partially refreshed annually to promote resident participation,” she offered.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The committee also believes that the village should outline clear, actionable goals and specific assignments each year to continue progress and provide opportunity for measurable results. In addition, the group asks the village to use its 2017 communications proposal as guide in planning for longer-term projects. “The 2017 report continues to accurately illustrate the current state of communications and should be used as a guide for future projects and be updated as needed,” Gruenberg said. She then concluded her comments by relaying that, if the board established a permanent committee, the body should be advisory in nature, assisting a public information officer or designated staff person in completing tasks.

As the resolution states, the village hopes that the new council will help village officials to “foster public trust and confidence in local government” and to develop “communications that successfully reach diverse audiences...(and) cultivate an informed and engaged community, nurture enhanced public involvement in official decision-making, and constitute a hallmark of local government excellence.”

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

White Plains Daily Voice (NY)
November 10, 2015

EPA Issues Water Violation Notice To Westchester County

Author: Cathy Reakes

SCARSDALE, N.Y. -- Westchester County Water District 1 has received a Tier 2 violation from the federal Environmental Protection Agency for failing to make district-wide upgrades to its water system within a prescribed deadline.

The violation notice, sent to residents by mail with their monthly water bills, pertains to residents in the Village of Scarsdale and the cities of Mount Vernon, White Plains, and Yonkers, which receive drinking water through the district, said **Robert Cole**, Scarsdale deputy village manager. The water is safe to drink and use and is treated daily including receiving the appropriate chlorination to inactivate organisms such as giardia, bacteria and viruses, **Cole** said.

The district received the violation for not implementing district-wide upgrades required by the EPA that includes ultra-violet treatment in order to be more effective and detect such organisms as cryptosporidium. Specially, the district did not comply with the requirements from July 1 to Sept. 20. The county has until 2018 to bring its water treatment facilities into compliance.

Cole said that although the water supply is not presently subject to the ultra-violet treatment, ongoing testing has not detected any cryptosporidium in the drinking water and that testing will continue until the necessary upgrades are completed.

In the notice to consumers, residents are warned if they have specific health concerns, they should consult their doctor before using the water. It also warns residents with severely compromised immune systems, have an infant, are pregnant or the elderly, that they may be at an increased risk for infection. The district is currently installing two new UV disinfection treatment facilities in White Plains that will treat all of the district water. One will be complete in May 2017 and the other in March 2018.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
May 13, 2014

Oak Park survey: Parking in village is crummy

Author: Timothy Inklebarger

Oak Park is a great place to live and raise a family, but it doesn't come cheap, and parking in the village is still a major concern, according to the results of a survey conducted last year by the village. Eighty-nine percent of the 417 Oak Park residents who returned the survey say the village has an excellent or good quality of life, and 92 percent said it is a good place to raise children. Fifty-seven percent said the village is an excellent or good place to retire, which seems to be connected to the perception of availability of affordable housing in general. Only 37 percent of respondents believe affordable housing is excellent or good.

“[The 57 percent figure is] kind of a low number,” **Rob Cole**, assistant village manager, said during a presentation to the village board on Monday. “There’s a corollary to that: many of the citizens who participated in this year’s survey found that there’s an absence of quality affordable housing.” He suggested that their concerns over affordable housing could be a combination of the price and level of taxation in the village.

Displeasure with parking in the village remained steady, with 37 percent reporting that parking is satisfactory, up two percentage points from the 2011 results — the last year the survey was conducted.

In a separate question, 64 percent of respondents said parking is a moderate or major problem. “We have eased parking and created more parking overnight, but I think as we go forward, we should continue to look at our policies and figure out how to ease parking on our residents and how to make it more friendly,” said Village President Anan Abu-Taleb.

Residents said public safety was of less concern, with 94 percent saying they feel safe in their neighborhood during the day. That number dropped to 69 percent after dark. Only 49 percent felt safe from property crimes such as burglary and theft, and 59 percent said crime in general is a moderate to major problem. The survey cost the village about \$10,000 and was conducted by the National Research Center in Boulder, Co.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
December 3, 2013

Forum focuses on new state gun law

Author: Jeramie Bizzle

State Rep. La Shawn Ford, along with lobbyist Todd Vandermyde of the Illinois Rifle Association, hosted a community forum on Nov. 20 to provide information on the concealed-carry gun law passed in Illinois. The forum, which took place at the Little Red Wagon Coffee House, 818 S. Oak Park Ave., gave attendees a chance to ask questions and receive information about the law. Vandermyde, 49, said those who are interested in receiving their license and/or permit must meet requirements set by the state. “I don’t agree with 16 hours, I think no more than eight, depending on what you have,” Vandermyde said, referring to gun safety training requirements. “Illinois has a broad law on bodily force. You’re here to do one thing and that is to protect yourself and the one next to you.” Rep. Ford, 41, who originally voted against the law, said the discussion was informative and was glad to see everyone get involved. “More people will carry guns; studies show that when law is enforced, the crime rates go down. It is a deterrent and it protects people and their families. I just want what is best for the people of the 8th District.” Ford said.

Concealed weapons will not be allowed in schools and any establishments that don’t want them in their businesses. Oak Park Village Attorney Paul Stephanides said the village has received some questions about the law from business owners but it is up to the owner whether to allow concealed weapons in their establishment. “In order for business owners to prevent people from coming in with weapons, they must put up a sign. That’s in the law, not in the village laws.” Stephanides said. Little Red Wagon owner Valorie Mitts, 43, said she will more than likely put up a sign that will keep guns out of her business. “Oak Park is a family-oriented place, I have kids’ families and it would be scary to me. I see this law changing fast, people snap even without permits. I will put up a sign, I mean the session was informative and people went home with a wealth of knowledge, but I can’t see a good coming from it,” Mitts said. At the end of the forum, Vandermyde invited everyone to visit www.ILGA.gov and look under House Bill 183 (HB183) for more information of what the law prescribes. The concealed-carry gun law, which passed in July, won’t go into effect until January, making Illinois the last state in the nation to allow gun owners to carry concealed weapons. To be eligible for the gun license, you must be 21 with no felonies, mental health issues or two or more violent misdemeanors. Applicants must also undergo between 16 and 18 hours of training approved by the state police and complete a 70 percent hit rate to qualify.

Assistant Village Manager **Rob Cole** said the village will put out information concerning the law. “The state police has a website that will help them understand the law,” **Cole** said. “Those with weapons are trained and know they are not allowed to bring weapons into those establishments, but it defers to the property owner whether or not they want them. The sign by the Illinois State Police is available on the website in a PDF file.”

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
September 3, 2013

It's in the mail

Author: Dan Haley

Oak Parkers should check their mailboxes soon to see if they were chosen to take part in the resident survey the village is conducting to “gauge citizen views on a wide range of community aspects and issues.” The surveys, which will be showing up in mailboxes of Oak Parkers selected at random to help the village collect information, should take about 15 minutes to complete and will help policy makers better understand priorities for government action and citizen opinions on quality of life and public services, according to a village news release.

Oak Parkers who receive the survey are urged to promptly complete and return the document to ensure wide representation. About 1,200 responses are needed for a 95 percent confidence level. Survey respondents remain anonymous.

“Residents who are willing to take the time to complete and return the survey will be doing a great service for the community,” Assistant Village Manager **Robert Cole**, who is overseeing the project, wrote in the release. “The findings of this research will provide important information for planning how best to allocate municipal resources in the future.”

National Research Center Inc. (NRC), a social science research firm whose core business is community surveys, was hired to ensure the scientific validity of the survey results. NRC assisted with surveys conducted in Oak Park in 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2011. Results of these past surveys are posted online at oak-park.us and can be found by searching “community surveys.”

Surveys in 2000 and 2004 were conducted by telephone. But with telephone response rates plummeting across the industry and costs rising, mail has proven to be a more cost-effective approach. In addition, officials say, mail responses tend to be more candid than those gathered by a telephone interviewer.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
June 11, 2013

Oak Park seeks \$14M in federal funding

Author: Anna Lothson

Oak Park officials hope a “shovel-ready” project that extends the success seen on gentrified South Marion Street will catch the eyes of those at the U.S. Department of Transportation who recently announced \$474 million in the latest round of federal grants. The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, commonly known as TIGER, grants are aimed at aiding communities in completing projects that help create economic competitiveness, create and preserve jobs, increase transportation choice and access to transportation services, improve efficiency, are sustainable and enhance livability, among other qualities.

Although this is Oak Park’s third bid requesting federal funds for this specific project, the last two attempts being unsuccessful, **Rob Cole**, assistant village manager, said the village’s proposal may have “a leg up on other communities” because of the project’s readiness plus proof of past success. **Cole** points specifically to the redevelopment of Marion Street, noting that the new project could grow infrastructure investments north and south of the already developed area using the TIGER grant. **Cole** said the village has already seen a 5-1 return on its investment in terms of what was spent on the Marion Street project and what the village has gained in private investment in return.

The project that Oak Park is proposing is called the Inner-Ring Renaissance: A Model for America, and seeks \$14.48 million for a \$20.9 million project. The application specifies the funding will be used to expand the purpose of work already done. The concept of Oak Park’s Greater Downtown Area Plan targets “transit-oriented and complete street public infrastructure investments.” According to the application: “The primary project objective is to realize a compelling, economically vibrant, livable and compact downtown center that leverages the intrinsic value of existing public and private infrastructure to support federal livability principles through a combination of investment strategies that provide more transportation choices, promote equitable, affordable housing and enhance economic competitiveness.”

Based on feedback from previous TIGER grant applications, **Cole** said he believes Oak Park has aligned its proposal well with what decision-makers seek. Federal officials said they are seeking an “aggressive timeline” for announcing selected projects, and the “readiness” factor in Oak Park’s proposal makes it more doable than in the past. Oak Park had previously pushed through projects to better situate the village to receive federal funding, but it didn’t yield results. This time around, Oak Park has evidence to back up the project, **Cole** said. South Marion is highlighted as one of two massive projects completed in Oak Park since 2005.

The South Marion \$5.4 million project involved brick street pavers, bluestone sidewalk and 4,000 pieces of granite curbs, gutters, crosswalks and planters, replacing the asphalt and concrete

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Robert A. Cole
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of the old street. It also called for updating inefficient streetlights and added pedestrian-friendly areas. Construction included replacement of aging water and sewer lines beneath the pavement. The investments expected in the Inner-Ring Renaissance project include replacing deteriorated underground water and sewer infrastructure, reconstructing streets and streetscapes, expanding sidewalks and pedestrian areas, increasing bicycle parking, improving intersection crossings, enhancing pedestrian-level lighting, adding public sidewalk benches, plaza spaces and landscaped sidewalk areas, and improving multimodal station access.

The application says the \$20.9 million project will be worth \$26.2 million after bringing in private investments. It's also expected to leverage \$4.24 million in energy savings. Overall, the project has the potential to increase travel efficiency in the area, linking both South and North Marion streets to Oak Park's larger downtown and helping people navigate more smoothly — both from a pedestrian and motorist standpoint, according to the application. "Oak Park sits in a unique position benefitting from embedded assets, including central location advantage and enviable access to myriad transportation options," the application reads. "In turn, Oak Park is an attractive location for investment consideration."

In terms of project readiness, Oak Park's application contains an environmental survey indicating that the proposed work would be completed by the end of March 2014. This would allow all contracts to be awarded by the end of September this year and for work to begin soon after. "The Inner-Ring Renaissance project is poised to immediately generate near-term economic activity while at the same time laying the proven groundwork for significant long-term benefits," according to the application.

And though it's the same proposal as the past two rounds, **Cole** said Oak Park officials have aligned its proposal closer to what the federal officials seek with each application. "We think we've done a good job," he said.

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
October 9, 2012

IDOT to host open house about ‘multi-modal plan’

Author: Anna Lothson

The Illinois Department of Transportation is hosting another meeting to gather input on the early stages of its overall plan to improve its roadways from a ‘multi-modal’ perspective. The plan, specifically called the Fiscal Year 2014-2018 Proposed Multi-Modal Transportation Improvement Program, will be detailed at a public meeting at the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph St., in Chicago from 3-6 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 16. Although the presentation isn’t related to the last bit of information IDOT provided to Oak Parkers in June about the possibility of widening the Eisenhower Expressway, the Village of Oak Park is paying close attention.

A village memo was prepared that details nine key points IDOT must consider before moving forward with any plan. **Rob Cole**, assistant village manager, said it’s important for Oak Park to stay involved to ensure that IDOT doesn’t veer from its commitment to incorporating a multi-transit solution to easing traffic congestion. The concern from Oak Park’s view about IDOT’s plan is that it’s not in fact “multi-modal,” as the highway department suggests, **Cole** said. Instead it looks exclusively at the roadways and ignores public transportation (specifically the CTA Blue Line). “They have essentially divorced the repairs for the Blue Line from the highways,” **Cole** said. As a result, IDOT is missing opportunities to tackle the problems at the same time, which will only push problems further down the road, he added. “The CTA Blue Line is right in the middle of highway. The highway expansion [plan] is excluding that,” **Cole** said. “That’s not a multi-modal.”

Furthermore, **Cole** said IDOT needs to work with other transportation groups, like the CTA and PACE, to determine how they can work together to tackle the project at one time instead of looking at it solely from a highway viewpoint. “Agency boundaries don’t determine what the transportation needs are,” **Cole** said. “You need to look at all pieces of transportation amenities and make sure they are brought up to the same state at the same time. ... You can’t ignore the state of good repairs and focus on one simply because you are highway department.”

At past meetings, IDOT officials have said the life span of the Eisenhower and the Blue Line are nearing their respective ends, and they promised to incorporate the two when moving forward. The concepts that people will hear at next week’s meeting, however, don’t reflect that, according to **Cole**. He’s worried this move is a slippery slope and will apply to similar issues with IDOTs highway expansion proposal impacting Oak Park.

One of the points outlined in Oak Park’s memo states that the five-year plan fails to recognize the importance of incorporating all the elements, and excludes an opportunity to save time and money. It also notes that no resources are assigned to public transit infrastructure needs located

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within the highway median. “It doesn’t include anything to improve state of repairs,” **Cole** stressed. “They are viewing the project through a jaded lens of highway constraints.”

In the June meeting in Oak Park, IDOT officials, Oak Park leaders and residents collided over their views on the expansion proposal. Concerns about environmental impact, incorporating more public transportation options, and keeping the Ike within its current footprint were expressed then. Representatives from IDOT promised they’d be back for another public hearing in the fall, but **Cole** said he has yet to hear any news about such a meeting.

Tuesday’s meeting will be an open-house format, with a continuous audio-video presentation and exhibits illustrating the current fiscal year 2013-2018 plan. IDOT staff will be present to answer any questions related to the multi-modal program, project planning and development process.

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Robert A. Cole
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Wednesday Journal (IL)
August 3, 2012

Oak Park awarded .1 million grant for improvements around Harlem CTA station
Author: Anna Lothson

A federal grant totaling more than .1 million, awarded to the Village of Oak Park, will help link Oak Park's downtown CTA station with the surrounding retail and commercial area on Marion Street and South Boulevard. The funds will target the area adjacent to the Green Line station in downtown Oak Park, with improvements running west from Marion Street along South Boulevard to Harlem Avenue. In addition to enhancing the area for surface transportation and pedestrian travel, the grant also will help pay for replacing deteriorated underground infrastructure, some of which dates to the 1800s. The Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program announced the grant on Aug. 2. The program provides up to 80 percent of the funding for comprehensive initiatives like Oak Park's Transit Gateway project. "This project will help make Oak Park an even more livable and sustainable community, and I thank President [David] Pope and the entire village board for their leadership," U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said in a news release. "By leveraging federal dollars, Oak Park will attract new private investment and sustainable development that create and retain jobs. This is exciting news for Oak Park, which stands to be a regional model for local revitalization that incorporates transit, walking, biking and economic development." The .1 million grant was part of 63 million announced last week from the office of U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. Around 1,500 requests totaling .5 billion were received, of which the amount actually awarded is a fraction.

Rob Cole, assistant village manager, said the project fits in with Oak Park's commitment to promoting transit options that focus on promoting public transportation and pedestrian-friendly options. **Cole** said the grant can help build on the village's previous streetscape projects on South and North Marion streets. It can also help expand the purpose of the enhancement and spur growth in the area. The project, he said, will support the existing infrastructure and helps reduce the overall costs of future streetscape improvements. Because discussions have been focused statewide on highway transit options, **Cole** said it's refreshing to see alternatives being invested in. Overall, the project can produce regional and local benefits, **Cole** said. "It's really great to see, at least from a policy standpoint, an interest in these types of projects," he said.

Pope agreed, saying the federal transportation officials are increasingly supportive of the type of strategic, transit-supportive reinvestments Oak Park is pursuing. "The federal government has a direct financial interest in supporting strategies that lead to reinvestment in established, infrastructure-rich communities like Oak Park that often comprise older inner-ring suburban corridors," Pope said. "The alternative of devoting resources singularly to building new highways in ever more remote, low-density areas has been shown over the past several decades to simply perpetuate sprawl, which then creates its own increasing demand for yet more investment."

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Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
May 22, 2012

As Oak Park Apartments building goes on the market, Holley Court garage still needs repair

Author: Anna Lothson

Whiteco, the 14-story, 204-unit luxury apartment building, officially known as Oak Park Apartments, has had its share of controversy. But beyond the debates about its design, size, funding, and development, the adjacent parking structure, the Holly Court garage, caused a slew of its own problems for the village and the developer.

After the village expanded the garage in 2009, officials noticed there were cracks in the concrete. Oak Park paid for the expansion but it was determined that Whiteco was responsible for the repairs and consequent costs due to construction problems. Now that the property is on the market, however, the question has arisen: Whose responsibility is it if the property is sold?

Rob Cole, Oak Park's assistant village manager, said the garage repairs aren't complete but confirmed that conversations with Whiteco representatives have provided verbal agreements that the company would finish the necessary repairs.

Cole said the fact that the property is on the market doesn't change the urgency of the repairs, and the village is in ongoing conversations with Whiteco about the progress. "We want it to be fixed and fixed right," he said. From a legal perspective, he added, the village wants the project to be up to code no matter who owns the property.

The redevelopment agreement between Whiteco and the village also stipulates that the units remain rental property for 10 years following its opening, which **Cole** said is a factor the new owner can't change. "They are bound to the agreement as it exists," he said. "They can't get rid of any portions." **Cole** said any issues moving forward will be part of larger conversations between the village, Whiteco and any potential new property owner.

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Robert A. Cole
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Wednesday Journal (IL)
February 7, 2012

Will Oak Park’s cap-the-Ike dream vanish?

Author: Marty Stempniak

Since the late 1980s, Oak Park has been thinking large, hoping to possibly mend the “scar” that cuts across south Oak Park, by putting a cap over the Eisenhower Expressway. And since 2000, village hall has taken steps toward making the possibly billion-dollar pipe dream a reality. But lately the issue has appeared dormant, at least to the public eye. One loyal supporter of the idea thinks the opportunity might be slipping away to “cap the Ike,” while on the contrary, village officials feel they’re positioned to make it happen. In a recent email, Oak Parker Fred Brandstrader urged village officials not to let the cap chance “slip thru our hands.” Dallas got a highway cap built in two years, he said, and nine others are in the works across the country.

“The cap is still totally possible but the window is closing,” said Brandstrader who served on a citizen committee related to the effort. “It needs to become a focus item for the village or we will miss this once in a lifetime opportunity, while communities across the country capitalize on theirs and realize their dreams.” Oak Park had a study completed on the Ike cap back in 2005, at a cost of about \$250,000, paid for with a state grant. Early estimates have said a full cap, Harlem to Austin, would cost some \$1.5 billion, while a scaled back version might cost \$464 million.

In May 2009, Oak Park OKd a \$955,000 contract for a feasibility study on the concept, with federal money set aside for cap-related studies, lobbied for by Sen. Dick Durbin, former senator Barack Obama and Congressman Danny Davis. URS was tasked with figuring out how the project might affect traffic, real estate values and air quality, along with creating visuals of the different options.

Three years later, only a small portion of that contract amount has been spent — about \$25,000. Oak Park has been stuck in a wait-and-see pattern on the project, as it doesn’t want to start doing detailed work on it until the state decides the future of the Eisenhower, said Assistant Village Manager **Rob Cole**.

For years, the Illinois Department of Transportation has been exploring how it wants to relieve congestion along the expressway, whether by adding extra lanes, lengthening the CTA Blue Line beyond its Forest Park terminus, or through some other means. IDOT is now in the process of weighing its options, and officials don’t expect any sort of decision until 2013.

Cole said Oak Park is loathe to start spending money engineering an Ike cap, only to have the idea turned upside down when the state unveils its own plans for the expressway. He disagrees that the window is closing, rather, the village is getting its ducks in a row so it has something to “fold into” the design of the highway. “Any representations that we’ve lost opportunities or we’ve fallen behind the timeline are false,” **Cole** said. “Quite the contrary, we’re ahead of the timeline.”

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URS has been mostly inactive on the effort as of late. But back in September, the consultant started work to determine how an Ike cap might affect real estate values in the surrounding neighborhood, according to project manager Robert Andrews. The company did similar work several years ago related to Millennium Park. Part of that analysis will include looking at the consequences of similar caps on other communities. Andrews said, preliminarily, they have found that a cap could benefit surrounding real estate. They hope to wrap up that portion of the report in the coming months.

Rick Kuner, a transportation planner and former village trustee, sees the benefits of a cap, but is skeptical that it'll ever happen. He wonders why Oak Park should get hundreds of millions in federal money, and not other communities along the corridor that feel the same effects. "The concern I have with it is, in a really bad economy, where does anybody find the money to do it?" he said. "The other concern I have on it is: What makes Oak Park so special that we should get a billion-dollar investment while nobody else in the state gets a piece of that billion dollars?"

Village President David Pope acknowledged that the federal government is in a much different place, budget wise, than it was back when Oak Park started really looking at the cap idea 10 years or so ago. But it's important for the village to explore "the art of the possible" as the state continues envisioning the future of the Ike. "Obviously, the federal government is in a dramatically different financial position today than it was seven, eight, 10 years ago," Pope said. "There are realistic implications that the finances of the federal government are going to have on the reconstruction of any highway, not just the Eisenhower. And those resource limitations, along with the plans that exist at the federal, state and local levels, are going to have to be taken into account when we look at what we can do to achieve our ultimate goal, which is to improve the connections that exist among all areas of our community, and specifically those that are adjacent to the Eisenhower."

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Robert A. Cole
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Wednesday Journal (IL)
November 29, 2011

Another try at federal funds for brick streets in Oak Park

Author: Marty Stempniak

The Village of Oak Park has just finished decking out South Marion with bricks and bluestone sidewalks, but it may already be moving on to \$43 million in similar upgrades around town. For the second time, village hall is applying for \$26 million in federal grants, hoping to spread the Marion Street upgrade in downtown Oak Park to Lake Street and Oak Park Avenue. With a match of local dollars, the total project would cost some \$43 million, according to **Rob Cole**, assistant village manager.

Oak Park was turned down previously for TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) funding last year, losing out to similar projects in Peoria and Moline. But after making some tweaks, **Cole** feels confident they'll win out this time. "It was a strong application last time," he said. "We received a lot of positive feedback on it, and we made improvements and adjustments where they felt it was a little bit weaker in the last round."

Oak Park is facing stiff competition, though, as the U.S. Department of Transportation received 828 applications from all 50 states, according to a press release. Those jockeying for position asked for a total of about \$14.1 billion, but only \$527 million is available. At the request of President Obama, the process is being accelerated, and winners should be announced by the end of 2011, months ahead of schedule. If Oak Park does gain federal funding, **Cole** said, it'd be difficult to tackle the whole project, and the village would likely only pursue parts.

After pouring \$5.4 million into South Marion earlier this year, Oak Park is next eyeing upgrades along Oak Park Avenue between Lake Street and Pleasant. The village board was originally to have discussed that project this fall, but that discussion will likely be pushed to early next year, according to Village Planner Craig Failor. An ongoing lawsuit between village hall and Oak Park and River Forest High School has delayed those talks, as the future of the downtown tax increment financing (TIF) district is uncertain.

Oak Park is pursuing the upgrades because it wants to unify all of its main shopping districts by spreading a similar look through its downtown. A similar idea was recommended in Oak Park's downtown master plan, and the timing is right, Failor said, since underground utilities are due for a fix-up.

After watching storefronts fill up along North Marion Street, Pat Zubak is convinced the original \$6 million street project was worthwhile. The director of the Downtown Oak Park business association thinks the village would see similar results in other parts of the village. "I think Oak Park has to go all out and attempt to win some of that available money," she said.

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Robert A. Cole
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But others aren't as sold on the notion. Anan Abu-Taleb, the owner of Maya Del Sol on South Oak Park Avenue, said the benefits seem too vague, the options too few, and the costs too extravagant.

Abu-Taleb went through a similar street project in Downers Grove, and saw his revenues drop by 40 percent overnight. He thinks Oak Park should place as much attention on keeping the businesses it has as attracting new ones with brick streets. He's formed a group called Oak Park Avenue Neighborhood Streetscape to stay vocal on the issue, and is asking anyone interested to visit opans.org. "They have this attitude of 'trust me, it's going to be OK,' and I have a problem with that," he said. "I need to see numbers and I need to see other plans."

Trustee Adam Salzman, who voted against the South Marion redo earlier this year, agrees that Oak Park should slow down on the plans. "Given the way the economy is and how difficult it is to run a business in this kind of climate anyway, I don't think folks need their local government putting obstacles in their way to being able to recruit customers," he said.

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Robert A. Cole
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Wednesday Journal (IL)
November 11, 2011

Survey says: Residents mostly satisfied with Oak Park

Author: Marty Stempniak

Despite occasional grumbles about soaring property taxes and shoddy sewers, Oak Parkers are mostly happy with the village, according to recently released results of a community survey. Some 1,200 households were polled by the National Research Center, and 450 surveys were returned, according to **Rob Cole**, assistant village manager. Oak Park has been sending out the questionnaire roughly every four years since 2000, hoping to gauge residents' perception of the community. Overall, some 90 percent of respondents considered the quality of life in Oak Park "excellent" or "good," a 10 percent uptick from the first survey, completed in 2000. Possible reasons for that improvement, the survey found, could include increased satisfaction with public safety, ease of bike travel and the village's appearance, **Cole** told village trustees at a meeting last week. "All in all, the survey results say Oak Park is a very special place," he said. "The vast majority of the ratings are well above national benchmarks."

Oak Park fell short of those benchmarks in five categories, including employment opportunities, amount of public parking and the availability of quality affordable housing, according to a summary of the survey. Trustee Colette Lueck said the things respondents griped about — such as sewers, streets and job growth — echoed concerns they often hear spoken aloud. "They mirror, almost identically, the areas that trustees consistently get complaints about. So you know that what we're hearing and what people are saying in the survey are very consistent with each other," she said. Lueck worried about some of the low marks employees received for politeness at village hall. Village Manager Tom Barwin pointed out that Oak Park has had to reduce its training programs, and dozens of layoffs have left some departments stretched thin. They're attempting to swing the pendulum the other way by bringing aboard employees who excel in customer service. "We're working on understanding people's personalities and trying to hire people who are ferociously friendly and aren't distracted easily," he said. Trustee Glenn Brewer expressed concern that some 91 percent of residents said economic development is essential in the community, yet only 8 percent rated Oak Park as doing "excellent" in that arena, and 25 percent said it's doing "good." Barwin said Oak Park is budgeting to hire an economic development director next year to help focus those efforts, along with dollars to institute a Main Street program here to strengthen the smaller business districts.

Questionnaires were sent through the mail and participants were contacted beforehand by phone. At a 39 percent response rate, the survey has a 5 percent margin of error, and provides a scientifically valid snapshot of the community, according to **Cole**. Oak Park is increasing the frequency with which it conducts the survey to every three years, with the next one planned in 2014.

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Robert A. Cole
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Wednesday Journal (IL)
August 25, 2011

Oak Park residents not eligible for flood assistance

Author: Marty Stempniak

The Village of Oak Park announced last week that residents who experienced flooding in their homes in July will not be eligible for federal aid. That's because the level of damage caused during a heavy rainstorm, July 23, was "insufficient" to declare the village a disaster area, according to a letter sent to the village from the Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The county made the determination after examining flood reports from throughout the area. Village Manager Tom Barwin said the news is disappointing, though not a huge surprise when July's storm is compared to the much heavier rains in July 2010, which did result in assistance to private homeowners.

Last year's storm caused 10 times as much damage to public property and twice as much damage to individual homes, Barwin said. "I kind of figured this is how it would go, while hoping and advocating that we'd get some assistance," he said.

The state could have gone ahead and declared a disaster, despite the county's decision, but chose not to, according to **Rob Cole**, assistant village manager. Thus, there is no alternate recourse for Oak Park or other communities to obtain federal relief.

Oak Park, however, is considering starting a program where it would assist residents in installing flood-prevention devices, such as overhead sewers or backflow prevention devices. Public Works Director John Wielebnicki is gathering info on similar programs in surrounding communities and plans to propose options during upcoming budget talks in the coming months. Village staff is expected to present a report on the flooding to the village board in September, with an initial discussion likely starting at the Sept. 6 board meeting.

Some 321 residents in Oak Park filled out forms, outlining the amount of damage that flooding caused to their homes July 23. Village Trustee Adam Salzman — who lives in northeast Oak Park, and experienced sewage backing up in his basement in July — thinks flooding like the past two Julys is going to be a frequent occurrence because of climate change. He believes Oak Park should be better prepared next time around.

"You can't treat it like it's a deviation from the norm," he said. "We have a responsibility within village boundaries — notwithstanding what's going on with the county or the federal government — to make sure that our sewer infrastructure is equipped to handle that kind of extreme weather because it's just a fact of life in the 21st century."

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Robert A. Cole
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Wednesday Journal (IL)
October 19, 2010

Oak Park considers cutting Ike lobbyist

Author: Marty Stempniak

For the past seven years, Oak Park has been paying a lobbying firm in Washington, D.C., to help keep tabs on whether the feds may look at expanding the Eisenhower Expressway. The bill has totaled more than \$1.3 million, and one trustee is questioning whether the village should continue paying for the lobbyist. “I have some concerns, and look forward to talking about it in the budget process,” Trustee Ray Johnson said. “It’s good to get these out early so we can flesh them out and better understand where we’re going.”

Johnson brought up those concerns during a budget meeting last week. He emphasized that he’s supportive of stopping the expansion of the Ike, which Oak Park has said would potentially cost the village precious properties on Garfield and Harrison. However, trustees previously got regular updates from the firm, which seems to have “tapered off” in 2010. He wants the contract to go away, or to better understand why things have been so quiet.

Oak Park started its partnership with Nossaman LLP in 2003. The firm was hired to provide “legal, technical-environmental and legislative services” related to the Ike. Trustees have been renewing the contract each year, most recently with a maximum cost of \$171,000 in 2010.

Deputy Village Manager **Rob Cole** declined to make the most recent reports from Nossaman public, saying that they’re protected under the pending or imminent litigation portion of the state’s Freedom of Information Act. He said the village has been diligent in keeping the costs for the contract down, most recently saving \$90,000 from the budgeted amount in 2009.

Village Manager Tom Barwin said it’s difficult for Oak Park to follow what happens in D.C. related to the Ike. He’s hesitant to kill the contract, and would be happy to provide more frequent updates from the lobbyist to the board. “It’s a hell of a fight to try to get 100-year-old state agencies that are used to doing the same thing year after year, decade after decade, to do something different,” Barwin said. “So, it is an uphill battle, and to win an uphill battle or even have a fair hearing, you need to be on your toes and up to date and engaged.”

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Robert A. Cole
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Wednesday Journal (IL)
June 29, 2010

More brick streets, blue stone sidewalks for downtown Oak Park?

Author: Marty Stempniak

The Village of Oak Park may spruce up several intersections in its main shopping districts, using more brick streets and blue stone sidewalks. If pursued, the project could carry a hefty price tag, but officials believe federal dollars could be nabbed to help fund the idea. Under the preliminary plan, Oak Park would dress up five different high-profile corners in a fashion similar to the 100 block of North Marion. That's where the village invested \$6.12 million to rip up a pedestrian mall, add a brick street and open it up for vehicular traffic. The village hopes that bringing those design elements to other areas of Oak Park's central business districts will help unify disparate shopping areas. "When we were developing Marion Street, the thought was always to bring those elements out and use it as a palate," said Loretta Daly, business services manager for Oak Park.

The five intersections being eyed are Lake and Forest, Lake and Marion, Lake and Oak Park Avenue, South Boulevard and Marion, and South Boulevard and Oak Park Avenue. The village's downtown TIF (tax increment financing) district – a fund created by freezing property taxes at a certain level and using the revenues beyond that point for development and infrastructure projects in the area – is set to expire in 2018. And with that, officials want to start talking about ways to utilize the fund before it sunsets, said Daly. Oak Park had renderings completed of the projects about a month ago, and started showing them off to members of the business community more recently. Daly emphasized that the idea is in the very early stages and has not yet been discussed by the village board.

Improvements to Marion have helped spur property owners into making significant investments in 20 or so buildings on or around Marion, said Daly. Those include the Sushi House, Lido's Caffe, Aripo's and Careful Peach Boutique. Oak Park hopes streetscape projects in other areas would stimulate similar investments. Obtaining federal funding for the project may also be a possibility, said **Rob Cole**, assistant to the village manager. In March Oak Park applied for \$18.4 million for the effort through the federal appropriations process. It would cost about \$23 million to redo all five of the intersections, according to the village's application.

If Oak Park were to eventually move forward with the project, it would take 12 months to be designed and 18 months to construct, for a total of 30 months. In the application, the village says it hopes to finish the work by Nov. 30, 2013. **Cole** expects to hear whether Oak Park will get the funding by early 2011. The village could also look to state or other sources to access other dollars. Village President David Pope believes Oak Park may be in an advantageous position, as the Obama administration is targeting federal dollars toward dense, pedestrian-friendly communities rather than sprawled-out exurban towns. "Oak Park is exceptionally well-positioned to benefit from this new emphasis by the federal government," Pope said.

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Robert A. Cole
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Wednesday Journal (IL)
September 22, 2009

Need milk? Grab your golf cart?

Author: Marty Stempniak

Could small electric cars and golf carts soon be a norm on Oak Park streets? The village is exploring whether it wants to allow “neighborhood vehicles” on its roads. Defined by the state, they are small, self-propelled, four-wheeled, gas- or electric-powered vehicles that travel at speeds between 20 and 25 mph. These could take on the appearance of anything from a golf cart to a small pickup truck.

The federal government started regulating neighborhood vehicles in 1998, while state laws – most recently amended in August – allow neighborhood vehicles on local roads at the discretion of municipalities. Neighborhood vehicles are somewhat expensive, with village officials estimating the cost between \$9,000 and \$20,000. But they’re more environmentally friendly and use less gas. They’re viable for local trips across town, grabbing a cup of coffee or going to pay a bill at village hall, said Village Manager Tom Barwin.

Hinsdale passed a law in November, allowing neighborhood vehicles on its local roads. Now Oak Park will consider its own ordinance and whether it’s a good idea to do the same. But the process is confusing, with both state and federal regulations in place. Illinois says the vehicles are not allowed on state routes – such as Harlem, North Avenue and Roosevelt Road. And roads with shared jurisdiction, such as Austin Boulevard, would need approval from both Chicago and Oak Park for people to use neighborhood vehicles on them. Chicago passed its own ordinance in February, allowing neighborhood vehicles to travel on streets that are under the sole jurisdiction of the city. Chicago also added some of its own requirements, such as stipulating that neighborhood vehicles traveling within its boundaries must have doors.

The state says neighborhood vehicles are only allowed on streets with speed limits of 35 mph or less. But **Rob Cole**, assistant to the village manager, says Oak Park may look at keeping them on streets with speed limits of 25 mph, since that’s their top speed. The state also requires drivers to have insurance, and for neighborhood vehicles to have headlights, brake lights and turn signals.

Cole says other issues need to be explored, such as whether Oak Park should require license plates on neighborhood vehicles, or if the village needs to install signage to help regulate them. “There’s a whole wide variety of issues and considerations,” **Cole** said. Village staff plans to explore the logistics of allowing neighborhood vehicles on its roads and will return to the village board with a recommendation as soon as next month, **Cole** told the board at a meeting on Monday.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
November 18, 2008

Oak Park may acquire trolleys next year

Author: Marty Stempniak

Oak Park may become the San Francisco of the Midwest by the middle of next year. The village is working to obtain a pair of trolleys to tool around Oak Park in 2009. At about \$185,000 a pop, the vehicles could be used for tourism and shopping-related trips. Oak Park is expecting to receive a federal earmark of more than \$600,000 to purchase what could be as many as three trolleys. That federal money would first go to Pace, which would buy the trolleys and then send them to Oak Park.

Trolleys would replace the village's current shuttle program, which offers two free vans that drive set routes in Oak Park. It will cost the village about \$170,000 to run the shuttle program next year. Switching to the 30-seat trolleys would likely cost more for gas but less for maintenance, since they're brand new. At current ridership levels, the village estimates paying \$5.68 for each ride on the shuttle this year. With trolleys, that number would jump to almost \$6. That's assuming the number of riders (29,000) this year is the same next year. To help decrease that subsidy, Oak Park is considering charging \$1 to ride its trolleys and selling advertising on them. Recent studies say that riders would pay to ride trolleys in Oak Park. The same studies said adding the vehicles could strengthen tourism and shop local efforts.

However, some village trustees believe the trolleys would be a waste of taxpayer money and a duplication of services already provided by Pace and the CTA. "The idea that these shiny new buses...will increase ridership seems totally unrealistic," said Trustee Jon Hale. "I don't see how we can spend increasing amounts of money on something that hasn't worked." Other trustees believe the trolleys will bolster ridership and village revenues. "The reason people don't ride the shuttle is because they look like vans," Trustee Greg Marsey said.

Trustee Ray Johnson said officials, such as Congressman Danny Davis, have worked hard to obtain funds for the trolleys, and it would be unwise to reject those dollars. If Oak Park declines, funds would likely go to other interested communities. "I don't want to give \$600,000 or \$700,000 away to another community," Johnson said.

Village staff is calculating exactly how much it would cost to operate trolleys in Oak Park next year. That information will come back to the village board in the next few weeks in time for the board to make a decision before adopting the 2009 budget, said **Rob Cole**, deputy village manager. If the board, which seemed evenly split on the issue, decides to obtain the trolleys, **Cole** estimated that they would arrive around the middle of next year.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
February 26, 2008

Blue Line extension gathers steam

Author: Bill Dwyer

After three years of study and public input, officials of the Cook-DuPage Corridor Study presented preliminary plans for a major expansion of rapid rail and bus service in the western suburbs to the Regional Transportation Authority. That plan would include extension of the CTA Blue Line from Forest Park to as far west as Oak Brook, and the development of three north-south rapid rail and express bus transit corridors in Chicago, western Cook County and DuPage County. Last Thursday's presentation outlined what is still a very conceptual set of plans to deal with a wide variety of transportation and related economic issues throughout the west suburban area and Chicago's far West Side. Public comment will be solicited from the public, including an event to be scheduled sometime in late March at Oak Park Village Hall. Officials expect to have a final proposal to present to the public for comment in about 18 months. The preliminary plan presented to the RTA Thursday reflects a mix of two of five original design concepts first brought before the public two years ago-mainline and concentric systems. "We took some of the concentric and some of the mainline system and overlaid them into a final set of options to put forward for public comment," said Oak Park President David Pope, who serves as vice chair of the study's policy committee.

Benefits of an extension

People in Oak Park may have reason to support the heightened possibility that the CTA Blue Line would be extended and the overall width of the Eisenhower Expressway remain unchanged. However, Oak Park officials, who have been intimately involved in various aspects of the study, stress there are several other key elements that must be included for any final plan to ultimately gain the broad political support needed to be successful. A fully extended Blue Line would feature intersecting connections with three major north-south transit corridors, including the Cicero Avenue Transit Way in Chicago, what's called the "Inter-circumferential" rail line track and right of way that would be extended from O'Hare Airport down 25th Avenue in Bellwood and continuing south to Midway Airport, and the "J-Line" bus rapid transit corridor in DuPage that would connect numerous DuPage County municipalities, including Schaumburg, Addison, Elmhurst, Oak Brook, Lisle, Naperville and Warrenville. Any extension of the Blue Line would likely also have significant benefits for the enhancement of 1st Avenue, which could become a major transit route to such destinations as Loyola Medical Center and Brookfield Zoo to the south, and Triton College to the north. Pope said Friday the increased awareness of all the benefits an extended Blue Line has to offer is generating increased support. "I think we're making strong progress," said Pope. "Both the DuPage members of the policy committee and staff at the RTA are increasingly impressed with the value and potential value to the region of the Blue Line extension, and of the incorporation of the Inter-circumferential rail option that would travel through western Cook and the airports."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Just as importantly, said **Rob Cole**, an assistant to Oak Park Village Manager Tom Barwin, support is broadening in favor of the Blue Line extension over the establishment of dedicated High Occupancy Vehicle lanes on the Eisenhower. “HOV will only save two minutes [commute time],” said **Cole**, who serves on the corridor study’s technical committee. He said the building of additional lanes for HOV traffic could also constitute a back-door way to widen the expressway. “HOV lanes can be reverted into regular traffic lanes if it was determined they weren’t being adequately used,” he said.

Growing consensus

Both Pope and **Cole** are encouraged by what they see as a growing consensus between the city, Cook and DuPage representatives on the study. That consensus, they say, is based on a growing trust between the previously opposed groups, a trust that each group’s interests will, in fact, be protected and advanced. Such trust is essential for any progress to occur, since a super-majority of 70 percent of the policy committee must agree on any final plan. Pope and **Cole** said Friday that there is a widening agreement among politicians on how to proceed with what is basically a once-in-a-century opportunity. “There’s a growing sense of collaboration and mutual goals we’d like to explore,” said **Cole**.

Pope called the proposed development of the Mid-City Transit Way along Cicero Avenue “the most important element” of the plan. Pointing to a map, he noted, “This north-south run picks up many of those in the West Side community and would help reduce congestion.” A look at that map shows the Cicero corridor, which would feature express bus service intersecting with five Metra rail lines and the CTA Green Line and both branches of the Blue Line in Oak Park and Cicero. The result would be greatly increased access to a wide geographic area by low income people seeking distant employment.

New Urbanism

Pope, whose thinking is informed by a conceptual framework called “New Urbanism,” said such streamlined transportation options that don’t require commuters to travel downtown to make connections would benefit a wide variety of people. He lauded the study’s plan as a positive step toward “strengthening the region as a whole.” “If you can develop urban regions in a way people can live, work, shop and recreate within close proximity, you can reduce the negative impacts we see in sprawl,” he said. The thinking of the past 50 years, he said, has led to a region-wide situation in which poor transportation and land use planning have contributed to, not mitigated, urban sprawl. Any current and future plans, he insisted, must take into account both transportation and land use. “If we don’t have healthy cities and economically viable urban areas that attract and maintain diverse and viable populations, we end up with situations where people want to move further and further away,” he said.

Pope said he’s as grateful for what didn’t happen six or seven years ago as he is for what might happen over the next six or seven years. “If not for Rick Kuner, eminent domain would already be under way [to take Oak Park land for a wider expressway],” said Pope, referring to the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

concerted efforts of former Oak Park trustee Rick Kuner, a transportation expert who blew the whistle on efforts by the Illinois Department of Transportation to ram through plans to significantly widen the Eisenhower by adding additional lanes, with no option for rapid rail improvements. Such plans would have cost Oak Park significant land adjacent to the expressway, threatening the loss of such historic structures as the Oak Park Conservatory and Rehm Park. “Kuner helped Oak Park and other communities prevent IDOT from beginning expansion of the Ike corridor,” Pope said. “He was on the cutting edge of ensuring IDOT wouldn’t just ram something down the throats of the communities in the western suburbs.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
March 28, 2006

VOP to-do list to predict agendas months ahead

Author: Drew Carter

The Village of Oak Park is in the process of creating the most comprehensive to-do list on the block. The list, naming roughly 165 items the board is working on, is the brainchild of President David Pope, who said at a study session Monday night that eventually it will be able to predict meeting agendas months in advance. The 21-page document is color-coded, sets priorities and divvies up the work among the village board, commissions and staff. “It is overwhelming when you first look at it,” said Trustee Robert Milstein. “We really need to narrow it down and decide what we are going to focus on, and what we are really going to focus on.” Trustees will review the list over the next week while on “spring break” to prioritize the items. The document lists plans for business districts; infrastructure issues, such as “Streets and alleys” and “Water and sewer;” personnel issues, such as “Teamsters contract” and “Personnel policies review;” transportation issues, such as “Review of traffic calming options” and “Area-wide parking study;” and others. Pope said he was “extremely gratified” village staff, led by Deputy Village Manager Lisa Shelley, was able to pull the list together. The list will be available on the village’s website within a week or two, Pope said. Milstein said the list will function as a communication tool with the community in that it will let people know when issues are coming up, and what the board has already accomplished. Each major item on the list is broken up into component steps. For example, “Neighborhood Walk Program improvements” begins with the step “Zones revised for more efficiency,” then goes to “Start program with new zones” and ends with “Target date for first inspections under new program completed.” The first two steps have an X to indicate the step has been done.

According to the list, which is a preliminary document, other achievements include:

- ☒ Adoption of Chicago Avenue concept plan;
- ☒ Beginning the process of developing a new comprehensive plan;
- ☒ Setting of guaranteed maximum price for the Holley Court garage expansion;
- ☒ Holding quarterly contractor forums;
- ☒ Making permit forms available online;
- ☒ Creating the profile for the new manager search;
- ☒ Beginning negotiations on police and fire pay and benefits;
- ☒ Preliminary recommendations on smoking ban;
- ☒ Creation of roundtable discussion with youth agencies.

The board also heard staffing recommendations for the interim until a new village manager is hired. **Rob Cole**, who heads the village’s performance measurement effort, will become acting assistant village manager. The study session started at 9 p.m. after the board was in a closed-door meeting for more than two hours “to discuss property acquisition and personnel.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wednesday Journal (IL)
December 13, 2005

OP village hall heads toward ‘community report card’

Author: Drew Carter

The Village of Oak Park has begun grading itself.

It has created statistics and survey information, which it will gather to compare with previous years and with other communities. “If we do this correctly, our residents will gain the benefits of improved levels of service and of lower costs to provide those services,” said Village President David Pope, who does this type of evaluation for companies for a living.

Known as performance measurement, the concept has long been part of the corporate world, where financial returns are weighed against costs and risks. For governments, financial returns translate into improved quality of life. “If you know your priorities and have a way to evaluate performance, you can begin to channel dollars in your budget to initiatives that are going to have the greatest impact on improving quality of life in your community,” Pope said. “The whole concept of performance measurement in city government is fairly new,” Village Manager Carl Swenson said, although some cities, like Portland, Ore., have been using them for approximately 15 years. “For municipal governments of our size, we’re certainly a leader.” Shortly after he was elected to the board in 2003, Pope began discussing performance measurement with Swenson, who enlisted help from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

Dealing with the data is complex, said **Rob Cole**, who helps all village departments establish and maintain performance measurements. Getting information is one thing; comparing it to other information can cause problems.

Oak Park pushed to develop a consortium of municipal governments in northern Illinois to share data, ensuring the village will compare its costs with similar communities. It was the second ICMA consortium in the country, the first being for communities around the Puget Sound in Washington State. Two more have recently sprung up in Oregon and Arizona. Not only will the village benefit from seeing how efficiently it provides services, but would be able to tap into other governments’ approaches to lowering costs.

The village board used a set of “key indicators” this fall in preparing the 2006 budget. Examples include everything from “green” targets, such as percentage of recycled paper, eco-friendly ink and low-energy light fixtures bought, to getting streets cleared to “wet” after snows within 12 hours, to raising citizens’ perception of safety.

Using the measures, the board can see the cost for attaining a goal, adding information to the process of setting those goals. For example, everyone wants smooth streets, but paving costs money. If having 90 percent of streets judged “good” costs \$1 million, is it worth \$1.5 million to get 95 percent rated “good”?

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert A. Cole
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Pope said trustees on this board and the previous one have been open to the use of performance measurement. But Trustee Robert Milstein has some concern over how and to what extent the concept will be used. “I think they’re useful tools, and we should use them,” Milstein said, [but] “I don’t want this to become ‘scientific management’” where the human element is removed entirely.

Having performance data to show how the village is doing will help put discussions about performance in a rational context, Pope said. If one person complains about a bumpy road, the village will still respond, but will be able to point to a recent survey of roads that show X percent of them are “good,” “fair,” etc. But Milstein doesn’t believe you can ever completely remove anecdotal evidence from the equation. “This is not a perfect thing,” he said.

Pope’s larger goal is to use the concept on a community-wide level, where taxpayers would be able to choose between, for example, an all-day kindergarten program at public schools or better streets. And it would allow the community to see how its governments are doing in all areas.

Citizens don’t think about divisions between different taxing bodies; they only see the quality of life results, Pope said. He hopes to see a community-wide planning process take place within the next year that will eventually result in a community “report card.”

Research Compiled by: Curtis Farr
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 7

Robert J. Daniels

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

ROBERT J. DANIELS, CM, MPA

456 Oriole Circle, Jupiter, FL 33458
(561) 339-4026 rijdan14@aol.com

Mr. Ron Williams
Colin Baenziger and Associates
2055 S Atlantic Ave
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Dear Mr. Williams,

I am honored to present this documentation as my submission for the position of Town Manager with the Town of Juno Beach. Overall, I have over 8 years' experience as a City Manager and over 25 years in senior management in municipalities. I am currently working as the Town Manager in Sewall's Point for the past 2 years, a high end peninsular community in Eastern Martin County and I was planning on working here for the rest of my career in public service in Sewall's Point. That changed yesterday when I heard that the Town Manager's position was available in the Town where I previously worked as the Assistant Chief of Police. I couldn't pass up the opportunity to work in Juno Beach, a community I loved and closer to my home.

I previously worked as City Manager with the City of Madeira Beach, a coastal community battling sea level rise and stormwater sewer renovations, with 4 major stakeholders: residents, businesses, tourism, and developers. I promoted community involvement through a monthly meeting at different venues with residents throughout the city, which also gave businesses the opportunity to meet the residents they serve. I am apolitical and was able to build consensus between developers and residents, implementing concessions acceptable to all stakeholders, including the commission. I worked hand in hand with the Commission to enact their vision, and we were successful in obtaining legislative allocations of \$1.75 million for renovation of our 50-year-old beach groins and \$500,000 towards a roadway and stormwater project to partner with a \$2 million dollar loan. In the height of COVID, we were able to complete \$12 million roadway reconstruction with replacement of water and sewer lines, replacement of the stormwater system, and sea walls within the budget and on time.

I was also Town Manager of Melbourne Beach, where I accomplished rehabilitating a crumbling stormwater utility system with a FEMA grant, revamped the code enforcement function creating a better quality of life for the residents, transformed the police department with the hire of a new police chief and the addition of a school resource officer, completed a pier restoration project, beach renourishment, and pavilion renovations. Prior to that opportunity, I served as the Interim City Manager at the City of North Bay Village in Miami-Dade County.

In Sewall's Point, we were very project driven securing an \$8.4 million grant for a septic to sewer project from DEP, \$10 million grant for a resiliency project raising the only major through street servicing the south part of Town, and converted the businesses along A-1-A that did not have sewers available.

Additionally, I oversaw all budget and conservative fiscal operations, demonstrated a strong desire to move the community and projects forward working with public works, I specialize in coastal communities, and improving intergovernmental relations in each of my management positions. I have an ability to de-escalate contentious situations, collaborate with a community leaders and resident groups, and be an effective problem-solver. I also embrace a positive attitude and mentor staff to excel and have membership in the Florida City County Managers Association (FCCMA), International City Managers Association (ICMA) where I am a credentialed manager, and the League of Cities.

I believe that I am uniquely qualified to provide the vision and innovative leadership, direction, planning, operations and administrative expertise that should be expected from your Town Manager. I am available to answer any questions, living within a 20-minute drive.

Sincerely,

Robert Daniels

ROBERT DANIELS, CM, MPA

456 Oriole Circle, Jupiter, FL 33458

Phone: (561) 339 - 4026 | Email: rjdan14@aol.com

Results oriented City Manager with over thirty years progressively responsible experience in public administration managing operations in municipal government. Demonstrated proficiency in coordinating programs and interfacing with professionals of all levels; coupled with strong ability to assess services and support with stakeholders and elected officials. Profound knowledge of the government policies and regulations pertaining to budgeting and accounting, coupled with an outstanding knowledge of municipal ordinances, Florida laws, and federal legislation necessary for the management of a municipal government. Highly skilled in city planning, economic development, and personnel management as well as effective communication skills.

SKILLS SUMMARY

- Demonstrated working knowledge in the interpretation of the codes, city policies and procedures, and the state and federal laws applicable to Florida local government, including but not limited to the Public Records Act, Sunshine Law, Code of Ethics and the statutes governing the budgeting and financial operations.
- Demonstrated ability to delegate responsibilities to the proper employee and provide mentoring opportunities.
- Demonstrated ability to make effective recommendations to the Commission and provide feedback on all operations.
- Deals with residents, businesses, officials and contractors, and employees in a professional, tactful, diplomatic, transparent, and honest manner.
- Oversee the administration of all vendor contracts, interlocal agreements, grant opportunities, grant monitoring, and development agreements.
- Oversight of budget development, appropriations, and budget administration along with monitoring the effectiveness of all fiscal operations to ensure expenditures and revenue are within projections.
- Extensive experience in law enforcement management and government HR matters.
- Specialist in coastal communities with a population under 10,000.

EXPERIENCE

Town Manager – Town of Sewall's Point (2022 – Present)

- Streamlined operations dealing with a small staff but utilizing strong customer service skills.
- Effectively worked with the local legislative delegation for appropriations of \$1.5 million over two years for resiliency programs.
- Maintained communications with other jurisdictions within the County and Martin County managers as well.
- Improved communications internally and externally keeping the residents informed of the Capital Projects and the work of the Town Commission.
- Served as a resource for Commissioners advising them of the pertinent information for them to

make their official decisions.

- Worked to build trust and transparency with the public while maintaining an open door policy for residents and staff.
- Instituted new community events to gather the residents with an opportunity to improve neighbor relations.

Key Achievements:

Working with staff we were able to obtain funding for a septic to sewer project for 706 connections in the south part of the Town (\$8.4 million), funding for Phase 2 resiliency project adding stormwater treatment with outfall lines and raising the only through roadway (\$10 million), funding for Phase 3 resiliency project adding stormwater treatment with outfall lines and raising the only through roadway, and funding for a Vulnerability Assessment (\$100,000). Developed staff to a strong customer service organization to match the high expectations of our residents and including a police department with a bias to Community Policing. Instituted a full time position for finance to maintain the cash flows, grant reports, and the ability to cross train where the need arises. In a small town, everyone must wear many hats.

City Manager — City of Madeira Beach, Florida (2019 – 2022)

- Oversaw all operations of a barrier island community and increased community involvement.
- Ensured that all laws, provisions of the charter, and directives of the Board of Commissioners were enforced.
- Offer recommendations to the Board of Commissioners to facilitate a shared vision and assist in the decision-making of the Commissioners.
- Developed new avenues of communicating with the residents and other stakeholders seeking transparency of all operations.
- Submit regular communications to the Board of Commissioners concerning the operations of the City Departments, personnel, and on-going projects.
- Kept open door communications with Commissioners, residents, employees, and other stakeholders.
- Worked with lobbyists to secure Florida legislative allocations for major projects and local community partners to improve operations for the beach communities.
- Developed transparent code enforcement investigations and utilized a smart phone application to improve communications with residents.

Key Achievements:

All stakeholders reaped the benefits of a strong economic development program. Just recently, we were successful in obtaining legislative allocations of \$1.75 million for renovation of our fifty-year-old beach groins and \$500,000 towards a local roadway project. I also secured over \$3 million dollars in grant funding for various sustainability projects and successfully negotiated a three-year labor agreement with our firefighters. Our beach was chosen by Trip Advisor as the #9 beach in the country thanks to our cleanliness campaign and our pro-tourism strategies. We also developed a non-profit organization to seek funding for beautification of our parks, beaches, and the city.

Town Manager— Town of Melbourne Beach, FL (2017 – 2019)

- Direct administration of all departments of the Town except the Town Attorney.
- Developed community outreach programs to increase citizen involvement in town operations.

- Worked with a long-standing Sustainability Committee to develop environmental programs and recycling kitchen waste into compost.
- Developing and overseeing the town budget and financial operations, planning and code management, personnel administration, facility management, procurement, public works, community development, grant administration, building department and public relations. Oversight of the volunteer fire department.
- Developed fund raising programs for park and playground improvements.
- Worked with local leaders to combat water pollution affecting local canals and waterways.

Key Achievements:

- Experience rehabilitating a crumbling stormwater utility system and securing FEMA grant funding to assist with the financial commitment.
- Revamped the code enforcement function creating a better quality of life for the residents.
- Transformed the police department with the hire of a new police chief, the addition of a school resource officer function, and revamping the security functions.
- Completed a pier restoration project, beach renourishment, and pavilion renovations.

Interim Town Manager — North Bay Village, FL (2010-2015)

Worked as the Interim City Manager for one year and additionally served as the police chief and acting City manager as needed.

- Managed all city operations to include planning, economic development, building, finance, personnel, IT, public works, water and sewer operations, and the police department.

Key Achievements:

- Calmed labor unrest by successfully negotiating a new labor agreement and instituting a labor-management committee.
- Improved internal and external communications with the City Commission and staff.
- Initiated a park development project with grant and bond funding.
- Successfully brought to closure a major main line sewer and beautification project.
- Developed the City's Code Enforcement functions with the latest technology.
- Initiated an Emergency Management Response Plan and responsible for all emergency operations.
- Implementation of security protocols to provide a safer working environment for employees and citizens.

Position Held in Law Enforcement

Chief of Police — North Bay Village, Florida (4 years)

Chief of Police -- Buckeye Police Department, Buckeye, Arizona (1 years)

Assistant Chief of Police -- Juno Beach Police Department, Juno Beach, Florida (3 years)

Interim Chief of Police -- Florida Atlantic University Police Services, Boca Raton, Florida (1 year)

Boca Raton Police Services Department, Boca Raton, Florida (26 years) retiring as Assist. Chief of Police

EDUCATION

M.A. Public Administration (MPA)

Florida Atlantic University – Boca Raton, FL

B.A. Business Administration (BBA)

Florida Atlantic University – Boca Raton, FL

Additional:

Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy FBI Training Academy - Quantico, VA

Post Graduate Studies – Criminal Justice Education, University of Virginia – Quantico, VA

Certifications: Management Development Certification; Certified Government Financial Manager;

Florida Executive Development Seminar; Florida Chief's Executive Seminar Class 29; Certificate in

Public Records Management, All FEMA required courses and certifications, Stormwater Inspector and

Operator certifications, **ICMA Credentialed Manager – Recipient of award for local government service.**

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

- International City Managers Association
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Florida City County Manager's Association
- Florida League of Cities (Legislative Committee)
- FBI National Academy Alumni Association
- American College of Forensic Examiners International
- Rotary.

Candidate Introduction

Section 7**ROBERT DANIELS**

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, Florida Atlantic University (FL)
 Bachelor of Business Administration, Florida Atlantic University (FL)
 Credentialed Manager, International City Manager Association (2022)

EXPERIENCE

Town Manager, Town of Sewall's Point, FL	2022 – Present
City Manager, City of Madeira Beach, FL	2019 – 2022
Town Manager, Town of Melbourne Beach, FL	2016 – 2019
Interim Town Manager/Police Chief, North Bay Village, FL	2010 – 2016
Chief of Police, City of Buckeye, AZ	2009 – 2010
Assistant Chief of Police, Town of Juno Beach	2006 – 2009
Interim Chief of Police, Florida Atlantic University, FL	2005 – 2006
Assistant Chief of Police, Boca Raton, FL (Through the ranks)	1978 – 2005

BACKGROUND

The Town of Sewall's Point is a bedroom community on a peninsula between the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River in eastern Martin County, Florida, in an area known as the Treasure Coast. The main connection to the mainland is A-1-A, which was just renamed Jimmy Buffett Blvd. This road takes traffic to the beaches and points north along the Atlantic Ocean coastline.

The Town has a population of around 2200 people and is transforming from an upper-class retirement area to one that is seeing families migrate from California and New York. Some of the residents are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies or previous leaders. The Town employs 17 individuals, including a Police Department, a Building Department, Public Works, Finance, and a Town Clerk, with four department heads directly supervised by me. The General Fund budget is \$4,053,671, and the total budget with Capital Projects is \$28,663,320.

The three most significant issues facing the Town are:

- The most important issues are environmental and involve increasing the resiliency of the Town. Examples are the Septic to Sewer Conversion Project, which is important to the health of two bodies of water surrounding Sewall's Point, the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River. The Town has several septic tank systems that are failing, causing fecal material to enter our waterways. The northern area of Sewall's Point already has sewer service available, but since then, Martin County Utilities has made it harder for us to build a sewer system that connects to the County's sewer treatment plant. We

Section 7**ROBERT DANIELS**

currently have authorization for 340 connections, but authorization is needed for 366 more connections.

- The Town has one roadway that serves the South area of Sewall's Point, where most residents reside. That roadway and some neighboring properties flood during king high tides, sea level rise, and torrential rainstorms. The Town is raising the roadway to a standard level of three feet above sea level, the highest level allowed because of the low floor heights of the homes along the roadway. The project has been divided into four sections, each needing \$10-12 million. The roadway will have two separate drainage systems, one servicing the road and one servicing the neighboring properties. The stormwater will then be treated in a stormwater treatment area and released through an outfall line into the Indian River. One section has been completed, and one is just starting construction, leaving the search for funding for the other two sections.
- Planning for the same roadway in the north area of Sewall's Point is more complicated. That section is a Martin County Roadway, and the County has refused to cooperate with raising that portion of the roadway along with the drainage project needed to keep the road and residences dry. For over two years, we have tried to have the County join us in the design work as a starting point, and we even obtained a grant for this purpose. This roadway is also essential as it is an evacuation route for the beach area during a hurricane evacuation.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I was previously employed by Juno Beach, having worked for the Police Department as the Assistant Chief of Police. The Town always had a hometown feel, and the employees formed a team that could provide exemplary service. I am sure some of the names have changed, but the charm of the Town has not. The sense of community is fostered by the events the town hosts, such as the Ice Cream Social and the summer picnic. The Town Council was professional and worked well together to craft the vision for the administration to follow. I know some changes in perspective have occurred, but we can constantly refocus on a shared vision directing us to what is best for Juno Beach. I am eager to utilize the experiences I have gained through the different organizations I have been a part of to assist Juno Beach in traversing through a strategic plan for the future.

I never stop learning and have been lucky enough to garner new ideas and concepts from everyone I have worked with. My participatory management style has helped not only my learning process but also that of my teammates through the exchange of knowledge. Succession management is also a priority to prepare the staff for other opportunities in Juno Beach or other municipalities. I always take time to speak with staff and am concerned about their problems. I stress that it is important for employees to take care of themselves first and then their families. Next comes their job, finding the balance between their personal and professional lives. Some

Section 7**ROBERT DANIELS**

think of legacies as the names on a building or accolades they obtain, but I believe in legacies left in your teammates.

This concern also reaches the commissioners I have worked with, dealing with their goals and desires as they work to make a better town. I gave them the information they needed to make the best decisions for the community. I never shy away from important decisions but realize that policy decisions rest with the Town Council. I strive to communicate with each council member, keeping them aware of important issues and preparing them for future Town Council Meetings. I strive to reach a consensus within the Town Council, finding a common ground that each member can agree on. I always follow the HEART principles: Honesty, Ethics, Accountability, Respect, and Trustworthiness. This is my code of conduct, which my previously elected officials have appreciated. I have found the truth is always the best course of action, and demonstrating professionalism even in adverse conditions is also the best option.

I'm always working on patience because I want to get the job done so we can move on to the next project or situation. I always maintain my composure and never lose my temper. Once you lose that, you have lost everything. I also believe in working with each employee to broaden their knowledge and experiences, which is documented with an annual goal-setting conversation usually held during their performance appraisal. I have found this process to help meet organizational goals as well. Goal setting usually leads to success and setting the bar high because you may never reach your expectations if you don't try. One of my most significant achievements came at Sewall's Point. I was told Sewall's Point has never received large grants. We applied for a \$8.4 million grant from the Department of Environmental Protection and received the award. This was the catalyst for our Septic to Sewer conversion process, in which we delivered 169 connections out of 706 connections in part 1 of the project in January 2025. This took coordination with the residents, the contractors, Martin County Utilities, the contractual Town Engineer, and the Town Commission. Part 2 will deliver 171 connections and is planned to start in May 2025.

I am in my second year as Chairperson of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a member of the Treasure Coast League of Cities, and the Martin County Local Mitigation Strategies Committee, all of which have assisted me in moving the Town's agenda forward. This has also been helpful with the projects we have worked on and those in the future. I have been fortunate to represent the Town of Sewall's Point at the Local Delegation Meeting and have successfully received legislative appropriations.

I also believe that we learn something from every failure. In my case, we had a \$1 million stormwater replacement project early in my career, and I did not double-check the work of the Town Engineer. The contractor and the engineer decided to start the project at one end of the street, which was different from where the project was supposed to start. It had already been published, and I contacted each resident on that block. The residents at the other end of the project received little notice and were upset with the mix-up. I learned to always check and recheck with contracted staff to ensure appropriate notice and communication is given to the residents.

Section 7**ROBERT DANIELS**

One of the most challenging parts of the job is terminating someone's employment. I never felt good about firing anyone, but it is a necessary function of being a Town Manager. I always allow employees to correct their behavior and prove that they can improve when possible. In December of 2019, when COVID was showing signs of occurring in China, at a staff meeting, I mentioned to our Fire Chief to make sure his personnel had enough personal protective equipment (PPE) since rescue personnel might be the first employees to have to confront COVID patients. In March 2020, COVID hit. Early on a Friday morning, I was met by the Fire Department Inspector, who explained that we had two firefighters the night before had two patients who supposedly had COVID, and one was in cardiac arrest and subsequently died. The Department had no PPE except for one set, and no firefighters were trained in using the gear. When the firefighter used the equipment on the now-deceased patient, the protective mask fogged up while he was doing chest compressions. I could not locate the Fire Chief. I called his house and cell phone, leaving a message to contact me immediately, and I subsequently discovered that the Chief was taking off on Fridays to go on last-minute cruises without submitting paperwork to the timekeeper. I had the Fire Inspector obtain the necessary PPE and conduct training with the firefighters. I learned he had lost the respect of his personnel due to his constant absence and his inability to protect his employees. I placed him on administrative suspension until my investigation was completed, and he was subsequently terminated after I met with each commissioner and the mayor to advise them of my actions. I believe senior staff members have an essential responsibility to their department members, and he breached that trust, among other apparent regulations.

I see the following challenges in Juno Beach:

- It is imperative to bring the Town Council and residents together and speak with one voice to face the town's challenges.
- Facing the challenges of new development and re-development while keeping the hometown feeling of Juno Beach.
- As change occurs on the federal level, be prepared to take advantage of opportunities and mitigate changes.
- Utilize the Vulnerability Study to make Capital Improvement Plans for further drainage and flooding improvements and promote the town's resilience.

During the first six months, my efforts will involve:

- Open lines of communication with the Town Council and the residents.
- Meet with citizen groups, other elected officials, and Fire/Rescue Department officials to build a bridge and strive for common ground.
- Meet with each employee and volunteer of the Town, stressing teamwork and communication.
- Evaluate each Department and function the Town provides to check effectiveness and efficiency.

Section 7**ROBERT DANIELS**

- Create strategies to handle future developments in the future.
- Work with County officials to enact more reasonable solutions to the Town's traffic.
- Develop a rapport with media representatives.

I have always had a good relationship with the media. I realize they have a job to do, and the easier I can facilitate their job, the better the Town will be. Honesty, to start with, is the best course of action with outstanding media relations. I am an open book and would never embarrass the Town, Council members, employees, or residents. I deal with everybody straightforwardly, so they understand the position of the Town, and some may not like the fact that I have to say no at times. I also utilize different forms of communication. For the most part, Facebook and Constant Contact are the more popular methods utilized. We have used both to communicate events, Council agendas, and recaps of Council meetings, all of which seemed to reach 60-65% of the residents. Also, emergency notices for natural disasters and our street closures are better received via e-mail.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF

- Honest
- Ethical
- Approachable
- Proactive
- Reasonable
- Friendly

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB SECTION

There is only one position I would leave Sewall's Point for, and that is the position of Town Manager with the Town of Juno Beach. Juno Beach is close to home, and I have some great memories of my time there. I also feel that the time is right to utilize my skills and experience to benefit Juno Beach.

CURRENT SALARY

My current salary is \$130,000 plus benefits.

CB&A Background Checks

Background Check Summary for ROBERT "BOB" JAMES DANIELS

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	Results Pending
County	
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found
Martin County, FL	No Records Found
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
Maricopa County, AZ	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Arizona	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Palm Beach County, FL	Results Pending
Martin County, FL	No Records Found
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
Miami-Dade County, FL	Results Pending
Maricopa County, AZ	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	Results Pending
Arizona	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Very Good

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

**Background Check Summary for
ROBERT “BOB” JAMES DANIELS**

Employment

Confirmed, except for the City of Madeira Beach (2019 – 2022), North Bay Village (2010 – 2015) and Buckeye Police Dept (2009 – 2010)

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
ROBERT "BOB" JAMES DANIELS
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Robert Daniels

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 X

2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No X

3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No X

4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No X

5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No X

6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes No X

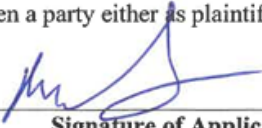
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No X

8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / X (Twitter) / Instagram / LinkedIn, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. None Currently

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 X

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

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes

Robert “Bob” Daniels

John Hendricks – Former Mayor, Madeira Beach, FL 727-394-8877

Mr. Hendricks has known Mr. Daniels since around 2019. They enjoyed a good working relationship. Mr. Daniels did a good job for Madeira Beach.

Mr. Hendricks has lived in the town of Madeira Beach for over 40 years, and he knows the residents and staff. Mr. Daniels brought ideas and matters to Mr. Hendricks for his perspective and because of his knowledge base of the community. He listened and wanted to learn.

Managers should give the elected officials guidance, particularly when newly elected, because they may not always understand how the government works or the requirements that the City is beholden to. One of Mr. Daniels’ strengths was helping the elected officials understand what they could and could not do. He guided them in the right direction without pushing them.

While Mr. Daniels made good decisions when hiring staff, he also tried to promote from within the organization if the employee was qualified. They generally know more about the City and the organization than someone coming in from the outside.

Mr. Daniels kept processes the way they were, as long as they were running properly. He also did what he could to streamline the organization. He was not one to alienate staff with layoffs and harsh discipline. He counseled and mentored employees to help them improve).

The Barrier Island Government Council (BIG-C) is an active group in the community. Mr. Daniels attended roundtable discussions on matters related to the island. He listened to what was said and was there to help answer questions. He also provided feedback at the meetings. His knowledge and experience was very beneficial, as the group consisted of many Mayors that were new to their position, or had only been in place for a few years.

Mr. Daniels has great Florida and coastal experience. He has worked with FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers on grants to protect the City against floods and hurricanes. He is very calm under stress, and always retains his cool even under scrutiny.

The Mayor and Mr. Daniels had frequent meetings, several times a week. Mr. Daniels always wanted the Mayor to be informed. They met the day before a Commission meeting to go over what was on the agenda.

Mr. Daniels is customer service oriented. He meets deadlines. He hired a contract employee to audit and review the financials, even though they have a good finance staff. This employee handles the audits, which have all come back outstanding. He is the top of the class.

Mr. Daniels was very professional. Elected officials came to meetings in casual dress, some wearing flip flops. He always wore a suit because he wanted to put that good foot forward as their City Manager.

Reference Notes

Robert “Bob” Daniels

An individual disliked the former Commission, ran for office, and won the election. He saw Mr. Daniels as an extension of the previous Commission and wanted him out. His vendetta had nothing to do with Mr. Daniels personally, but he became so angry at meetings that the other Commissioners had to calm him down. Mr. Daniels was always professional despite the actions of others. Nothing in his background would concern a reasonable person.

Mr. Hendricks would hire Mr. Daniels. He would be a good hire for any community.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Loyal,
- Driven,
- Tenacious,
- Honest, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Paid close attention to detail, pursued grants for the City, always accessible.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Dave Hutson – Former Commissioner, Madeira Beach, FL 330-524-4313

Mr. Hutson has known Mr. Daniels since 2019. Mr. Hutson was a new Commissioner at the time and Mr. Daniels was very helpful. He shared the background of projects and matters, as well as current information.

Mr. Hutson believes that the most important attribute for a manager is to be ethical and act correctly for residents, employees, and the city. Mr. Daniels is ethical. Mr. Hutson would like to have Mr. Daniels back as their manager. He is a very well-rounded leader and understands how decisions affect certain groups. The community is divided between residents and businesses. He walked the line between the two sides better than other managers they have had.

Mr. Daniels was tasked with hiring a new Public Works Director. They had an internal candidate and an external candidate. While both were qualified for the job, the external candidate had management experience that the internal candidate did not have. Mr. Daniels felt some pressure to hire the internal candidate, and she has done well. She was not as polished at first, but she has grown in the role. His decisions in general are good.

Mr. Daniels held an event called Breakfast with Bob at a different location every month. This event gave residents the opportunity to speak with him. They sometimes made appointments to come to City Hall and talk about neighborhood issues. He often met with the community.

Reference Notes

Robert “Bob” Daniels

Mr. Daniels held scheduled meetings with elected officials every two weeks. One before the Commission meeting, and one before the workshop. Mr. Daniels went over agenda items and gave them an opportunity to ask questions. He was a wonderful manager.

The budget required three months of meetings. Generally, the finance person did the talking but Mr. Daniels reiterated and relayed the information in a way that people in the audience could understand the budget and what was included in it.

Sand blew under a bridge and the Department of Transportation (DOT) was involved in the solution to remove it. Mr. Daniels worked with the DOT, the Army Corps of Engineers, the County and a citizen who owned some of the land. The project received all necessary permits, but the project was halted due to covid.

When Mr. Daniels was being attacked, or the situation was very tense, he stayed calm. When he realized that some Commissioners wanted to let him go, he continued to do his job and even met with businesses on a project related to parking in the business area.

One Commissioner was accused of sexual misconduct and Mr. Daniels had to investigate the claim. It was a difficult situation as he reported to the Commission. Once they started investigating the matter, the victim withdrew the complaint. Pressure was applied by people in the town to put something in this Commissioner’s record, which Mr. Daniels did. This situation may have been a factor that led to Mr. Daniels’ dismissal. Nothing in his background would concern a reasonable person.

Mr. Hutson would hire Mr. Daniels. He is a good manager who has worked for communities that were large enough to have several department heads, and he has worked for smaller places that did not and so he wore many hats. He has great experience.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Ethical,
- Calm,
- Fair, and
- Mentored employees.

Strengths: Ethical.

Weaknesses: With his police background he was willing to wade into situations like commercial enterprises putting their chairs too close to the beach. However, he was not the best spokesperson. He also could improve at aligning the employees and the elected officials. That said, at the time the Commission was very hostile.

Reference Notes Robert “Bob” Daniels

Maria Pierce – Finance and Human Resources Director, Sewall’s Point, FL 253-307-7797

Ms. Pierce has known Mr. Daniels since 2022, and they work closely together. Mr. Daniels has done a great job, and he is a go-getter. He has been able to get many capital projects underway. The Town is small, and the employees must wear multiple hats. He jumps in and does what needs to be done. He keeps the staff informed.

Mr. Daniels makes good decisions, both in hiring and in general. He is not afraid of change and is innovative. Some long-tenured employees are resistant to change but he still tries to move the organization forward. He has good financial skills. He is very responsive.

One way that Mr. Daniels interacts with citizens is through community events and meetings. He introduced Arbor Days because the community has earned the Tree City Award. They are preparing for their third annual event. He helps with the set up and clean up. He has high expectations of staff, but he dives in and helps in any way he can. When the maintenance person is out, he has been known to clean the bathrooms.

Employees usually run booths at events while Mr. Daniels is focused on talking and meeting others, though he helps as needed. He came into the community and quickly learned everything and everyone. Ms. Pierce had been with the Town for longer than Mr. Daniels, but he was the one to take her into the community to show her areas of concern and opportunity. He also introduced her to the public works side of Capital Improvement Projects as she had previously only dealt with the grants and finance portion.

They have a septic to sewer project that did not have 100% buy in and they were receiving some push back. Mr. Daniels worked with the contracted engineer, the staff, and the granting agencies to bring the Commission along. When the project came up for vote, it passed 5-0 which surprised everyone as unanimous votes are very rare for these types of projects.

While Mr. Daniels has become frustrated a few times, he corrects himself, breathes, and reminds staff that they have this. For example, they are working with the DOT on a project funded by the state. In a Teams meeting the DOT said they were required to use federal guidelines. Mr. Daniels was frustrated but he remained professional. He waited for his turn to talk and then stated that they can use state guidelines because it is state funding. He can be firm, but not in a bad way, it is more of a negotiating tactic.

Code enforcement can be challenging. Mr. Daniels tries to have a good balance between the enforcement and individual. For example, a citizen cut down 24 trees without a permit, which is subject to a \$5,000 fine per tree, or \$120,000 total. Mr. Daniels follows the regulations, but shows compassion to residents. He explained the procedures and shared that the magistrate can decide to lower the penalty if they wish. They have a similar situation regarding a foreclosure property that someone else is interested in buying. He recommended that the interested party work with the magistrate.

Reference Notes

Robert “Bob” Daniels

Nothing in Mr. Daniel’s conduct or behavior is concerning. An employee made some claims which resulted in an investigation. The Town hired a private investigator at the employee’s request, but the results were not favorable to the employee. While this individual may have a negative opinion of Mr. Daniels, they were not found to be reliable during the investigation.

Ms. Pierce would hire Mr. Daniels. She enjoys working with him. He is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Supportive,
- Genuinely cares about the Town and employees,
- High expectations of staff but in a positive way,
- Flexible, and
- Visionary.

Strengths: Team player, ambitious, vision, good sense of the organization, keeps others on task.

Weaknesses: In Commission meetings when the elected officials ask for items, he promises to turn them around quickly. He may not always realize that it will take longer than what he is shooting for. He aims to please, and while he does listen to staff when they are overwhelmed, he still tries to get it all done.

Curt Preisser – Former Public Information Officer, Madeira Beach, FL 940-650-2883

Mr. Preisser has known Mr. Daniels since 2019. Mr. Daniels did an excellent job. He worked well with most elected officials, and the ones he did not were rogue operators who wanted to manage staff, which was against the charter and city policy.

Because Mr. Daniels seeks information to be well informed, his decisions are well thought out. He spoke with department heads and others before moving forward. As such, his decisions were well received. In layman’s terms, he is a straight shooter.

Mr. Daniels was consistently out in the community. They had a weekly coffee once a week with local businesses. He enjoyed speaking to others about the community and sharing his vision. He listened to the feedback that attendees had.

Mr. Daniels maintains operations at a high-performance level. He immediately recognized the value of having a communications professional on his team. He heard every suggestion that Mr. Preisser had and agreed with 99% of them. The community is very close-knit, everyone knows everyone, and it was important to Mr. Daniels to be upfront with communication both internally and with the community. Communication is a priority for him.

Reference Notes

Robert “Bob” Daniels

Madeira Beach only has one main street. They wanted to start a Farmer’s market downtown without blocking the evacuation route. Business owners were concerned about the impact on their sales. The effort required coordinated communication. Mr. Daniels met personally with the business owners at their location, rather than asking them to come to City Hall. He brought the Directors together and they were able to successfully hold a Farmer’s market.

When it came to putting the budget together, Mr. Daniels was excellent. He brought it to the Commission, while prioritizing projects and the work. He recognized that they only had so many tax dollars and found grant money to fund projects without raising the millage rate. He took advantage of partnerships. He brought all the pieces of the puzzle together, and even attained the approval of the Commission.

When Mr. Daniels has a deadline, he meets that deadline. A few times Mr. Preisser was not done with his part and requested more time. Mr. Daniels asked for what had been done and finished the rest of it so he could meet the deadline.

Madeira Beach requires patience, and Mr. Daniels handled the stress very well. When others may have been angry at how the elected officials conducted themselves, he never let it get to him. He always made himself available to the elected officials. Though some chose not to meet, his door was always open. He sometimes became frustrated, but this is common in local government. When a mistake was made, he owned it and never blamed the staff.

Mr. Preisser cannot recall any controversy that involved Mr. Daniels. One Commissioner wanted a different manager and refused to meet with him. He used the sunshine law as an excuse. However, he was voted out of office two years later.

With Mr. Daniels, what you see is what you get. He never tap dances around or plays politics. He does the best job he can with the tools at his disposal. He is very straightforward and direct. His style was appreciated by most of the community.

Mr. Preisser would hire Mr. Daniels in a heartbeat, he is an excellent manager. Mr. Preisser has worked for several managers and Mr. Daniels is in his top three. Mr. Daniels was consistent, and he gave the unvarnished truth. Though the scale for performance evaluations was one to five, he never gave fives because there are always things to learn. One of his best attributes is understanding the rules of communication. He listens before he speaks.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Deliberate,
- Concise,
- Able,
- Progressive, and
- Open minded.

Reference Notes

Robert “Bob” Daniels

Strengths: Because he is a former law enforcement officer, he is by the book. Communication and clarity are all high strengths. Well versed in local government. He works well with the political nature of elected officials.

Weaknesses: He does not like it when technology does not work.

Joe Capra – President, Capra Engineering, Town of Sewall’s Point, FL 772-215-0330

Mr. Capra has known Mr. Daniels since 2022. Mr. Daniels does an excellent job. He is on top of everything and is very accommodating. When Mr. Capra’s team has been working hard on a project, he brings them donuts.

Mr. Capra has been in the region since 1988, and Mr. Daniels is one of the best managers they have ever had. He is outstanding and never backs away from an issue. He compromises when it is appropriate, and stands his ground as needed. He completes his work in a timely manner.

The last review Mr. Daniels had was great, his elected officials think highly of him. He works very well with members of the public. He communicates well, listens, and expresses the opinion of the elected body. He is never harsh but explains matters in a way the audience needs to hear.

They meet once a week and Mr. Daniel stays on top of it all. The Town has many construction projects planned, with a limited cash supply. Mr. Daniels worked with the bookkeeper and accounting staff to ensure they allocate the money properly. When they need to go into the reserves, he provides guidance to the accounting staff. He will not ask anyone to do anything that he will not do himself. He is an exceptional leader.

While Mr. Daniels may feel stress, he responds well and never looks overly stressed. He researches when he does not know the answer. He listens and responds, while accomplishing what needs to be done.

Mr. Daniels has not been involved in anything controversial. Mr. Capra would hire Mr. Daniels. Mr. Capra highly recommends Mr. Daniels for any position in management. He is experienced and honest. They were lucky to find him, and he has proven himself to be very capable. He was a good choice for their town. Anyone who hires him will be very fortunate.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Professional in attire and manner,
- Kind,
- Considerate,
- Generous,
- Thoughtful, and
- Upstanding person.

Reference Notes Robert “Bob” Daniels

Strengths: Personable, very good at his work, accommodates Commissioners and citizens.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Bob Garlo – Town Manager, Town of Jupiter Island, FL 772-545-0104

Mr. Garlo has known Mr. Daniels for decades. Mr. Garlo had a long career in law enforcement in Palm Beach County. They met when Mr. Daniels was the Assistant Police Chief for Boca Raton, FL. They have stayed in touch. They interacted during the time Mr. Daniels worked for Juno Beach. They have collaborated on ordinances and other matters during Mr. Daniels’ tenure at Sewall’s Point.

Mr. Daniels is an excellent employee. He is very conscientious. His decisions are good. He has been handling finance and budget for years, and does very well. He is responsive.

Mr. Daniels is more active in the community in Sewall’s Point than Mr. Garlo is in Jupiter Island. He is also active in the League of Cities and Chamber of Commerce. Being an Assistant Chief in a large agency like Boca Raton is not easy, but he did very well in all regards. As the Chief Executive Officer for Sewall’s Point, he has handled interactions with the public well.

Sewall’s Point had a septic to sewer conversion, which was a substantial capital improvement project. Mr. Daniels has had to navigate the project with the County and has been rather successful in the process.

Mr. Garlo is not aware of any personal or professional controversies involving Mr. Daniels. While Mr. Daniels may have some detractors because of his position, Mr. Garlo does not personally know anyone who has a negative opinion of Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Garlo would consider hiring Mr. Daniels. He is a good manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Daniels:

- Conscientious,
- Hard worker,
- Thorough in researching aspects of decisions he is faced with,
- Good work ethic, and
- Decent person.

Reference Notes
Robert “Bob” Daniels

Strengths: Vast experience in government. Works well with an elected board.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
December 20, 2024

South Sewall's Point announces first STS phase

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

Some 169 homeowners in South Sewall's Point here are now eligible to apply for connection to sanitary sewer service provided by Martin County Utilities after officials announced the completion of Phase 1 of the septic-to-sewer program along South Sewall's Point during the Dec. 10 Town Commission meeting.

Martin County Utilities Technical Services Administrator Leo Rapetti provided the Commission an overview of the grinder sanitary sewer system now ready to be installed. "Each home would have a small individual grinder station installed near the building's clean-out," he said. "When we install these, we generally do directional drill – a highly invisible process – and that's one of the benefits of this installation. This past week, Martin County did our 1,000th install of these same grinder systems you'll be using here, so this is the extension of an ongoing successful program."

Rapetti insisted there was no systemwide assessment and homeowners would only have to pay for connections upon failure of their current septic systems. "Phase 1 is 169 homes shown in the purple-shaded homes," he explained. "These are the same properties also listed in the interlocal agreement between Martin County and the Town of Sewall's Point. So, if somebody lives a house away from this and wants to connect, we can't at this time because the interlocal only allows us to service those homes. The cost for our grinder system is \$10,000, but we are discounting that to \$7,000 if connected within the first 365 days."

Financing is also available for those who'd prefer to pay the cost of STS conversion as part of their monthly utility bill. "The other option is to pay \$85 a month on your utility bill that's spread out over 120 months [and] that's simple interest," Rapetti added. "It's a simple form to fill out online, and literally overnight approval. As long as you're a good customer with Martin County Utilities, that's kind of your creditworthiness."

Rapetti emphasized that new South Sewall's Point sanitary sewer customers could expect to see a \$50 total sewer bill in addition to their current water bills. The maximum would be \$70 per current rates. Installation would be as painless as possible for those applying for septic-to-sewer conversion. "We have contractors that provide all the materials, all labor, [and] we'll take care of the electric from your panel out to the pump," he said. "We'll install the basin and then the lateral out to our main in the right of way, connect the house gravity to that basin, pump the septic tank and clean and fill it, per Department of Health rules. We do all the grading, cleanup and sod work. The contractors do a really good job of not making a mess of your yard."

"What happens if you have to install a new water line?" Commissioner Vinny Barile asked. "Is this piping that's going down to the street going to affect a new water line coming in if we have to run across the top?" "Obviously, you wouldn't want to dig in the same trenches, but it can

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cross," Rapetti answered. "You'd want at least some separation. This is a fused poly pipe, so there's different rules with the Health Department. With the glued types, you have to keep a foot of separation between the two, but since this is a fused pipe, the Department of Environmental Protection will allow a closer separation."

The commissioner wondered about the possibility of mandatory connections related to Florida Statute 381.00655 that residents had opposed from the onset. "Florida Statute requires that, once a sewer system is available, a letter be sent out to the homeowners saying that it is available," he said. "That statute requires that people connect within 365 days. How are you ignoring this statute, or why are you ignoring this statute?"

In his response, the Utility's technical services administrator insisted he and his staff weren't ignoring that statute but rather honoring the rights of private property owners. "I cannot come on your property and force you against your private property rights," he said. "We can't shut off your water and say you have to connect. There's limits to what we can do. Forcing people to connect can also create a financial hardship. We're trying to be a kinder, gentler Martin County Utilities."

"Can someone pay the \$7,000 and not connect, and then when their system fails, connect and so lock in the price?" Tidikis asked. "No," Rapetti answered. "If you pay, you're a customer and we're going to connect you. Right now, \$7,000 is our pricing based on current market. We haven't raised it in the last five years that we've done it even though prices have gone up. You have a whole year to decide, the letter is going out today. Well send another letter out in about 11 months as a reminder to take advantage of the discount and connect now."

Tidikis lobbed his next question at Town Engineer Joe Capra related to the potential loss of electricity during weather events that could knock the grinders offline. "In the budget numbers that were put together per household, there was a line-item number for individual small, portable generators for each household," he said. "What happened to that?" "It's kind of difficult," Capra replied. "We did put that in there and told them they could maybe do that, but the unfortunate part about it is some people had generators and some didn't have generators. So, we've basically been trying to make sure everybody's paying the same amount of money. We talked about that, but we didn't put that in there."

Rapetti insisted mutual aid agreements with other nearby utilities would provide emergency pump-outs for the grinders in that circumstance, which do have a substantial holding capacity. "There's like 80 gallons of storage capacity in this thing [because] we went with the bigger basins," he said. "It'll give us a little extra time: It's 20-25 toilet flushes, it's a 10-minute cold shower." Commissioner Kajia Mayfield expressed her satisfaction with the first phase completion afterward. "Thank you for the presentation," she said. "You did a good job – a lot of good information. I think that the residents able to hook up will appreciate it. I'm excited that it's ready to go."

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Chairman Frank Fender expressed surprise that letters were mailed to those first prospective sanitary sewer residents the very day of the public announcement to the Board. "Does that imply that we'll start hooking up imminently?" he asked. Rapetti told him he's already been receiving requests from residents who wanted to convert to sanitary sewer. "We've got a list from the town of people that are struggling," he said. "Their septics aren't efficient when we get a little bit of rain. We have those names, and you don't have to wait until you get the letter. If someone's struggling to make it work, we will get you first."

"Does that also imply that the infrastructure's already in place and we're done with this phase of the infrastructure layout so that people can hook up?" Chairman Fender prodded. "Actually, 100 percent," Rapetti answered. "The system's cleared by DEP, everything's constructed. The infrastructure received by the town is the property of Martin County Utilities, which can now maintain the system."

Since Rapetti had also told commissioners that new residents who purchase properties after the end of the 365-day discount period would also have a grace period to connect at the discounted rate, Town Manager **Robert Daniels** wondered if that would apply to North Sewall's Point residents as well. "Yes," Rapetti said. "We've done 17 basins throughout the county. It doesn't matter, it can be 10 years after we inaugurate the service. We will honor the discount rate."

That response pleased the town manager. "Thank you for coming tonight, I really appreciate," **Daniels** said. "It's great to hear it straight from Martin County Utilities. Thank you for pushing us along so we could get that service going."

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
June 26, 2024

Sewall's Point picks new grant team

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission got deep into the weeds of the grant writing/grant management process June 18 before ultimately deciding to contract with two separate firms, whose combined \$578,000 cap caused heartburn and prompted an in-depth staff lesson on grants and appropriations.

Sewall's Point had previously contracted with Kloee Ciuperger, the Stuart-based principle of Gallo Pavo, LLC, to provide grant writing and lobbying services on an annual retainer. Town Manager **Robert Daniels** decided recently to issue a request for proposals for those services. "As you know, Kloee did not want to move forward with us under a non-retainer arrangement," he said. "We had the RFP for grant-writing services, and we're trying to recoup those funds through the grant process. If you follow the procurement process and do what the federal government wants you to do and include all the language in there, we have a chance of getting those fees we pay reimbursed."

Both **Daniels** and Building Official Jack Reisinger rated the submissions from seven companies responding to the RFP, which included Boynton Beach Business Consultants; CAPTEC Engineering, the firm belonging to Town Engineer Joe Capra; Cape Canaveral Scientific, a company the town has previously contracted for those services; Fred Fox Enterprises; GrantWorks; Guardian Community Resource Management; and In Rem Solutions. Each applicant was rated on four categories for a total of 100 points, and now **Daniels** requested the Board take the unusual step of awarding the bid to both top-rated companies. "Out of that, there were three top firms," **Daniels** continued. "We have the two top firms for you, [and] I think we would like to have both firms. Captec would be our grant management side in providing information for the quarterly reports, and Cape Canaveral Scientific doing the actual grant writing."

Commissioner Vinny Barile immediately asked about the firms not being recommended as he examined the rating sheets on Captec and CCS. Both bid respondents listed \$289,200 as a not-to-exceed amount for their services. "Who was the third one?" he asked. "In Rem Solutions," **Daniels** replied. "What was their quote?" Barile prodded. "They were at \$165,000," **Daniels** said. "I wish we could have seen all seven," Barile said.

The only public speaker on the item, Crane's Nest resident Frank Tidikis, posed questions about the pricing, which was dramatically higher than Gallo Pavo's \$60,000 annual cost. "First of all, Kloee was paid \$5,000 a month basically for these services," he said. "Now we're engaging two firms with a projected cost of \$289,200 per year per firm. Captec bid it at \$11,855 per grant with an estimated time of 104 hours. It comes out to about \$113.99 an hour." Tidikis also opined on the other top-rated firm. "Canaveral Scientific is headed by Amy Adams, who worked for the

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town one other time," he added. "Her performance was not necessarily deemed satisfactory. She bid in an hourly cost of \$145 an hour. It seems that \$289,200 times two is an unnecessary expenditure of funds."

Commissioner Dave Kurzman launched the subsequent Board debate based on similar concerns. "When Cape Canaveral was doing our grants, it was very expensive," he said. "The problem is, if we get declined, we're still going to pay them. I remember when [Michelle] Berger called me into her office and showed me the return on investment was very poor."

Vice-Mayor Frank Fender then wondered if the decision had to be made that day. In his response, **Daniels** describing a looming grant timeline. "As many as three grants were left by our previous grant writer," he said. "We were notified by the Department of Environmental Protection that the drafts are in their portal. That's something that we need to look at right away, and the deadline is June 30. We need to get it done."

Fender likewise asked clarification questions about Captec's bid response and pricing. "I'm looking at the proposed fee schedule, and the number doesn't look anything like \$289,000," he said. "How do you help me map the difference between what we've been paying in the past and what makes this contract a viable [solution]?"

In his response, **Daniels** spoke about two different lobbying styles. "Kloee liked to lobby the executive branch instead of the legislative branch," he explained. "When you all approved the lobbyist, I think you were looking for somebody to lobby the legislative branch so we could get appropriations. We can kind of address that because that's been in the wheelhouse of Canaveral. As to the grant writing, the hourly fees are spelled out. Obviously, we have to watch the hours and make sure we're getting the best bang for our buck."

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield admitted the technicality of lobbying and the differences between state appropriations and grants could sometimes be overwhelming to the uninitiated. "Obviously there's overlap, and it's very confusing," she said. "Overall, you're probably the best judge of how things are running, but I agree the \$289,000 and two contracts at the same time is a bit shocking. It looks like it's a one-year contract with four optional renewals, so maybe if it was structured more palatably. Overall, this is all very confusing to us, [but] we need the grants to do our projects."

Vice-Mayor Fender wanted assurances of the budget amount that would occupy the current \$60,000-line item for grant writing and lobbying services. "If you had to guess, what would you think that line item would be next year?" he asked. "It could be close to \$100,000," **Daniels** replied.

Capra came to the podium to provide his insight, emphasizing the complexities of grants. "We have to go through several PowerPoints to the different groups that the grant people form to make a decision," he said. "There's more than just writing the grant: We have to come up with a concept plan and put all the calculations together. All that is in this proposal." Capra also

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delineated the duties to be shared between him and Adams. "First of all, Amy keeps track of what the grant agencies want relative to what they're dishing money out for," he explained. "I'm designing things. She knows what the legislators want and knows their assistants. There's a lot of benefit to having someone who just writes grants all the time. I can do parts of it and give her the materials she needs, but I'm not keeping track of all that. I'm keeping track of getting the thing designed, permitted and built."

"Why such a discrepancy in the cost [of] \$60,000 for Kloe and \$578,000?" Barile asked. Capra insisted the not-to-exceed number was deceptive. "You're not giving me [or] Amy a contract for \$289,000," he replied. "You're telling **Bob** he can spend up to \$289,000 and either one of us can put together the grant and do the administration."

Adams subsequently came to the podium to explain why the bid responses included the \$289,200 cap, insisting her fee would most likely be considerably less. "We were not given in the RFP how many [grants] you wanted written per year, nor how many needed to be managed," she said. "So, I went with the low number of eight grants per year at \$9,000, [which] is \$72,000. I've never really written eight grants for one town per year because we usually get all the money in the first two. That's sort of the way we go."

The Commission then voted unanimously to award the bid to the two firms.

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
June 5, 2024

Sewall's Point adopts \$79.7m capital improvement plan

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission formally adopted its \$79.7 million five-year capital improvement plan on May 28 despite a barrage of last-minute questions hurled at its members by two residents concerned about the municipality's ability to actually pay for the projects contained within the document. The Commission had previously approved the preliminary draft CIP on May 14 after a lengthy discussion dealing with flooding on South River Road aggravated by the construction of a new home in the area.

Both Town Engineer Joe Capra and Public Works Director Jack Reisinger offered their input that day on Capra's proposed \$2.5 million solution of the problem, represented by a budget item provisionally placed in the Fiscal Year 2027 column of the draft document. The pair had visited the area and came up with a provisional \$200,000-plus solution they believed would alleviate most of the problem until they could find grant funding for a more comprehensive solution.

Town Manager **Robert Daniels** promised a detailed cost estimate and projected timeframe for that stopgap stormwater fix at the next meeting.

Before the Board could get to the resolution for the CIP approval that night, two members of the public came forward expressing concerns, beginning with North Sewall's Point Road resident Alan De Rosa. "I'm trying to understand the value that should be placed on the five-year capital improvement plan that now calls for \$80 million in expenditures over the next five years," he said. "We all know the town doesn't have this kind of money or revenue in the future, so where's the shortfall going to come from? Looking at the actual revenue and expenditures report year-to-date, I see under federal and state grants [that] we plan to receive \$16.3 million for the full-year budget. Through April, we've recovered \$354,000 or 2 percent. So, when I look at this overall five-year plan, can you tell me I should place absolute value on this plan?"

Crane's Nest resident Frank Tidikis expressed his doubts that the draft CIP was ready for a final vote. "No. 1 is capital projects increased by \$3,761,314," he said. "Why? If you take out for the patrol cars and the computers, that accounted for \$326,000. What drove the other \$3.4 million increase? The Police Department remodel increased by \$34,500 or 46 percent. North Sewall's Point Road increased by \$11,835,000 or 76 percent. Why? South Sewall's Point Road Phase 2 and 3 went down, why? At any rate, there was no explanation, and there is no explanation."

Tidikis said the capital maintenance portion of the capital improvement plan "decreased by 46 percent or \$1,675,000 from last year's CIP. Bridges and seawalls went down by a million dollars. Why? What's being deferred, what projects are being dropped? Stormwater maintenance decreased by \$300,000 a year to \$125,000 a year. The questions we asked earlier: How many outfalls do we have today, what's our maintenance cost per outfall, how many will we have after

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the phases are done on the road resiliency project and what will that do to maintenance costs? What assumptions were used in formulating this budget?"

While admitting he had not attended the prior CIP discussion that same month, he did watch it online and made a reference to a request from Vice-Mayor Frank Fender who'd asked for a more comprehensive business plan and funding overview. "Defer approving the CIP until Commissioner Fender is provided with what he requested; schedule a workshop so that the questions can be answered; and schedule a revised CIP for approval at the next meeting," Tidikis concluded.

Mayor John Tompeck attempted to alleviate some of the concerns. "The purpose of a capital improvement plan is not necessarily to identify how everything is going to be paid for and when it's going to be paid for," he said. "What you're trying to do here is to identify the projects and the priority you want to do those projects in, that kind of thing. Obviously, we're not going to do these projects when we anticipate we're going to be able to do them unless there's a lot of grants. The numbers don't disturb me because every one of these specific projects are going to have to get approval. If we don't have the money [or] the grant, it's not going anywhere."

Mayor Tompeck referred to the five-year CIP as "a 50,000-foot view" of our plans. "I understand your concerns, and they would certainly make sense when you look at these numbers," he continued. "You're just looking at our projects in the future and what's coming up. If we don't have the money, they just get pushed back. So, I think the way we should be looking at this as a Commission is: Are these the projects that we would like to do [and] in this order?" "I heard some angst about the size of the numbers on the plan, and because of that, it was not worth the plan that was created," Fender said. "I sort of disagree with that. I do want to ultimately tie this to a budget – but this is not a budget – this is a plan of the projects we want to do. We have actual flooding projects underway that have to be completed – that can't be completed – if the money is not in the budget. Even though we have the best-laid plan we could possibly come up with, we're pretty smart people. We're not going to spend money that doesn't exist. If we don't shoot for the stars, we're never going to hit the moon. So, we have to put numbers on a piece of paper in order to tell our funding municipalities how to budget and fund some of these pretty significant flooding problems." Commissioner Kajia Mayfield immediately made a motion to approve the CIP resolution, which was seconded by Vice-Mayor Fender and passed unanimously.

Afterward, **Daniels** provided a brief update on other items. "I did want to make certain that these are going to be addressed, either by having a special meeting or waiting until June 18," he said. "The one we discussed at the last meeting is the flooding issues we've had in the Marguerite area. On the capital improvement plan that y'all just adopted, we do have the South River Road section there, but it's what I call a short-term gap until we can get funding for the whole project. It's spelled out in that memorandum that Joe had submitted [with] a preliminary design and a budget of about \$250,000. So, we're identifying funding sources for this."

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
May 1, 2024

Sewall's Point projects update

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

An update by the town engineer on April 8 for all current capital improvement projects here revealed substantial progress on the ongoing stormwater and septic-to-sewer projects as well as potential grant-related and logistical delays for both north and south Sewall's Point Road. "Most of our projects are dependent on a lot of grant money, and in doing that, we have to keep track of the various grants and how we handle items within the grants," Engineer Joe Capra said.

His update began with the first phase of the South Sewall's Point Road stormwater project, which required raising the roadbed from High Point to the Sewall's Meadow neighborhood, including the installation of two separate exfiltration systems, a sheet pile weir, a baffle box and an outfall. Crews replaced an existing water main at the same time. That work is complete, although the town is still awaiting grant funding to repay its own coffers. "All these grant programs are reimbursable," he said. "So, we spend all your tax money, and then we have to get the money back from them."

Phase 2 from Sewall's Meadows to Pineapple Lane is now underway. "We have been working on the design, which means we've been gathering field data, survey information [and] geotechnical information," he said. "We're expecting permits and design to be completed around September of this year, and we also have been pursuing easements on every one of these projects. We'll be working with Martin County Utilities on water main improvements in this area, and they'll let us know what lines they want replaced. In the past, they've been paying for those items."

Sewall's Point has grants in-hand for the second phase, which includes a \$1 million Department of Transportation State Appropriation Grant, as well as a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant, a Department of Environmental Protection Resiliency Grant and a DEP Septic-to-Sewer Resiliency Grant for all of South Sewall's Point. "In Phase 2 we will be putting in some low-pressure force main items," Capra said. "Our predicted time to start the bidding is expected in October or November, and we hope to go to construction in January of 2025. That'll probably take most of the year. I tell you these projected timeframes because it's always a matter of when the grant agencies give us the money."

Capra was about to continue onto Phase 3 from Pineapple Lane to Ridgeway Drive when Commissioner Vinny Barile, who was just elected to the Board in March, posed a question about the phasing. "How did you pick those phases?" he asked. "I'm just talking septic-to-sewer." The town engineer told Barile that Martin County was limiting the number of residences that could be serviced with such low-pressure force mains and grinder sewer systems. "We tried to concentrate on along South Sewall's Point Road [where] we're making drainage improvements by raising the road," Capra said. "I think that's the best time to get the sewer lines in place."

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They're also the most low-lying area, so the septic tanks will be impacted on how they operate. We have to put a sewer line down South Sewall's Point to serve all of the peninsula." Commissioner Barile, who emphasized his opposition to mandatory hookups and assessments during his election campaign, immediately switched tactics. "I'm only concerned about how you pick who's going to get forced assessed and who's not," he said. "How is that done?" "There are no forced assessments," Town Manager **Robert Daniels** chimed in. "We're not forcing anybody to be assessed, that's the deal," Capra confirmed.

Barile continued prodding, however. "How do you pick that out if you're going to do a vacuum system?" he asked. When Capra informed him that the town had no plans to do a vacuum sewer system, Commissioner Barile questioned him about a gravity system. The former then emphasized that he wasn't a fan of a gravity system either. "If we do have to do it, we're trying to hear which people have the problems with their septic systems currently," Capra responded. "From that, we'll determine who needs the gravities first. Our goal is to get all the low-pressure forced mains in place so those people have the ability to hook up when they need to. We may or may not have enough money to do all the gravity at this point for the whole 706 units out there."

Daniels pointed out that current grant funding would cover low-pressure force mains for an all-grinder sewer system that Martin County has yet to approve. "The people would pay \$8,000 to \$12,000 to hook up," he explained. "If they spend that much money, they'll be matching what we're putting in from the grant. Unfortunately, the county said you can't put in all 706 connections with low-pressure mains, so we had to go to the next option, which was put in some gravity mains." While Sewall's Point could rehab some of those installed by developers in the area years ago, **Daniels** still hopes the county will change its mind on restricting Sewall's Point to 340 grinder connections. "It is our hope we can get the county to let us hook up all 706 connections," he added. "We can do that with the money we have now, and everybody would be on the same system."

After further discussion, Capra returned to his Phase 3 update, a project he hoped to construct from June of this year to March of 2025. "We have the design and permitting completed, we're kind of monitoring the water mains and sewer mains being built out there," he said. "This project has a FEMA grant [and] funding from DEP Resiliency. Unfortunately, it takes time to process the FEMA money. They told us the grant amounts are good, and we're going to get the money, but they need another month or two to get that all processed, so that pushes us back into May for bidding." "I don't think the Commission or the general public understand the difficulty in obtaining these funds and matching them," Mayor John Tompeck said. "It's a real jigsaw puzzle, and we appreciate how difficult it is, at least I do." "Do we have a plan in place to ensure that the funds are available to get the projects done?" Vice-Mayor Frank Fender asked. "Yes, we do have a plan, and you'll see some of that as we get into the capital improvement projects starting at the next meeting," **Daniels** answered. "I wanted to do the kickoff with the overview of the projects, and as we narrow down that focus, going out to bid is going to help us a lot in knowing what that amount is as we go through Phase 3."

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As far as Phase 4 between Town Hall and Ridgeland Drive, the town has a sewer line installed, a concept plan and the necessary easements in hand but still lacks the grants. Capra plans the same infrastructure improvements for North Sewall's Point Road now being implemented on South Sewall's Point Road but admits that phase will be expensive. "We're proposing that we build the road all the way from AIA to the north town limits," he said. "That's about 700 or 800 feet, [so] that's the longest phase of projects we'd be doing. We've come up with cost estimates and concept plans. We have one FEMA grant that allows us to start the program design [and] expect Martin County to help us. We've approached the county administrator, [and] he's agreed to put this in front of his board as a capital improvement project. Currently he's going to propose to his board that we equally share in the design of the project. He has not committed yet to equally share in the construction costs, so that's something that we have time to determine."

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
January 3, 2024

Sewall's Point ends 2023 on positive grant footing
Town has \$19 million in pipeline, plus \$15.7 million for stormwater and septic-to-sewer projects

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The city's outside grant consultant brought the Town Commission here a bit of early holiday cheer Dec. 11 with the positive grant news revealed during her end-of-the-year grants update. Consultant Kloee Ciuperger, the Stuart-based principle of Gallo Pavo, LLC, has provided grant-writing and lobbying services for Sewall's Point for more than two years and helped bring the Board's last meeting of 2023 to a festive close as the last item on the agenda that night. "I was asked to do an update today, so I figured the best way to approach this is the beginning, middle and end, kind of where we were, where we are and where we're going," she said. "I have worked with you about two-and-a-half years, and in [that time], the town has managed to receive \$3,419,525 for Phase 3," she explained in reference to the South Sewall's Point Road stormwater retrofit. "\$8.4 million for the septic to sewer, which we had an awesome groundbreaking for yesterday; and an additional \$1 million in appropriations for Phase 3 and \$2,900,00 for Phase 2. That's over \$15 million, and we're still going."

The consultant attributed that success to her laser focus on specific grant programs and the support of Sewall's Point staff members including Town Manager **Robert Daniels**, Engineer Joe Capra and Finance and Human Resources Director Maria Pierce. "Under your town manager and working with Joe Capra and his staff and Maria too, we are in constant communication," Ciuperger continued. "A big part of my job is advocacy, but some of these things are very spin-on-a-dime. I'm able to pick up the phone at any given moment and get answers within 10 or 15 minutes. I work with a couple other local entities, and this is one of the most structured and best teams. It makes my job easy, and it makes you guys ideal candidates for a lot of good money."

In addition to the \$15,719,525 in grant monies already under its belt, Sewall's Point now has some \$19 million in current grant applications and appropriations requests before the Florida Legislature. Those include about \$9 million for the continued stormwater and simultaneous septic-to-sewer project along South River Road and other STS funding requests. "Project numbers are going up as you all know," she told commissioners. "We've put in an additional \$5 million for Phase 2 and 3 so that we can meet those growing project costs. We've got an additional \$4 million ask for South River Road, and then a couple million more for septic to sewer. There's also an appropriations request about to go into this legislative session for a million dollars for Phase 3 because we got funded for Phase 2. So, we're trying to make sure these projects get done and the town isn't footing the bill."

Ciuperger concluded her update with both a description of the upcoming legislative session that begins in Tallahassee on Jan. 9 and Gov. DeSantis' announcement of his environmental budget to be discussed between that date and the end of the session on March 8. She believes most of the

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

present funding requests could have their positive resolution during those debates. "This session he's looking for \$745 million for Everglades restoration," she said. "Over \$330 million for targeted water quality improvements, [including] \$135 million for newly expended water quality improvement grants; and \$100 million for projects that specifically address the Indian River Lagoon. There is also \$50.8 million to combat harmful alga blooms. All of this is money you all are eligible for." As soon as Ciuperger finished her presentation, Mayor John Tompeck asked her about potentially getting such grant information in smaller chunks for the future. "I was wondering if you could give us some kind of monthly report," he said. "You went over about 10 different grants, some of which I had no idea we were working on. I knew you were working on grants, [but] I just didn't know which ones. I think it would help us all if you'd issue a quick monthly status about which ones you're working on and where they are in the process." "Absolutely," she responded. "I think the monthly report would be helpful to give you an all-encompassing look. But when you look at that report, I want you guys to remember that a grant is so much more than just submitting a piece of paper. There's a lot of advocacy and discussion. Even when that grant gets awarded, you staff can tell you first-hand how much it takes in negotiations with the agencies to get the actual grant agreement to be in favor for the town."

Mayor Tompeck subsequently referred to a tree grant the City of Stuart had won recently and wondered if the Town of Sewall's Point shouldn't simultaneously be seeking other types of funding. Ciuperger admitted that she'd put all of her initial effort in getting the town's major infrastructure project funding underway, but now thinks Sewall's Point has the breathing room for just such expansion. "Now that we've gotten momentum with that, it generates itself," she said. "The state understands it, [and] I think we can now start expanding into different programs and tackling that list you all created during the strategic planning session." For his part, Vice-Mayor Frank Fender wanted to know about other potential waterfront resiliency grants that might be available. "We have a dock at the end of one of our public areas that we'd like to try to renovate and make available to the public," he said. "Certainly, we have lots of residents who live on the water, but we have lots of residents that live on the middle of the peninsula who need access to the water. While the buyers are buying up waterfront and sealing off access to it, we're looking for grants that make water availability accessible to the public. Just plant in the back of your mind if you see water-access types of grants." "Once those grants get released," Ciuperger replied. "We can be candidates for them because that'll happen after the budget is passed in April or May. So, we'll see in the summertime when those things open up."

Commissioner Dave Kurzman then wondered whether commissioners should consider showing up in Tallahassee to personally lobby the legislature during the upcoming session. While Ciuperger emphasized that the town has a great local legislative delegation working on its behalf, she believes there could come a moment when that extra lobbying effort could be just the ticket. "It actually may be very fruitful, but we kind of have to be very flexible during session time," Ciuperger told him. "**Bob** understands that process, and he's told me countless times, if I need to get up there, I'll get up there. So, I'm trying to make his life easier by having those meetings in the district, but those meetings may need to happen in Tallahassee."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
September 20, 2023

Commission focused on public education with new water main

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

SEWALL'S POINT – After putting the final tweaks Sept. 6 on the town's interlocal agreement with Martin County Utilities for a new water main running beneath South Sewall's Point Road, commissioners dove into their planned septic-to-sewer conversion in South Sewall's Point at the request of Town Manager **Robert Daniels**. **Daniels'** agenda item that evening was to discuss the next steps for septic to sewer conversion, since the exclusive peninsular community already has an \$8.4 million Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant in hand to connect 340 homes closest to the shores of the Indian River Lagoon.

Town officials had hoped to convince Martin County Utilities to double that number of approved and less-expensive individual home grinder systems but Utility officials remained firm on that cap. Now Sewall's Point is looking at adding a more expensive gravity sewer component, which may prove more difficult to win over die-hard residents still clinging to the independence of their aging septic tanks and drainfields. North Sewall's Point got access to sanitary sewer services about three years ago. South Sewall's Point residents did not want to be forced by the Florida Department of Health to connect to sewer once their septic systems failed.

A staunch opponent of the project, Frank Tidikis, addressed the Commission prior to the discussion and referred to a recent study done by Town Engineer Joe Capra detailing possible STS alternatives, including the creation of a hybrid grinder/gravity sewer system in South Sewall's Point. Martin County just approved an interlocal agreement with Sewall's Point to begin rehabilitation of old unused sewer lines and equipment in that same area. "I would like to know if Option 2 LPS-Grinder/Gravity Combination is what's being discussed tonight," he said. "Option 2 was priced at \$25.43 million. Page 15 of the report said the pipes and lift stations were substandard and would need to be replaced. Please confirm that this includes replacing the existing gravity pipes and building three new lift stations with emergency generators. Do you commissioners still stand by your pledges that there will be no assessments and no mandatory hookups? If so, I urge you to reject Option 2."

Another resident, Bonnie Flint, expressed concerns about the funding gap between the current grant funding and the estimated cost of the same alternative option. "As Frank pointed out, we're doing a combo project," she said. "Anyway, it could crank up to the \$25.4, [so] there's a difference of \$17 million not in the door. As a homeowner, that's scary number to me because but we seem to be running fast [and] need a lot more grants to come in." Flint also addressed the projected costs for individual homeowner connections, which are not currently covered by grant funding. "What I'm understanding is we're asking homeowners to kick in \$12,000 to \$13,000 per house," she continued. "And that's for a simple hookup before you get involved in where things are located, trees in the way and all that. Then there's a generator need with the grinders, which

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would be another \$500. In conclusion, is it good governance for five people to take on a \$25-to-\$30-million project?"

The town manager said he'd recently received calls from homeowners not part of the county's approved list wanting to know when sanitary sewer service would be available in South Sewall's Point. "We're getting close to a point now where we're going to have to start looking at what we're going to do next," **Daniels** said. "We have Part 1 [the first 170 homes] moving along and should be working on that towards the latter part of this calendar year. We're getting a lot of inquiries. Two today came in via email in reference to an individual that needs to hook up to a sewer system. I think it's good for our residents to have some idea of when they could expect that so they can make decisions whether they have to replace their drain field or what have you."

Daniels reminded the board that they'd agreed last December to proceed with 706 STS connections in South Sewall's Point, but staff had only been able to negotiate about half that number as grinder systems. "I want to make sure we can come up with a game plan on which way we want to go and obviously have the direction of our town engineer and what his recommendations are," he continued. "I did throw out the gravity [system] in there because, in my conversation with the county administrator, he acknowledged they were supportive of us rehabilitating some of our gravity lines to help come up with the 706 [connections]." Both **Daniels** and Mayor John Tompeck insisted both staff and commissioners were opposed to both mandatory assessments and connections. "I think we're headed in the right direction," the latter said. "There's going to be a lot of options as we move through this thing, and we need to be a little bit patient. I think there's going to be some places where we have a decision to make: If we don't have the money, we're going to have to get the grant or the work will not be done. It's really that simple."

Commissioner James Campo believes the town is still missing the mark on community education efforts after hearing the two public speakers' comments. He asked **Daniels** to display the South Sewall's Point STS map on the overhead screen for context. "As great as **Bob Daniels** has done, I think that communication has always been a challenge for us," he said. "Until we can tackle that, we're going to continue to have disinformation of \$16,000 special assessments, etc. This [map] to me, is a piece that should go out, so that everyone sees what we're working on right now, what we've got an interlocal agreement [on] now. This is as official as it gets. I'm against proceeding until we do some of this communication work." Commissioner Kajia Mayfield agreed with the need for better communications and admitted she'd made her own unsuccessful Hail Mary effort to get a total grinder system approved. "That would make the majority of people happy," she said. "I made a last-ditch effort to the county this past week, but there's not a lot of enthusiasm, which is a shame." "At this moment we're about 340 connections total on grinders," Capra said. "The map that's up there, that's 169 connections. The next phase gets us to 340. I recommend we move forward with the grinder stuff first because we have enough money for that. It's a lot easier, it certainly doesn't require mandatory hookup [and] it doesn't require mandatory assessment." While the Commission did not take an official vote that day, **Daniels** did say via email Sept. 11 that he'd be providing a full report on next steps to its members during the next meeting.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
August 24, 2023

Sewall's Point debates utilities agreements

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission here warily approved two interlocal agreements with Martin County Utilities for planned projects in South Sewall's Point that still have unresolved issues, one of which could end up costing MCU administrative charges and the town more than \$100,000 not covered by current grant funding. Mayor John Tompeck asked to remove the two separate items from the non-discussion consent agenda on Aug. 15 due to those changes, the first made by Town Manager **Robert Daniels** and the latter by MCU staff. Mayor Tompeck specifically worried about **Daniels'** change to the first agreement on the South Sewall's Point Road water main replacement that may have caused concern to county officials. "The county may have some difficulties with what we have in the MOU," he added in reference to a 20 percent administrative fee for Sewall's Point.

Daniels then asked commissioners to turn to Page 75 of the first interlocal agreement that laid out the town's responsibilities in overseeing the water main construction and ensuring compliance with the contractual obligations. He said he tacked on the fee due to the interlocal agreement clause requiring town staff to perform periodic inspections and verify the project was constructed in accordance with the technical plans and specifications. "In other jurisdictions I've been in, there was a percentage of the contract that we undertook and had to do all these things, and that was 20 percent," he said. "We're trying to get the county to sit down and talk with us, but I really think the town needs to be making money off their contract because we have important responsibilities here. We need to protect ourselves and make sure we're taking the steps necessary to fulfill this agreement, and that's why I did it."

When Mayor Tompeck questioned if those same costs weren't covered under the county's existing construction, engineering and inspection contract, **Daniels** offered more clarification. "The county has already paid a design engineer for the county project portion and contracted for CEI services," he said. "But [clause] seven puts the ball back on our responsibility to conduct the inspections to make sure the job's on schedule. It means more time of our staff to go out and make sure that happens."

Mayor Tompeck directed his next inquiry to Assistant Town Attorney Susan Garrett. "I'm assuming the 20 percent is one of the issues the county has with the agreement," he said. "To me that jumped out at me at being a little bit high." "I just was informed this afternoon that the county had some substantive issues with the agreement," she responded. "I've asked for specifics but haven't received them yet." "We're trying to work out a partnership and recoup as many of the costs that we have with bidding and rebidding," said Commissioner James Campo.

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield agreed that going from nothing to a 20 percent fee probably shocked MCU officials. "I agree with the town manager that it makes sense if we're doing

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administrative work to be compensated," she said. "Hopefully there's a meeting – if not 20 percent – somewhere in the middle because we need each other to get this project done."

Mayor Tompeck asked for clarification on the second interlocal agreement on Phases 3 and 4 of the low-pressure force main installation along South Sewall's Point Road. As part of this agreement, MCU is requiring the town pay a monthly water surcharge until the new sewer line achieves a two-feet-per-second flushing velocity. The fees would be about \$2,000 per month, said Town Engineer Joe Capra. "The county's asked for a flushing station to be put on the low-pressure system because they can't estimate how many connections we're going to get to start off. We are going to have a force main down South Sewall's Point Road, and they want to make sure the line stays clear. It will take water to do the flushing, so that's the number we're talking about." "For how many months?" Campo asked. "If you think about the number of connections we need based on this flushing of two feet per second, it could be as much as five years," Capra replied. "It could be over \$100,000. I think our goal was to try to get that somehow into the grant, but we can't guarantee that."

Capra's major concern was that the flushing cost might have to be borne by the town's residents as a whole when the project will only benefit South Sewall's Point residents. **Daniels** agreed it seemed to be an unfair burden that MCU was placing on the town. "They're getting 706 customers at the end of the day," he said. "I just think it's unfair they're asking us. We have to turn this system over to them once it's completed, and then we have to pay for maintaining their system? I have a problem with that."

After Garrett told the Board she expected the county would make additional revisions to the agreements, commissioners voted unanimously to approve the two interlocal agreements.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
June 8, 2023

Sewall's Point ponders stormwater fee

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission here debated the need for additional funding to maintain the community's stormwater infrastructure in the future, including the possibility of implementing a stormwater utility fee tacked onto a utility bill before ultimately authorizing the town manager to come back with a formal report. Town Manager **Robert Daniels** launched the discussion by emphasizing the millions of dollars the community is currently investing in the stormwater rehabilitation in South Sewall's Point. "I think a couple times during the last 10 months, we've talked about all the money we're putting into the infrastructure," he said. "Unfortunately, the folks before me never put some thought into how are we going to maintain the system that we have. We finished up Phase 1 just prior to me starting, and there are things that we have to do all the time between the pumps and the drains and the inlets. When we do get Phase 3 started and have it completed, we're going to be in the same boat."

As an example, **Daniels** pointed to a recent watermain leak under South Sewall's Point Road that cost the town more than \$20,000 in repair costs. "The money just doesn't sit there in an account somewhere," he said. "It'd be something that we'd have to make up and handle, which is fine, but I think long term we need to think how we are going to fund our maintenance for our stormwater system. Most communities utilize a stormwater utility fee that's tied in with the water bill or a utility bill. There's other ways to do it through taxes, but I'm not advocating that. Before I start researching it, I wanted to talk to you all and just see what your thoughts are."

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield was the first member of the board to express her support of the idea. "Given our location that we're a peninsula and we have very low-lying areas and are constantly fighting stormwater flooding, I think it would be prudent and smart to have a plan in place," she said. "If you're a property owner and own a home, you know how important maintenance is, so I think it's a good idea."

Mayor John Tompeck, asked about any current funding in the town's budget that could be used to cover unexpected infrastructure repairs and if there were any other budgetary sources. "Right now, is the \$80,000 budget for the stormwater inlet/outfall maintenance what we have for this particular issue?" he asked. "Is that where we're getting the money? What do we anticipate the costs are going to be over the next four or five years? How do you figure out what kind of a fee if you don't have any idea how much it's going to cost? I'd certainly like to see a projection at least so we can figure that out." In response, **Daniels** pointed to a statewide organization as his starting point. "The Florida Stormwater Association is a great outfit for giving us the data on what we should be doing [and] what we should be looking at as a reserve," he said. "That's what I kind of envisioned. When you have it in a fund, the months that we don't utilize it from one year to the next, you can build up a reserve. It's always safer having money set aside in a reserve account under the stormwater utility, and then our normal maintenance would be covered." The

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town manager believes infrastructure maintenance will become more critical in the future. "As the sea level continues to rise, I think we're going to see more and more maintenance issues come up on South Sewall's Point Road [and] even the side streets where we have systems," he insisted. "Some of those systems have been in for years and years and years [and] I'm not sure of the stability. That's something I'll look into and come back with a game plan."

Commissioner James Campo wanted to ensure Sewall's Point residents are shown tangible projects that any such future fees would be spent on rather than just using the money for the designing and planning stages overseen by the town engineer. "A fee, user tax or ad valorem, you know it's all money coming from residents," he said. "I'm okay exploring this if the end product was an end product and not Joe Capra's engineering fees that just kind of get lost out there. It's the planning/ bureaucracy fees that people get alienated." Commissioner Frank Fender worried that the public would view the proposed stormwater utility fee as just another tax. "In my mind, there is budget that we have," he said. "We do a budget cycle every year, and we count line items for all different kinds of maintenance. To me, this is just another one of those kinds of maintenance that we have to plan for, and if we don't have enough money in that budget line item – we have to increase it. Costs are what they are. If we spend \$20,000 repairing damage, that's going to hit our budget cycle next year. Hopefully we can meet that shortfall or we have to have more ad valorem."

Vice-Mayor Dave Kurzman insisted, however, that making any decision without the town manager's report would be premature. "I think we should hold off until we see some numbers before we say we're going to come up with other numbers," he said. "This should have been done years ago. Because we didn't maintain what we had, it wound up costing millions of dollars because we were trying to save a few dollars. I'd like to really see the end numbers of what's going to be involved. We're paying millions of dollars now, and if we can maintain it in our budget, I'd be fine with it, if it's going to cut things close, then I'm okay doing it this way."

The vice-mayor also agreed with Commissioner Campo about avoiding any extra fees incurred by Capra's engineering firm. "We shouldn't have to go through an engineering firm because it costs us money when our town engineer does this," he added. "At least get several quotes and see what it's going to cost. If we could avoid a middleman, I'm all for that." Tompeck emphasized that the Town of Sewall's Point could use its previous maintenance expenses as a guideline for potential future costs. "I think it'd be prudent to see how much we've been spending and see what that curve looks like," he said. "As we create more outfalls, we have a historical idea of how much they're going to cost and then you get an idea of what you're going to have to spend."

When the mayor acknowledged that his fellow board members weren't enthusiastic about the idea of imposing a stormwater utility fee on the residents, **Daniels** insisted that he just wanted "to go to the next step." "My plan is to do all that background work and then come back and readdress it, probably during the budget process," the latter said. "I just wanted to make sure that you all knew what I was doing so you don't [just] hear something about what Mr. **Daniels** is doing. I always try to be transparent."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
May 4, 2023

Sewall's Point dismayed at stormwater bid

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The town manager here dropped a bomb on commissioners April 25 that the only bid for the third phase of ongoing stormwater work along South Sewall's Point Road had come in at \$4 million over budget. Town Manager **Robert Daniels** didn't attempt to sugarcoat the scheduled bid update and hinted at the need for the Commission to soon make a decision either way on the award. "These are the particular numbers that we have of \$12.2 million for Phase 3, and we estimated the project at \$8.5 million," he said. "We had one successful bidder, and we've been negotiating with that bidder to see what we could do to bring their costs down. Hopefully we'll get that done sooner than later, (and) by the end of the week we can get some direction."

Mr. **Daniels** emphasized he would be reaching out right away to officials of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to inquire about additional funding to help with the unexpected higher cost. The town currently has a \$1.7 million grant award from FEMA. "The funding that we're getting is from a past storm a couple of years ago," he said. "We're hoping out of their pot of money they can help come forward with the money that we need to make up the rest of the difference. So, I'm looking at Options B, C and D on different things I can talk about at the next meeting and hopefully I should have everything in relation to that available." His last comment, however, prompted a question by Commissioner Kajia Mayfield. "You said Options B, C, D?" she asked. "These will be additional options," he replied. "Theoretical options B, C, D," Commissioner Mayfield confirmed.

Mayor John Tompeck posed a question to Town Engineer Joe Capra. "This isn't a minor increase, obviously," the mayor said. "I was wondering if you could highlight whether it was the construction (or) material costs. What's really the driver here?" Mr. Capra reminded the Commission that town staff had been actively searching for available stormwater grants for the project, which was initiated more than two years prior with an estimated price tag in the range of \$6 million. "Quite frankly the grant agencies we thought were being very generous with us, but unfortunately we've seen an increase in construction costs," he said. "I'm not going to tell you I'm surprised. Quite frankly, it's similar to what other agencies are seeing. If you look at the Department of Transportation averages in the last six months, the material costs and other costs have doubled."

Prices for both labor and materials began soaring with the onset of the pandemic some three years ago and have yet to fully stabilize. While Mr. Capra offered no hope to commissioners on such expenses coming down anytime soon, he did provide assurances he was working with the only bidder, West Palm Beach-based J.W. Cheatham, to find any cost savings. "We went back to the contractor and talked about items he could do, value engineering and some other items," he explained. "Some of those are alternative pipes, or different materials that we could consider. And they came back with some reductions for us." The town engineer also suggested breaking

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up the significantly larger Phase 3 100-acre drainage basin project into smaller pieces in accordance to the individual grant funding received. "We basically have a lot of work to do to get the drainage to work," he added. "One of the things we found out after we got several of the grants, is we had to break up the project into parts that show how each grant could pay for a specific area. That's why we have three areas."

Mr. Capra went on to explain the HMGP work area accounted for nearly a fourth of the contractor's bid amount. "Essentially that's the area that would drain in the lot that we acquired, creating a stormwater treatment area (and) one of our better outfalls," he said. "I think we have \$3.2 million in that area, yet we're only getting \$1.7 million from the grant agency." The South Sewall's Point stormwater work also includes two separate resiliency projects partially funded by the Resiliency Florida Program. "The south project will be adjacent to the South Sewall's Point Phase 2 Project," he explained. "That's probably a little less in cost, about \$2.2 million, because there are less items to be done in that area. Resiliency North came in about \$3.8 million. So, when you add \$3.8 and \$2.2, you get almost \$6 million. We have basically \$3.4 million in money from Resiliency (Florida)." Because the project also includes the installation of new water and force sewer mains along South Sewall's Point Road, Mr. Capra also is negotiating with Martin County Utilities to find other cost savings or funding assistance. "At this point, they have been willing to help us in that area," he said. "We first of all need to get the best price on the work we do. So [the] water main in the bid came in about a half million dollars higher than we hoped. We think we have a source of funding for that part of the project."

After his presentation, the town engineer emphasized the ultimate decision to accept the lone bid respondent – a general contractor that's previously done work for the town – would be up to commissioners. "There's options to bring the price down, and we're still not considering rebidding it," he concluded. "That's your choice, but I think at this point we'd like to continue negotiating until we can be satisfied the numbers are the best we're going to get. If that's still not good enough, and we don't get any more grant funding, we may need to rebid the project." Commissioner James Campo agreed with the latter suggestion, as well as working with MCU on any possible cost savings. "My thought would be to move ahead and continue the negotiations with Cheatham to see if there could be some different configuration between the contractors/sub-contractors to get the price down," he said. "I would like to give the county a week's time to review our final numbers to see if they can pull some strings and come up with some numbers that are more economical."

Mayor Tompeck believes Sewall's Point will still need to break up some of the work into smaller chunks in order to work with the grant funding already in-hand. "The fact that we have plenty of money here to do the force main in this particular project area is not really relevant to the fact we don't have enough money to do the stormwater work," he said. "It's obvious to me you have construction costs \$4 million more than before. You might be a good negotiator, (but) you ain't that good. So, I'm afraid we're still going to have to go back to the point where we have to break this down into some kind of phased approach."

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Commissioner Mayfield then credited Mr. Capra for exploring "a lot of options." "I think you guys are doing a good job and should continue on the path," she said. "I believe both you and the town manager wanted a little more time to negotiate and then the next logical step, to the mayor's point, we'd be doing it in segments. But you wanted kind of a last chance to see what you can do with the negotiations, is that correct?" "Yes," Mr. Capra replied. "Of the \$4 million, we're probably down a million, but we're not anywhere close. Basically, we're taking on additional work, stockpiling material and so forth. The fact of the matter is, it's highly unlikely we're going to get to the \$4 million, and that's why I went to the option of taking out some pieces."

Mayor Tompeck gauged the temperature of the commissioners on the next step. "Do we have a consensus to ask Mr. Capra and the town manager to see what they can do to bring it down a little bit more and come back with a proposal to maybe split the project into some pieces if we can't get it down to where we need to be?" he asked. They all agreed, with Commissioner Campo adding a final request as far as the MCU negotiations. "We're making huge amounts of progress, and I'd like the county to give us written comments on the final bid after you negotiate those things," he concluded. "If there's a way we can benefit from their savings, then I want to know about it. And if there's not, we'll be able to tell the public this is the way that we went about it."

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
April 20, 2023

Sewall's Point continues tree ordinance discussion

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The town commissioners here once again tackled the thorny and occasionally divisive issue of un-permitted tree-removals April 11, but failed to reach a consensus on its new tree ordinance. The town staff has worked on the ordinance for the last few months and touches on penalties, potential mitigation and community education efforts.

Town Manager **Robert Daniels** described a last-minute change suggested by Town Attorney Glen Torcivia to replace the term "native trees" with the term "non-invasive trees" throughout the draft document. "My hope was to have you give another look at the ordinance with the structure of it," Mr. **Daniels** said. "This is the original ordinance with the strike-through language and items that we wanted to change. Our town attorney did have a conversation with me, and he said the better terminology would be non-invasive because native trees here could be different than in the Panhandle of Florida. We're just better off dealing with non-invasive trees, which is what we're trying to get rid of and not have people plant."

In the early part of the discussion, Mr. **Daniels** expressed optimism his latest revisions to the draft ordinance would satisfy the concerns of all board members. "If you all come to an agreement, my thoughts are process-wise on what you would like to see in the ordinance," he continued. "I will get that back to Glen and we will try to get it through the reading process. I think it's more judicious to work out all the ifs, ands, and buts here in this format. Then in the next meeting when we publish it, it will be more routine. Hopefully it'll have the wording in it that you're going to mention tonight."

Commissioner Frank Fender led most of the ensuing conversation. "I just wanted to piggyback on some of the conversation we had at the last meeting, now that this has been typed up and you can read it clearly," Commissioner Fender said. "I don't have a ton of problems with changes, but I wanted to make sure it was clear that any changes recommended in my mind were never intended to be punitive. My only goal in bringing this ordinance back was to add the clarity that's missing." In addition to clarity, he insisted the draft ordinance lacked both a mitigation plan and a specific number of replacement trees for developers of larger lots. "My biggest gap in this ordinance is the fact that we don't specify that a mitigation plan is required prior to permitting," he continued. "I think it should be a standard part of the permit. I'm pushing to make sure the mitigation plan isn't the punitive side of it (but rather) the planning side. If a lot is under a half-acre, it specifies you must have eight non-invasive trees. If you are larger than a half-acre but smaller than an acre, you need to have 12 trees. I would recommend a third section: If you're greater than one acre, you should go with at least 16 trees."

Mayor John Tompeck subsequently questioned why the draft ordinance required a certified arborist to sign off on a dying tree before it could be removed. He also believed Town Building

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Official Jack Reisinger should be able to sign off on the removal. "If a tree is obviously diseased, and some of them obviously are, is that a determination that Jack can make?" he asked. "Or do we really have to get an arborist to say this tree has had it?"

Commissioner James Campo, in turn, offered a possible compromise. "You might say, if it's not apparent that it's diseased, they might need an arborist," he suggested. "But if it is apparent, the TBO could make that call."

Both Mayor Tompeck and Mr. **Daniels** liked that idea. "One of the other things that stand out is when the mushrooms start growing out of the tree," the latter said. "That's a sign of a fungus that the tree's going to die. So, with those, the sooner you can dispose of the tree, the better off you are, because that can spread."

For her part, Commissioner Kajia Mayfield spoke on one ordinance section that appeared to require property owners or developers who removed trees without permits to replace double the number of those trees or double the caliber (girth) of the trees. "I think it should just be single (replacement)," she said, "I think it should be the same and then we have the fine. It seems like a lot." Commissioner Fender, however, believed there should be separate penalties for those who knowingly break the rules and those who ignorantly do so. "Oh, OK, if you've gotten in trouble, double it," he said. "But if you're planning, what you're saying is reasonable for someone who is following the rules. But for somebody who has actually impacted you, why would you not then give them a stiffer fine because they did not follow the rules? To me that seems reasonable."

"I think in this case, they're going to be paying some civil penalties as it is," Mayor Tompeck chimed in. Commissioner Fender then repeated his calls for codifying mitigation planning in the ordinance. "I'm less concerned about the people who've already violated it," he insisted. "I'm more into keeping people from violating it. That's why I care about mitigation planning and putting this in the permitting process ahead of time."

Commissioner Campo concurred, at least partially. "I'm onboard with some of what you're proposing, such as clarifying definitions and having a mitigation plan in place," he said. "Some of this other stuff I think is going to be hard. I've got three trees on my entire lot, and I can't get my arms around any of them. So, I would be in violation because you're talking about the number of trees. I think caliber is what creates the canopy, so I think we should really insert that topic, the larger more mature trees."

While Commissioner Fender believed Commissioner Campo's property wouldn't be affected because the clause in the ordinance was aimed at "developers and people modifying" their lots, the latter recalled the development of the nearby Langford Landing property. "What you're going to have is a bunch of small trees because they want to get to that 16," Commissioner Campo said. "When they did Langford Landing, that was a clear-cut, and then they put up a bunch of twiggy trees. That's going to take 30 years. I just think when we're calculating the number of trees, we should include caliber."

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Vice Mayor Dave Kurzman waited until midway in the conversation before insisting on an educational component, referring to the planned newcomer packets describing the ordinance. "We've touched on, but we didn't go deep enough into it," he said. "One lady moved into the Archipelago (neighborhood) and had a 100-year-old oak tree obstructing her view. So, she decided to call a certain guy that cuts trees. This guy is the biggest violator, and we've done nothing, and he still cuts trees over here. He should be thrown out of Sewall's Point. He just did a butcher job across the street from me. He's also responsible for some of the people paying into the kitty, and he has no liability at all." After much further discussion, Commissioner Campo admitted the board was bogging down on all the separate issues. "I would advise Commissioner Fender to meet privately with staff and try to work through a lot of this stuff so that we're not doing it in this situation," he exclaimed. "We're like three or four meetings in, and we're just kind of digging ourselves into a hole." Mayor Tompeck then wondered if the commission was ready to stop for the day. "Have we thrashed this thing into submission yet?" he asked. "Almost, not quite," Commissioner Fender answered. "I was afraid of that," the mayor said. "I want to give everybody a chance to raise every comment they have about this ordinance," Commissioner Fender said in response. "I'm patiently listening and semi-arguing."

Mayor Tompeck subsequently expressed his doubts that **Daniels** had enough clarity or consensus to create a final draft ordinance for first reading. The latter, however, said he would give it his best shot. "If I can't get it done in time for the next meeting, it'll still be there for the meeting after that, so yes," **Daniels** said.

In addition to that lengthy discussion, the FPUA Board voted unanimously to authorize a restriction on the usage of the \$80,000 accumulated to-date in tree ordinance fines and allow **Daniels** to spend up to \$10,000 without prior board approval on items he sees fit. Members also authorized him to plan an upcoming Arbor Day event at Commissioner Campo's suggestion to help educate the public on the new ordinance.

Her fellow Sewall's Point resident Holly Hoover followed her to the podium, siding with the previous speaker's sentiments and informing the board that she was a professional engineer. "I am for septic to sewer, but I am for the vacuum system for the resiliency and maintenance reasons, as well as the lifestyle and practicality reasons," she said. "I agree with the former speaker that Captech has completely misrepresented the system. I request that, if you were to vote yes today, that you table the matter until I can give you all the details."

Ms. Hoover continued to speak out against the 300 semi-independent grinder sewer systems already approved by MCU for a portion of South Sewall's Point, insisting they were not resilient due to their need for generators during power failures. She called for MCU staff to take over the South Sewall's Point STS program and inform all that area's residents of the system's complications. "I would like for the county to take over the design and construction of the system," she said. "And for the county to require — because of the misrepresentation — that every resident of South Sewall's Point... be informed in writing of all the impacts of the grinder system [and] everything that they'll have to deal with for the next 20 or 30 years."

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Because the discussion was initially scheduled for later on during the meeting, Mr. Donaldson began trying to reach MCU Director Sam Amerson to have him come sooner since a couple of Sewall's Point representatives were in the audience. He arrived almost immediately upon the close of public comment and began a brief explanation behind the utility's 300 grinder cap. "For larger systems greater than 300 homes, we've selected a vacuum system, and for those communities fewer than 300 homes, we've selected a grinder sewer system," he said. "That fit our program [goal] of providing sewer service to 10,000 homes in 10 years, and we're meeting our goal at this point."

Mr. Amerson admitted that he'd previously received a letter from the Sewall's Point town manager requesting to increase that cap substantially, which had already been increased to just over 330 connections. "South Sewall's Point has 706 homes, and their request is to plead their case to allow 706 grinder systems in South Sewall's Point," he added.

Noticing Mr. **Daniels** in the audience, Mr. Amerson was about to invite him up to speak when Mr. Donaldson temporarily cut him off. "I just wanted to provide a little bit of background too," the latter said. "We'd also had conversations with his predecessor [Michelle Berger] about the ability to do some grinders for those that are the lowest [lying areas] — and as we understood it — those that were actually interested in having a sewer system right away."

Mr. Donaldson emphasized that MCU and Martin County had supported the town's application for the Florida Resiliency Grant for those previously approved grinder systems. "In the intervening time, that number has crept up to 330 based upon some other engineering considerations," he continued. "Mr. Amerson has put a cap of 330 as the maximum that he would consider in terms of the engineering design and the efficiencies of how we would serve the community. There's a lot of history behind the 300 versus economies of scale and how you build a vacuum or a gravity system."

Commission Chairman Ed Ciampi then invited the Sewall's Point town manager to the podium. "I've been in Sewall's Point now since Aug. 7, and I know this whole issue of septic-to-sewer conversions has been bantered about for the last couple of years," Mr. **Daniels** began. "I'm representing the Commission and all residents — not just some of the residents — and all these residents are also Martin County residents. Unfortunately, we tend to hear from people that have a different agenda. I have actually walked the streets in the last couple of weeks, and have only gotten one individual that didn't want to connect in the low-lying area. That's because they just built a brand-new home and have a new [septic] system, which is understandable."

Mr. **Daniels** immediately switched gears, reframing the conversation around teamwork and cooperation rather than the agenda item request before the Board that day. "I'm here today not to really talk about septic-to-sewer," he explained. "I really want to talk about cooperation. Your county administrator and Sam, they have been working with me hand-in-hand since I got into Sewall's Point, and I really appreciate that because your staff are top-notch. They go out of their way to help and not hinder."

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Emphasizing his desire for the commissions of the two municipalities to continue working together, he then dropped a bomb that brought the conversation to a screeching halt. "I'm here today to thank you all for everything," he said. "I know it was kind of a rush to get this on the agenda, but I would like to withdraw the request that I have in." Pointing to the need for more collaboration in the area of North Sewall's Point Road, which he insisted was in dire need of stormwater assistance and rehabilitation, Mr. **Daniels** said his eye was now on the future as well as the present. "I try not to just look at the problems we have right now," he concluded. "There's so much more we can get accomplished through teamwork to meet the goals and objectives of our constituents, our residents and our businesses."

Chairman Ciampi closed the discussion by affirming that both Martin County and the Town of Sewall's Point were on the same page. "I think the destination of where the village is trying to go is the same destination that we are [heading to] as a county to remove septic systems and get everyone to switch over to a sewer," he said. "As it goes back to your board and to your residents, I would tell you that the five of us are available to assist in any way possible. Our goal is the same as yours, to eliminate septic systems."

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
March 23, 2023

South Sewall's Point to get more sewer lines

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission majority here agreed March 14 to formally accept an \$8.4 million Florida Department of Environmental Protection Grant for the South Sewall's Point septic-to-sewer program. They also agreed to expand the program from 148 homes to the current cap set by Martin County of 337 sewer connections.

Although the Commission previously expanded sewer services southward from Jensen Beach to the northern end of town a few years ago, the effort to get the southern end of the exclusive enclave to end its reliance on septic tanks has met much more resistance. Before commissioners made the three separate votes to formally accept the FDEP grant, authorize the town manager to sign the documents and more than double the number of connections originally planned, Cranes Nest homeowner Frank Tidikis announced his desire to amend the town's charter so the Board could make no such future decisions without a referendum. "The amendment proposed will alter the Code of Ordinances and become effective immediately after a successful vote on the measure," he said. "The purpose of the petition is to put the question before the Town of Sewall's Point as to whether the voters should have a voice before the town incurs debt, has taxes raised greater than the Consumer Price Index or have a special assessment levied on the residents for town projects."

A staunch proponent of an STS (septic-to-sewer) referendum, Mr. Tidikis told the Board he was currently collecting signatures for his petition, but expressed frustration that the town attorney had declined to review his proposed ballot wording and Town Manager **Robert Daniels** refused to ask him to do so. "Unfortunately, this action is being triggered due to the fact the Town Commission had promised to put the question of installing sewers to the voters and then reneged," he continued. "In addition, the town commissioners ran on not raising taxes and then passed the largest tax increase in the town's history. The commissioners have publicly stated there will be no special assessments. If that's the case, the petition should garner your support." Although none of the commissioners addressed his comments afterward, the Board had previously discussed the idea of an STS referendum on more than one occasion last year but could never come to a majority consensus. Last Dec. 13, Commissioner James Campo made a motion to authorize staff to further investigate the referendum process. Although his motion received a second by Vice-Mayor Dave Kurzman, it failed 3-2, with the rest of the Board dissenting. At least two of the dissenting commissioners, Kajia Mayfield and Frank Fender, insisted the ultimate decision should be left in the hands of elected officials. Town Engineer Joe Capra's Feb. 14 announcement this year that Sewall's Point had been awarded the \$8.4 million Resilient Florida Grant ultimately won Commissioner Campo over. The latter had voted against applying for it last August due to financial concerns.

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Mr. **Daniels** presented the latest three requests during the March 14 meeting. "As we talked about at the last meeting, we did get the reward notice and there is required paperwork that I have to sign and send in to let them know that we do want to receive the award of \$8.4 million for the septic-to-sewer plan," he said. Commissioner Campo made the motion to accept the award, which was seconded by Commissioner Fender and passed 4-1, with Vice-Mayor Kurzman dissenting without comment. The town manager's subsequent request for authority to sign the documents – a fact not stated in the previous agenda item, which necessitated the addendum – prompted more debate and comments from the vice-mayor, who admitted he'd discussed the town's STS plans with a trio of county commissioners and Martin County Utilities Director Sam Amerson. "I spoke to Sam Amerson regarding the septic-to-sewer conversion," he said. "Three-hundred-thirty-seven [connections] is what he'll limit us to. So, when we're up to 337 and somebody's septic tank fails – it's not going to be 338 – Sam Amerson says there'll be no exceptions. They'll have to get a permit to get a new septic tank." Mr. **Daniels** refuted that last statement, however, since he insists the county's Health Department overseeing the issuance of such permits already has a firm policy in place. "I'm not sure if the information relayed to you is actually correct," he said. "I have spoken with the Health Department, and if there's a sewer in front of your house, you have to connect to the sewer. They will not issue a permit to put in a new septic tank. So, where that puts them when we're at 337, I don't know. The county Health Department makes that decision."

For his part, Commissioner Fender believed that Martin County Utilities might be persuaded to bump the final number up once Sewall's Point reached its cap of grinder system connections. "I know Sam is super in favor of septic-to-sewer conversion," he said. "I would imagine this decision is not about you can't go over 337; I think the issue is what you can do right now. I bet if you came back to him after the 337 and asked for more, then we'd start the discussion on how we get more." Mayor John Tompeck agreed. "Certainly, if you ask them now, they're going to be hard-nosed about it," he said. "At the same time, we won't get to that point until a couple years down the road and have all the main infrastructure already in. I can't believe they would turn down customers when the infrastructure's there – it makes no sense."

Commissioners then voted 4-1 to authorize Mr. **Daniels** to sign the grant documents, with Vice-Mayor Kurzman dissenting. The Board spent most of its time on the final agenda item on potentially expanding the STS program to all the homes in South Sewall's Point, since the Town would now be flush with grant money. The Commission's original approval was for the initial phase of 148 connections, which the town manager now believes should be expanded to the 337 cap and perhaps even beyond in the future. "Right now, I'm authorized to have 148 connections," he said. That's taking the low-pressure force main from across the street at Harbor Bay Plaza down to just short of Pineapple Lane. Now there's enough money to do all of the connections, but we're not authorized by the county to do that. If that's what you all want, I will make sure we do what we need to do to move forward." The town engineer then explained how the new total of 337 connections would cover most of the low-lying areas along the peninsula. "That would put the line down South Sewall's Point Road all the way to High Point," Mr. Capra said. "It would cover all of High Point, as well as Island Road [and] Simara Street. We could go into some more areas of Homewood and we could also finish Rio Vista if you'd like to do that."

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The final discussion that evening revolved around how the town could potentially use the rest of the grant funding on the project within the five-year period. While Commissioner Fender hoped to use the money to keep homeowner connection costs to MCU on the low end of the \$8,000-to-\$12,000 estimate, Mr. Capra discussed other options, such as installing the more expensive gravity sewer systems into specific neighborhoods and giving those residents the option to hook up prior to septic tank failures. Because most Board members opposed mandatory assessments for the gravity systems, Commissioner Mayfield proposed another solution. "As opposed to giving those people above the 337 [cap] any kind of assessment, you could just give a smaller portion of people a gravity hookup where the grant would pay for it and then you'd have the same [connection] costs as the grinder," she said. "We should assess at a later date and there could be options, but currently we seem good with the 337."

Commissioner Campo ultimately made a motion to authorize Mr. **Daniels** to negotiate a memorandum of understanding with Martin County Utilities and to expand the STS program without mandatory special assessments. Commissioner Fender seconded the motion, which passed 4-1 with Vice-Mayor Kurzman dissenting.

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Robert James Daniels
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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
October 13, 2022

Sewall's Point passes Zoning in Progress

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The majority of the Town Commission here voted Sept. 27 to approval a Zoning in Progress that will put all development applications on hold for at least 120 days while an outside consultant updates the town's land development regulations to ensure alignment with the Comprehensive Plan.

Town Manager **Robert Daniels** provided commissioners an extensive overview of how a ZIP works while explaining that the LDRs were not analyzed by Land Planner Bonnie Landry after completing her work on the Comp Plan as he's previously seen done in other communities. "You want to make sure that you don't do something that's contrary to your Comprehensive Plan," he said. "The land development regulations should match what you've decided to do in your Comp Plan, and that really gives you the ordinance that governs what you can and cannot do. Originally when we looked at doing the Comp Plan and the LDRs, they were together in the Request for Proposals, but because of the cost concerns, it was split up at that time." Mr. **Daniels** then described how he came up with his timeframe for pausing developmental applications during the ZIP. "Generally, you'll do a Zoning in Progress so it kind of holds up any action," he explained. "They [developers] can still make an application, but the actual decision-making process isn't done until that Zoning in Progress is done. The maximum amount of time is usually 180 days. We're looking at roughly 90 days, [but] the problem we have is the holidays towards the end of December. That's why I asked for 120 days with the hope that we'll get it done sooner because I don't want to hold up any progress."

Mr. **Daniels** concluded his introduction by highlighting the recent sale of an eight-acre property off North Sewall's Point Road that served as both the impetus for the request and the debate before the Commission that evening. "I actually had a conversation with the gentleman that purchased the parcel that is of concern," he said. "His intention is to subdivide it into two parcels, both of them going from east to west and both of being just under four acres. He's a builder who's used to Zoning in Progress from his experience in Jupiter Island. Obviously, he'd like to get in and do something, but he understands the process and what we're doing. Again, we don't have an application. [and] we don't have any information other than the sketch and a copy of the email explaining what his project is."

Commissioner James Campo launched the Board discussion immediately afterward, expressing frustration that an adjacent property owner had urged the Commission during its Sept. 20 Final Budget Hearing to expedite the ZIP due to the new owner's plans for the property. "I called **Bob [Daniels]** because I'm very concerned the way that this came up," he said. "I thought it was a heck of a way to welcome someone into the neighborhood to put together basically a freeze-up of his private property rights. I was concerned that a neighbor came to a budget meeting – which was not meant to conduct normal business – and inserted a concern about the new owner. So, our

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first inkling is to slam on the brakes with any possible development." Commissioner Campo insinuated that passing a Zoning in Progress without including the property owner in the discussion could put the Town of Sewall's Point in a precarious situation similar to when the City of Stuart was successfully sued by the Lake Point Corporation. "This is hot potato stuff when you talk about a moratorium," he continued. "You don't want to bring this up at a public meeting that's intended for the budget and have it not adequately screened by the person that's going to be affected the most. I think we should give **Bob** a couple of weeks to work through this with this contractor to make sure we're all on the same page. When you start infringing on someone's use of their private property, it can result in a lot of damage, and I don't want to be a part of that."

Commissioner Frank Fender acknowledged that Commissioner Campo had hit on some "hot button issues" but insisted the idea of rewriting the land development regulations had not just come to light. "This discussion we're having here has been going on for as long as the Comp Plan's been under development," he said. "You're bringing up a concept of slow growth, versus no growth, versus fast growth and aligning it to the Lake Point issue. We're not stopping anybody from doing anything here the way I understand it; we're just saying let's have 120 days so somebody's not pushing something in under the wire. I absolutely want the developer to be able to develop." Vice-Mayor Dave Kurzman concurred, emphasizing his desire to continue focusing on improving the town's stormwater flow, which is addressed in the recent Comp plan revisions. "This has been out there for quite a while, [and] the Comp Plan we've been working on for a while," he said. "Our biggest issue is flooding – that's why we're buying property right now – and this will actually protect the area from flooding. Underneath the old rules, he could flood the daylight out of us. It's not just one neighbor, but many neighbors who were nervous about this. I just think this is ready to go, and I don't see any reason we shouldn't approve this tonight."

Commissioner Campo then found an ally in Commissioner Kajia Mayfield. "I hadn't heard of this before," she said of the current debate over the new property owner. "We had the budget, we had this meeting [and] it was a lot I was trying to understand in all of it. I do agree it was rushed. I would support putting it off because I don't feel totally prepared to make a decision like this that could impact a property owner. A hundred and twenty days is a long time in the real estate market." Taking her support as a sign of potential success, Commissioner Campo made a motion to table the Rezoning in Progress, which was seconded by Commissioner Mayfield. That was followed by much more Board discussion, as well as input from Town Attorney Glen Torcivia. "There's nothing illegal about doing this – Zonings in Progress are done often," he said. "This is a resolution that you can change at any time. On the one hand, Commissioner Campo is suggesting you postpone starting this for two weeks. You could just as easily rescind this two weeks from now, six weeks from now or eight weeks from now. It's really a discretionary decision."

After Mr. Torcivia's comment, Mayor John Tompeck asked Ms. Landry to provide her professional opinion on Zonings in progress. "The Zoning in Progress is a typical planning function," she said. "If you identify something about your LDR that needs to change, what you don't want is to have the LDR being drafted and this [current] one in place, and somebody puts an application in right in the middle. Then there's a conflict between what's being drafted and

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what's approved and the Comprehensive Plan and the LDR. That actually puts you in a more vulnerable position legally than not doing the Zoning in Progress." The Board then voted Commissioner Campo's motion, which failed 2-3, with Mayor Tompeck, Vice-Mayor Kurzman and Commissioner Fender dissenting. Vice-Mayor Kurzman, in turn, made a motion to approve the ZIP, which was seconded by Commissioner Fender and passed 3-2, with Commissioners Campo and Mayfield dissenting.

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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
September 28, 2022

Sewall's Point finalizes 2023 budget and millage

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The Town Commission here voted unanimously Sept. 20 to approve the 2023 millage rate and \$10.7 million budget during its final budget hearing, notably characterized by its muted tone and lack of angry residents.

The Board initially approved the 2023 millage rate of 3.27 mils during its July 26 meeting and affirmed that millage during its first formal budget hearing on Sept. 7, both with minimal public comment and virtually no opposition. A year ago, however, when then Town Manager Michelle Berger proposed raising the 2.87 combined millage rate to 3.2688 mils to help fund the stormwater retrofit of South Sewall's Point Road, the ensuing public outcry ultimately contributed to her resignation on Jan. 31 of this year. Her replacement hired on July 21, **Robert Daniels**, presided over much quieter proceedings this year, aided by Interim Town Manager Dan Hudson, who's kept the town running for the last several months.

Prior to opening the latest hearing, Mayor John Tompeck called for public comment on non-agenda items. The first speaker that evening, Mandalay Road resident Dorien Gilbert, did, however, pose a question related to the budget. "This is in reference to the River Road Project that was going on for many years that we've heard of anyway," he said of the ongoing \$4 million-plus stormwater rehab. "I heard one aspect of it saying that it depends money-wise whether we have the money or it's going to be a grant. I was told the money – about \$435,000 – has been approved. Is it available for that project?"

Mayor Tompeck subsequently informed him that he'd have to wait until later during the meeting to get his answer before turning the budget hearing over to Mr. **Daniels**. "I'm going to ask Mr. Hudson to step up since he's been sort of coaxing this baby along through the whole process of my getting hired and taking over," the town manager said by way of introduction. "He's going to read the roll back rate announcement for us into the record." Mr. Hudson, in turn, read the brief sentence, followed by short period of silence. "The proposed millage rate of 3.27 mils is greater than the roll back rate of 2.9357 mils by 11.39 percent," he said. Mayor Tompeck couldn't resist taking a jab at him at that point. "Is that all you have to say," he quipped, as the chambers erupting into laughter. "Would you like me to go ahead and give you the overview?" Mr. Hudson replied. "Yeah, why don't you go ahead," Mayor Tompeck answered.

Mr. Hudson began by reminding commissioners that they'd decided to revamp the budget structure this year by setting up a three-fund structure. Some citizens had complained during last year's budget hearings that there weren't enough details on categories like employee salaries. "We don't need to read every line, but the total budget is \$10,656,050," he said. "On Sept. 7, you asked to address the planning fees, and we were able to clarify that. The water supply plan – which was one of the items in question – is not included in the budget at this time. It will be, if

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and when a grant is approved. So, the budget and the grant are going to come back at an appropriate time. What is funded in the budget now is \$20,000 for ongoing planning issues and \$10,000 for the land development regulation updates."

The final version of the 2023/2024 Fiscal Year Budget also includes additional budget comparisons that some Board members asked for during the first formal budget hearing. "Exhibit A has two." Mr. Hudson continued. "The first one is just a simple look at the three funds, without really going into a lot of comparison. Then, the second chart gives you the line-item breakdown: how much you've spent year-to-date on each line item, and then a percent comparison of this year over last year. I think that was kind of what you were asking for." The last item the interim town manager described was the capital improvement project sheet, which he emphasized was still a work in progress and had seen only one change since Sept. 7. "The Town Commons restroom was moved out and is not included in the 2023 budget," he said. Right before he recommended adoption of both the millage rate and budget, Mr. Hudson briefly touched on the public comment related to the latter. "The question that was raised regarding the money for the South River Road project – it's still in the budget as part of the Capital Improvement Plan," he concluded.

Mr. **Daniels**, in turn, provided new information about potential funding for the water supply study before turning the discussion back over to the Board. "I've been working with the county on their study to see what we need to comply with," he said. "There is a grant available from the Department of Economic Opportunity [and] the opening for the applications is in January. DEO grants are fully funded – they're 100 percent – so there is no match we have to worry about budgeting. As we get closer to that deadline, we can discuss the grant application and where I recommend we head."

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield launched the brief Commission discussion, beginning with the \$20,000 Mr. Hudson said was dedicated to "ongoing planning issues." "Is that the communication plan – what is that one specifically?" she asked. In his response, the interim town manager referred to a comment by the other public speaker, North River Road resident Chuck Farrow. The latter reminded commissioners that he'd emailed each of them with his proposal of a "development application moratorium" while town staff updated the LDRs. "We have people come in from time to time, and they want an interpretation of the Planning Code," Mr. Hudson said in answer to Commissioner Mayfield's question. "It doesn't really reflect [the] Building Code so much; it is a planning-oriented kind of question. Dr. Farrell's comment just now, that's a planning issue: Actually, it'd be the LDR updates – the one that's directly relevant – but those are the kinds of questions we get from time to time."

For his part, Commissioner Frank Fender wanted to make sure staff addressed Mr. Gilbert's question posed prior to the budget discussion. "Do we want to take this time to address Dorien's question about the funds, or did you mention it?" he asked. "Yeah, that's what he just mentioned in the budget, effective Oct. 1," Mr. **Daniels** responded in reference to Mr. Hudson's presentation. Commissioner Fender also expressed satisfaction with the new information in this year's budget. "I was happy they came in and put the percentages in," he said. "For next year, I

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would love to see a year-over-year rolling percentage change for each line item. It would just help to make the understanding of the changes much more visible." Mr. **Daniels** told him that idea was already on the backburner. "As we build on each year, our plan is to go to a five-year rolling number so you can look back and historically see what we've funded for that particular account," he said.

Mayor Tompeck likewise lauded Finance Director Holly Vath and Mr. Hudson for their collaborative efforts on streamlining and improving the 2023 budget. "They did a terrific job," he said. "I'm not a budget expert, [but] it was a lot clearer in what exactly we were doing this year. It made it a lot easier for me to review, so I appreciate that."

The Board then voted 4-0 to approve the 2023 millage and budget, with Commissioner James Campo absent.

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Robert James Daniels
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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
September 8, 2022

Sewall's Point seeking \$8 million septic-to-sewer grant

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

The majority of the Town Commission here voted Aug. 31 to apply for an \$8 million Resilient Florida Grant to help fund a controversial septic-to-sewer project along South Sewall's Point Road, but not without resident opposition and some frustration from Board members.

Just the mention of the words septic to sewer is enough to raise the hackles on some of this exclusive riverfront community's residents, who have long opposed loosening their grip on their septic tanks. The debate became so heated last year that it led to calls for the dismissal of former Town Manager Michelle Berger who backed the proposal, as well as a millage-rate increase to pay for the ongoing stormwater rehab of the same roadway that was eventually approved. Although she ultimately resigned in late January over a contract-renewal dispute, her recently hired replacement, **Robert Daniels**, may have to tread lightly to avoid enraging the Sewall's Point masses.

Lantana Lane resident Art Swartz was one of the loudest voices in January opposing Ms. Berger's contract renewal, signing up to speak during the latest meeting even before the agenda item got underway. "Yesterday I'm pleased to say that we had our septic system pumped out," he said. "It was clean, inspected, -- everything was great at my house -- as it has been since we bought the house in 2004. We never had an issue, so I ask, where is the evidence to confirm the need for South Sewall's Point to undertake the expensive, disruptive and unwanted conversion from septic to sewer? I've heard a lot of talk [and] been to numerous meetings. I respect the opinions of you all, but I haven't seen any evidence from a report that says we really need to do this."

Mr. Swartz also insinuated that the town's engineer, Joe Capra of Captec Engineering Inc., might have ulterior motives in urging the Board to both apply for grants and proceed with the project. The firm is currently in charge of the ongoing \$4 million-plus stormwater rehab of South Sewall's Point Road. "I don't know much about Captec other than Joe Capra attends a lot of meetings," he continued. "He leads our commissioners as if he was a pied piper. I'm frustrated by the actions being taken by this body that have not been approved or mandated by the residents and the town people of Sewall's Point. Actions that are expensive, disruptive and unwanted should be a topic of discussion for the town."

Town Manager **Daniels** then formally introduced the agenda item on the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan and Project Implementation Grant, whose application window was rapidly closing. "I got a phone call Friday night about this opportunity, similar to the opportunity that we addressed on the Aug. 9 meeting," he said in reference to the planned conversion of the Town Hall and three adjacent commercial buildings from septic to sewer. "The difference with this one is, a portion of it is federal dollars that we can use for matching the

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

original grant that we put in. It is an \$8 million grant that has opened. I thought with the Commission taking the action on Aug. 9, that I would bring this one forward in all transparency. This is something that we can consider, which should help us with our match on the original grant."

Mayor John Tompeck was the first to speak afterward, lamenting a lack of advance notification. "I am really disappointed that I can't seem to get a listing of the opportunities for grants," he said. "I look at the Resilient Florida Grant page that was given to us, and this portal opened on July 1. Here we are Aug. 31, and it's the first time we're discussing it. That's not acceptable. I don't know if there's any opportunity for appropriations. We can't be in this position where you have to call a special meeting because a grant is due that day or the next day." As far as the project in question, Mayor Tompeck assured residents that neither he nor anyone else on the Board would support mandatory septic-to-sewer connections. "The residents want to know, how are we going to do this and how much will this cost?" he continued. "The answer is, we don't know. We have an idea of the total project cost, but we don't know how it'll cost [residents] because we don't know how much we're going to get in grants. I think the Commission agrees that nobody's interested in any kind of mandatory assessment. That's something important for everybody to understand."

The mayor also defended the town engineer, insisting that Mr. Capra had only recently received the draft report on the South Sewall's Point Road septic-to-sewer project from the consultant. "It's long, it's complicated, and he's trying to put it in some kind of a summary fashion that'll be easy for us to understand," Mayor Tompeck explained. "An important piece of this puzzle is – once he's got the options – he needs to see what Martin County is agreeable to do. If we do, in fact, go ahead with this conversion, they're going to get 650 customers for life. So, they ought to be able to throw a whole lot of money into the pot to help us out here."

In response to Mr. Swartz' calls for more notification and the mayor's complaints, Mr. **Daniels** said he'd already spoken to Mr. Capra and contracted grant writer Kloe Ciuperger about improving their game on providing grant information in advance. "In all fairness, that transparency has to be there, [and] obviously we go through great pains even in special meetings of getting out as much notice as we can," the town manager said. "I am working on a list of all of our grants that we have currently now and hope to have that out in a couple days. Also, we're looking at putting the grant information on the website, so we have full transparency out there on what we have."

Mayor Tompeck then invited Veronica Piccolo to the lectern, the only other member of the public signed up to speak on the topic. "We are lucky now that we have money that could be matched," the latter said. "But that's only these grants – you're not going to get another federal piece. You're going to end up down the road getting grants that have to be matched, and that's coming from the residents. If I lived in North Sewall's Point, I would tell you all to take a hike. They already have the sewer [and] are going to be assessed for something in South Sewall's Point. Why would they want to put the money out?"

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Ms. Piccolo urged the Board to drop the issue altogether until Martin County Utilities comes calling. "If we all shut up and didn't do anything as a Sewall's Point entity, we would come up on a list with Martin County, and Martin County would be doing everything that you guys are doing," she insisted. "You wouldn't have to spend any time: They would be the ones to do all the plans," Mayor Tompeck shot down that scenario, however. "We're certainly on the Martin County list, when Martin County gets to us, they just throw it on your tax bill, and that's the end of the story," he said. "They did that in North River Shores and Golden Gate. There wasn't any discussion – they just put it on their tax bill – and they're paying for 20 years. You're not going to save any money that way, trust me."

Commissioner Kajia Mayfield concurred. "I think it's important that we take part in it, try to reduce the cost as much as we can and have more control," she said. "As most people know, I support the conversion to sewer in South Sewall's Point. I don't want to tear up the road again." Commissioner Mayfield then made the motion to apply for the grant, which was seconded by Commissioner Frank Fender without comment. Commissioner James Campo was the last to speak, emphasizing that he opposed the current application but not the idea of septic to sewer conversions. "I'm disappointed that seven months ago we spent over \$100,000 on a study, and it sounds like some of those results are in, but we still haven't seen that," he said. "I think the residents of Sewall's Point are fair and willing to spend money when a case is made, and I think that's what lacks right now. We need a plan, [and] we need cost estimates before we move ahead."

The Board then voted 3-1, with Commissioner Campo dissenting and Vice-Mayor Dave Kurzman absent.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
July 28, 2022

Sewall's Point selects new town manager

Author/Byline: Donald Rodrigue

After holding a community meet and greet July 20 for six managerial candidates, the Town Commission voted unanimously the next day to hire Jupiter resident **Robert Daniels** as its new town manager. A career law-enforcement officer, Mr. **Daniels** cut his administrative teeth in Miami-Dade County's North Bay Village, where he served as police chief and both interim and acting city manager before taking over management of the Town of Melbourne Beach in 2017. Two years later he hopped to the opposite coast, holding the same position at the City of Madeira Beach for a two-year period as well.

The second of the candidates the Board interviewed in alphabetical order on July 21, Mr. **Daniels** was preceded by Raymond Bossert Jr., the current village Administrator of Port Edwards, Wis. He was then followed by Brian Geoghegan, the current city manager of Howell Township, N.J.; Ben Hogarth, the community affairs liaison for the City of Stuart; Lynne Ladner, the interim finance director for the City of Pahokee; and Larry Tibbs, the Moore Haven city manager. At the end of the same day, commissioners and staff held a special meeting at the Town Hall where each candidate was called in separately to provide their final comments and answer two final questions posed by Commissioner James Campo.

Mr. Bossert, like every other candidate that evening, began by thanking the Board and members of the public who'd come out to meet them the day previous day. Reminding commissioners that he was a history buff, the U.S. Army administrator who retired in 2019 described his management style utilizing an analogy of the town's namesake founder. "I would say what Captain Sewall would in looking for a town manager," he said. "He would say, you need a leader, you need a captain of this ship, to make sure it goes in the right path. He would say the leader needs to have inspiration, motivation and competency. He would need to provision the ship properly through rough, as well as, calm waters. Most importantly, the captain needs to understand the passengers – the townspeople – and how you communicate with them."

Commissioner Campo then posed his first question to Mr. Bossert related to his potential acceptance of the new town manager contract finalized by the Board on May 24. "Have you read the contract that was provided, and are there any terms that you do not agree with and would like to have changed that we need to know about before we potentially make an offer to you?" he asked. Mr. Bossert pulled no punches, insisting the \$110,000 salary listed in the contact was too low for the workload, something that Commissioner Kajia Mayfield repeatedly stated during the May discussion. Commissioners balked early this year at substantially raising the salary for former town manager Michelle Berger, who resigned Jan. 31 amid contract renewal discussions. "In my estimate, you're asking for more than a town manager," he said. "You're asking for a human resource director, a finance savvy person, a person that can cobble together your public

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works. I would ask that it be in the \$125,000 range because you're wanting experience, you're wanting someone that's competent and someone that has the capability to move forward." Commissioner Campo's second question was a lot simpler. "What would be the earliest start date?" he asked. Mr. Bossart's reply was a common answer for most candidates still employed by a municipality. "I have a 30-day notice clause in my current contract," he said.

While Mr. **Daniels** didn't refer to the posted salary, he did express his desire for upfront vacation time instead of waiting for it to slowly accrue. The Commission increased the annual starting vacation to three weeks in May, up from the standard two weeks allotted to most employees. "When we look at vacation time, obviously the tenure of a manager could be three years, and I'm used to having some amount of time frontloaded," he said, referring to the contract's three-year employment period. "I'm going to be working hard for you all the time, but you do need some down time." As far as his potential start date, Mr. **Daniels** is currently between jobs and very flexible. "I'd be ready tomorrow if I could sign this thing today," he said. "But I do have to get my son back to Alabama for school next week."

The next candidate, Mr. Geoghegan, highlighted his experience as a town administrator dealing with the same issues currently faced by the Town of Sewall's Point. "I did work at a small beachfront community after a natural disaster, so I bring that experience as well as extensive grant-writing experience," he said. "I've worked on some large-scale sewage projects recently, so I have a little bit of unique knowledge with that." Mr. Geoghegan's reply to Commissioner Campo's contract question echoed that of Mr. Bossart. "The starting salary is a little bit on the low side," he admitted. "In lieu of waiving the medical benefits and that kind of savings, I was hoping in the \$130,000 to \$140,000 range if possible."

Unlike the first candidate, Mr. Geoghegan didn't appear to need the 30 days' notice, which is a stipulation of the aforementioned contract. "Really, it could be immediately if everything were aligned," he said. "I do have some obligations throughout the fall I would have to meet, but I can provide those dates in advance."

Mr. Hogarth emphasized that communication with both the Board and the public would be a primary focus if he were selected as town manager. "I think it's something all of us can do a little bit better, to make everyone be heard and feel heard," he said. "I believe philosophically that residents – their voices – should be uplifted as much as possible." He had "no qualms or concerns" over the terms of the contract but did note that he was currently in the process of relocating to Martin County and preferred not to start immediately. "I would appreciate the ability to move first," he said. "That would be Sept.1."

Ms. Ladner, the final candidate standing in the previous candidate search, reiterated her desire to work for the Town of Sewall's Point. "My interest in Sewall's Point and the desire to be town manager has not wavered since I first learned of this opportunity in early April," she said. "My experience in local government and dedication to advance the goals and objectives of this community makes me the best candidate." Ms. Ladner had no complaints about the contract but said she did need to provide a 30-day notice to the City of Pahoee.

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The final candidate that afternoon, Mr. Tibbs, cited his financial background, grant-writing experience and familiarity with the same issues facing the town as his final selling points. "I do think I could contribute to what you're doing here, and know the seriousness of what you're dealing with," he said. "In the City of Moore Haven, we had similar issues with septic-to-sewer, flooding and upgrading stormwater infrastructure."

After Mr. Tibbs exited the Chambers, Mercer Group Senior Vice-President Dona Higginbotham, the Commission's contracted headhunter, suggested a potential voting format. "I would ask that you choose your number one, number two and number three choice," she said. "The candidates have been made aware that should your number-one choice not agree to the terms, the number-two person would step forward to negotiate."

Commissioners briefly debated among themselves on different and perhaps less-confusing options for tallying the votes until finally accepting an alternative method suggested by Commissioner Campo of reversing the order and using the number three as the top choice. "Whoever gets the most points is the favorite," he said. His suggestion proved to be the charm, with the Board only having to vote once. Village Clerk April Stoncius promptly tallied up the results for commissioners. "Number 1 is **Robert Daniels** with 13 points," she said. "Number two is Raymond Bossert with seven points; and Ben Hogarth is number three with five points." The Board then voted unanimously to offer Mr. **Daniels** the position and directed the village attorney to frontload at last half of the vacation days per the candidate's request. His first day with be Aug. 8.

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Robert James Daniels
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TBN
September 29, 2021

Madeira to renew city manager search — without Daniels

By Wayne Ayers

The search for a city manager will continue, following the rejection of the job by Lee Staab from Colorado, who had been the City Commission's number one choice. But this time, there will be an important difference as the search process moves forward. City Manager **Bob Daniels** will not be a candidate. **Daniels** had been the number two choice and was, in the words of Mayor John Hendricks, "the last man standing" after three of the top four candidates pulled out. Hendricks said Staab turned down the job after it was offered to him because "if his wife wasn't happy with an area, she was the boss, and he was going to go by her decision."

The decision to start a new search for city manager came at a special meeting on Sept. 22, called for the purpose of deciding how to proceed. The commission had two choices: Proceed with a new search or rehire **Daniels**. In a statement at the meeting's start, **Daniels** said he had been very happy with serving the residents and commission as city manager for the past two years. But he recognized "there is some divisiveness in the commission about retaining me." **Daniels** said he wanted to do what's best for the community. "If you make the decision to open the (selection) process up again, I am not applying," **Daniels** told the commission. He added, "I've been through the process, and done everything you asked of me. So it would be counter-productive to my staff and to the community" to reapply for the position. **Daniels** also said he would remain as interim manager "to keep the ship afloat" until a new city manager is selected. "I plan on doing that until you tell me you don't need me here," he said.

The commission divide that **Daniels** spoke of was apparent in the comments made by the commissioners following his remarks, and in the close vote to continue the city manager search without **Daniels** as a candidate. Commissioner Nancy Hodges said **Daniels** should continue as city manager. She stressed that it is important to have someone who has experience in a waterfront community, and said that **Daniels** has lived on the east coast of Florida as well as Madeira Beach. Referring to Staab's selection over **Daniels** for the city manager job, Hodges said, "Bringing someone in from out of state was really out of place." **Daniels** has done a good job, Hodges said. "He would be my choice."

But Commissioner Helen "Happy" Price spoke against **Daniels**. "It is not in the best interest of Madeira Beach to accept a city manager just because he is the last man standing," Price said. "Mr. **Daniels** didn't make my top five list," she said. "I'm inclined to get a different city manager in here." She added, "I appreciate all **Bob's** work." Price said she recently learned of an "unwritten rule that city manager candidates do not apply if there is a sitting city manager already in place. So, others with the local knowledge that we are seeking just do not apply."

Commissioner Doug Andrews said he wants to "see what happens" with a new city manager search. "Let's push forward," he said. Repeating comments he has made in the past, Andrews

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said **Daniels** should be replaced because “we need leadership, and we need direction.” Under **Daniels**, Andrews said the city has lost every department head except for one. “I don’t see any major accomplishments that have come out of this administration,” Andrews said. “Just because he’s a nice guy and he’s kind of steadied the ship is not enough reason to move forward with him.”

Commissioner Dave Hutson said **Daniels** has done a good job. In the two years he has been city manager, **Daniels** has gone through a change of commission, and COVID, “which has never happened before,” Hutson said. “He hasn’t had major accomplishments because there were no projects available to push through.” **Daniels** would bring continuity, Hutson said. “It would be very nice if he would stay.”

Two residents spoke on the city manager issue, and both wanted to keep **Daniels**. Jean Farnan said she has been a Madeira Beach resident for 30 years. “I have seen city managers come and go, and I am blown away by Mr. **Daniels**’ professionalism,” Farnan said. “I’ve never seen that here,” she said, naming several previous city managers. Farnan also said she was unhappy with the way some of the commission members have treated **Daniels**. She said if **Daniels** has “the intestinal fortitude to put up with this commission, I think we should retain him.”

Anita Roberts also said she was impressed with **Daniels**’ professionalism. She said the city needs a manager like **Daniels** who can handle things. “I’m a volunteer here, and I’ve seen him in action. He’s always been on top of everything,” said Roberts. “He’s a wonderful man,” she said. “I don’t understand why you wouldn’t hire him back.”

Commissioner Price made a motion “to give Mr. **Daniels** his 40 days’ notice, and for the city to renew its search for a different city manager.” The vote was 3 to 2 in favor. Andrews and Price voted yes; Hodges and Hutson wanted to keep **Daniels** and voted no. The deciding yes vote came from Hendricks, who did not speak on the issue. The mayor was also the swing vote when the commission picked Staab over **Daniels**. At that time, Hendricks said, in voting for Staab, he hoped to remove the discord on the commission and “settle the city down.” The commission will now proceed with a new city manager search, which is where it started three months ago.

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Robert James Daniels
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Tampa Bay Newspaper Weekly
September 8, 2021

Madeira Beach city manager is out; outsider picked to lead city

By Wayne Ayers

Following an extensive and exhaustive selection process that started with 28 candidates, the City Commission met in a special meeting Sept. 7 and made the final decision for city manager. In a close vote, a sharply divided commission picked Lee Staab, a Colorado resident with a mostly military background, over City Manager **Bob Daniels** to lead the city. The candidate field had been reduced from 28, to seven, and then to four. After the final four candidates were selected, one withdrew because he wanted a higher salary, and another for unspecified reasons, leaving only Staab and **Daniels**.

Before the vote was taken, it was clear from previous comments that two commissioners strongly favored Staab, two favored **Daniels**, and one — the mayor — would be the swing vote. Commissioners Doug Andrews and Helen “Happy” Price were for Staab. Neither of them had even included **Daniels** in their top five or top three list. Andrews’ criticisms of **Daniels** were frequent and sharp throughout the selection process. “To say that **Daniels** is the best candidate is absurd,” Andrews had said. Price was a strong supporter of Staab, saying, “If there’s anyone that can bring people together, it’s Staab.” Commissioners Nancy Hodges and Dave Hutson favored keeping **Daniels**. Hodges had said at a previous meeting, “I’ve read through everything and I thought **Bob Daniels** was the best.” Hutson said he had wanted to keep **Daniels** for stability.

With the commission split, Mayor John Hendricks became the swing vote that ousted **Daniels** as city manager and gave Staab the job. Hendricks had shown support in the past for keeping **Daniels** but was also impressed with Staab. When the candidates were narrowed to four, Hendricks said that Staab “has had experience all over the world doing different things. He’s very, very qualified.” The commission members said very little at the September 7 meeting where they made the final city manager selection. They voted by paper ballot, with the city clerk reading how each member voted, with Hendricks, Price and Andrews for Staab, and Hodges and Hutson for **Daniels**.

After the final 3-to-2 vote was announced, **Daniels** spoke. He thanked the commission for giving him the opportunity to serve as city manager for the past two years. **Daniels** is currently serving as interim city manager since his contract expired Aug. 31. Then **Daniels** pointed out that the commission members had, “in this age of Zoom meetings,” never met Staab face to face. All of the interviews with Staab were electronic, with Staab in Colorado where he lives. “Hiring somebody for this type of position without even meeting with them face to face is just different,” **Daniels** said. “It’s not in the best interest of you or your staff.” He advised the commission to consider “flying Mr. Staab in and have some type of meetings with him face to face.”

The commission agreed later in the meeting to bring Staab to Madeira Beach for a visit of two to three days or more, that would include contract negotiations and meeting staff members. He will

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be offered a salary of \$135,000 and “we will not go beyond that,” said Hendricks. That salary figure was given to Staab during interviews, Hendricks said, “and it was acceptable to him.” To ease the transition, Hendricks recommended that there be an overlap period between Staab starting and **Daniels** leaving. The commissioners and **Daniels** were agreeable to doing that. Staab will be offered a 30-month contract, so that it will not end during budget season.

Hendricks spoke of his vote in a later phone conversation with Tampa Bay Newspapers. “**Bob** did a good job,” he said. “You’re not going to please all the people all the time.” But, he said, there were problems between **Daniels** and “a commission member,” and “we can’t have this type of discord going on at commission meetings.” Hendricks said his goal “is to settle the city down, and this will do that.” He also said his decision to vote for Staab was “one of the most difficult I’ve ever had to make.” He mentioned Staab has no Florida experience, “which the commission has said they wanted, and that’s a problem for me.” “We’ll have to take a wait-and-see approach” with Staab, Hendricks said. “I hope he’s as good as his resume says he is.”

Staab is a former county manager of Grand County, Colorado, and a city manager in Minot, North Dakota. He has military background, and is a West Point graduate with 27 years as a commander of the Corps of Engineers. After retiring from the Army, he was president of a military-related company. He currently heads a nonprofit that works with military people and veterans seeking housing.

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Robert James Daniels
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Tampa Bay Times (FL)
June 18, 2021

Madeira Beach’s city manager post fraught with turnover

Author/Byline: Gabe Stern

Robert Daniels stepped in as city manager two years ago amid rapid turnover in Madeira Beach’s city hall. Now, he’ll need to reapply for his job after the city’s board of commissioners voted not to renew his contract. The vote came at a special meeting earlier this month and will open up a search that could result in the city’s fourth manager since 2017. **Daniels’** contract is set to expire Sept. 1. “Unless somebody wants to make the case that this city is running perfectly, and we shouldn’t look outside of what we got currently — I’m not sure that that argument can be made,” commissioner Doug Andrews said before the vote.

Now, just over a week after the vote, there has been little traction in promoting the new role, Madeira Beach Mayor John Hendricks said. The commission will likely work with the city attorney to decide on where to look. There have been no advertisements or interviews so far, he said. Hendricks, who voted against the motion to not renew the contract, said he was disappointed that the board did not renew it. “**Bob** has done most everything I’ve asked him to do,” he said. While making clear that the decision was not “firing somebody or embarrassing somebody,” Andrews — along with the other two commissioners who voted for not renewing **Daniels** — cited Madeira Beach’s complicated makeup, along with the chance for a manager to better navigate its divisions, as reasons to look elsewhere.

Along the 2.5 miles of beachfront that make up Madeira Beach, bitter divisions over how to develop properties have run deep, and several city managers have come and gone in recent years. Before **Daniels** was Jonathan Evans, who resigned to return to his old job as Riviera Beach’s city manager. He was accused by Andrews of lying to the commission about his commitment to Madeira Beach. Before Evans was Shane Crawford, who was suspended then forced to resign after ethics complaints filed both by and against Crawford, and a power switch on the city’s commission.

Daniels was hired in 2019 as the commission moved quickly to find a replacement. He served as interim city manager for a month in 2019 before the commission passed a rare unanimous vote to keep him full-time. This came after the commission’s first two choices for city manager fell through. During **Daniels’** two years as city manager, Madeira Beach has navigated a sand dredge problem at tourist attraction John’s Pass, zoning hurdles, the coronavirus pandemic and the long-lasting conflict between development and anti-development groups in the city. “I agree we need to open this up and look for somebody with a skillset that really fits our town a little more so than how **Bob** was really drafted at the last minute,” said commissioner and Vice Mayor Helen “Happy” Price at the meeting. “I would like to open it up and see who else would be interested in being our city manager. And comparing him to whoever else applies.”

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Price said in a text message that she would not yet disclose what she is looking for in the next city manager — the board will decide that as a group, she said. Andrews, in an emailed statement, said new appointments in city hall makes the city manager an attractive position again, and “it only makes sense to gauge the interest that’s out there.”

Speaking in front of the commission on June 8, **Daniels** made the case for why he should stay. He cited increased community outreach and an improved relationship with the city’s business community. He said that coronavirus restrictions and a turbulent 2020 hindered some of what he had hoped to accomplish.

“In reality, when you take one of those years out, we couldn’t do the normal contact things that I like to do with the residents,” Andrews said at the meeting. “We couldn’t do ‘Breakfast with **Bob**’. We couldn’t do live meetings for a while. And not having that outreach is important not only for the commission, but for your city manager. And that’s what I’ve tried hard to work on.” He also said he never asked for a raise because he didn’t want to bring it up with the commission. He currently makes \$125,000 along with benefits, per his contract. “So I just hope that you can look at those things and the positives that we’ve been able to accomplish, and the bridges that we’ve built,” Andrews continued.

After he spoke, Price put the decision to a vote. “I’ll make a motion for the city of Madeira Beach not to extend the city manager’s employment agreement, but certainly open it up and we fully expect **Bob Daniels** to reapply.” The motion passed, 3-2.

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Robert James Daniels
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Tampa Bay Times (FL)
April 15, 2020

Sheriff: Keep beaches closed

Author/Byline: Mark Puente

The Pinellas County Commission's idea to consider opening parts of the closed beaches and condominium pools for exercise might die before the discussion is scheduled to start at a public meeting on Thursday.

Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, who opposed closing the beaches last month, said Tuesday he does not support opening the beaches in a limited capacity because the coronavirus pandemic has not yet peaked in Pinellas County. He fears that opening beaches would further spread the virus, which has killed at least 38 people in the Tampa Bay area, including 15 in Pinellas. "I'm not going to go back and visit the past," Gualtieri said during a Facebook Live discussion with County Administrator Barry Burton. "That ship sailed. There is nothing to fix this other than distance and keeping people apart. Why would we back off something we already put in place?"

During a public meeting on Monday, a majority of the Pinellas County Commissioners said they want information for a Thursday meeting so they can consider opening private pools at condominiums and parts of the county's beaches for exercise and recreation. Several residents complained about the closures.

Commissioners will receive updated data projections on Thursday from the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County on whether the coronavirus spread is increasing or decreasing, Burton said. The county, he said, is not at the point where the numbers are rapidly decreasing. "At this point, we don't need to go backward to look at what would occur if, in fact, we loosened up on these restrictions," Burton said. "The restrictions are in place. They're consistent with almost every other part of the country." Citing fears over the growing coronavirus crisis, the commission voted in March to close public beaches and parking lots along the county's 35 miles of sand. This came after a video went viral online showing a packed Clearwater Beach, unleashing a flood of accusations from across the country that Pinellas elected officials were enabling a public health crisis.

Clearwater City Manager Bill Horne said he cannot support opening the beaches until the virus curve has flattened and the number of new positive tests decreases. The idea to ease beach restrictions surprised Horne. He said he expects and understands that commissioners might be getting pressure from the business community to make changes to the safer-at-home orders. "I don't see how you would enforce a limited opening of the beaches," he said. "It will be very difficult for our law enforcement agencies to police. The beaches still need to be closed. It's premature."

During Monday's meeting, Commissioner Dave Eggers suggested that keeping public parking lots closed would prevent visitors coming from outside the county. Horne disagreed. He said that

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type of plan “doesn’t even serve the needs of the people who live here. People aren’t going to walk to the beach.” Clearwater Police Chief Dan Slaughter agrees with Horne’s concerns and does not support beach openings, a department spokesman said.

Pinellas Commissioner Janet Long, who supported the idea of hearing information about easing beach restrictions, changed her position on Tuesday. In a newsletter, she said it “would be detrimental to our community at this point, but would very likely hurt us all much more in the long run.”

Gregg Mims, the Indian Rocks Beach city manager, said the city will support whatever decision the commission makes. The beach closures have “greatly reduced the use of the beach for out-of-town guests,” he said, but residents continue to walk the beach daily. “In reality, the beaches are being used for walking today,” Mims said in a statement.

In Madeira Beach, City Manager **Robert Daniels** said that any beach opening needs to be done with a regional approach. The city’s shoreline has been nearly empty since the closures and “very few people are out and about,” he said. He said he expects county commissioners to heed the advice from local health officials. “We just can’t take this lightly,” **Daniels** said. “Is the time right? I don’t know.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City of Madeira Beach Florida
December 2, 2019

‘Breakfast with Bob’ Comes to Madeira Beach VFW Post #4256 on Thursday, December 12th

City Manager **Bob Daniels** will host “Breakfast with **Bob**” from 8 – 9 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019 at the Madeira Beach Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 4256, 12901 Gulf Blvd. Coffee and a light breakfast will be available courtesy of the VFW.

The Town Hall style event allows residents to receive in-person updates on community development projects, city initiatives, programs and services from Mr. **Daniels** and his leadership team. Residents and business owners can also ask questions of Mr. **Daniels** and city staff.

“Breakfast with **Bob**” happens every month in Madeira Beach. Coffee shops, breakfast venues, and other businesses interested in hosting "Breakfast with **Bob**" can contact the City Manager's office at 727-391-9951 x228. For more information, contact Curt Preisser, City of Madeira Beach Public Information Officer

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tampa Bay Times (FL)
October 4, 2019

LAYING DOWN THE LAW FOR - LIVEBOARDS

Author/Byline: Sheila MULLANE Estrada

MADEIRA BEACH

A woman showered on the deck of her boat, nude. Another boat had an unusual passenger — a goat. These and other liveboard boats anchored in the Intracoastal Waterway in Madeira Beach may soon face substantial fines if they do not move, and their options are limited.

The City Commission is expected to give its final approval on Tuesday for a proposed ordinance that bans liveboard boaters from the city’s waters unless they pay a \$5 permit fee — and then they can remain anchored for only 72 hours and cannot leave their boats for more than eight hours at a time. The ordinance permits liveboard boats to dock at licensed marinas in the city. However, the city-owned marina does not allow liveboard boats to dock there, unlike in the past.

The city decided to crack down on liveboard boats anchoring in its waters after receiving repeated complaints. Just where these boats will go is uncertain. “It’s kind of like water. They seek the path of least resistance. When asked to move from one jurisdiction, they just go to another,” City Manager **Bob Daniels** said at a recent commission meeting. In a memo to the commission, **Daniels** said “Liveboard vessels are a growing issue in city waters and pose a threat to public health and safety.”

Daniels also is working with Pinellas County and nearby cities and towns to draft a “shared set of principles” to regulate and enforce rules regarding the anchoring of liveboard boats. Currently, there are about 40 boats anchored in Madeira Beach waterways and at least 15 have people living on them, according to Sgt. Richard Trump, who heads the Sheriff’s Office marine patrol unit. Trump said most of the liveboard boats are in the waters just northeast of the Tom Stuart Causeway Bridge between the American Legion building and the Sea Towers condominiums. Others anchor near the Madeira Beach Elementary and Fundamental schools and the Bay Pines veterans hospital. Much of these waters are outside the city’s jurisdiction. City Attorney Ralf Brookes said the city is considering annexing this part of the Intracoastal Waterway to gain legal jurisdiction to regulate anchored boats.

The people living on the boats often tie up their dinghies throughout the day at docks owned by a nearby Publix and McDonalds and at a dock owned by St. Petersburg College near a public school complex, prompting complaints, Trump said. “If a boat is moored to a private dock, we cannot touch it,” Trump said. Exacerbating the problem is that Madeira Beach is one of the few beach cities that has a significant protected anchorage area, according to Trump.

North of the city, the Intracoastal Waterway narrows significantly, deterring boats from anchoring there. Most of the waters to the south are restricted for liveboard boaters, while towns

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

to the north have mixed rules regarding liveaboard boats. A Treasure Island ordinance restricting liveaboards from anchoring in that city was the basis of the new Madeira Beach ordinance. St. Pete Beach also restricts anchoring liveaboard boats in its waters for more than 24 hours without getting a permit. Both cities' permits are free, are good for only 72 hours, and cannot be issued to the same boat more than once in a given month.

Redington Beach does not restrict liveaboard boats, except to require that they be "seaworthy" and be able to maneuver. North Redington Beach and Redington Shores completely ban liveaboard boats from mooring in their waters or at its docks. Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach and Belleair Beach don't address the issue of liveaboard boats in their town ordinances. Belleair restricts anchoring of liveaboard boats to 72 hours.

Compounding the issue for boaters are the fees charged by the few marinas that accept liveaboard boaters. "It's always been tough finding a place to anchor your boat," said Todd Nye, marina manager at the Blind Pass Marina. He says there are only four marinas that officially dock liveaboard boats: Blind Pass Marina, Pasadena Marina, the Harborage Marina and the St. Petersburg Marina. Other marinas may accept liveaboards, but generally don't advertise the fact.

The cost for for docking a liveaboard boat varies and is usually based on the length of the boat. Combined with other fees, the cost can range into the hundreds of dollars monthly. The only other legal option is Gulfport's new mooring field that accommodates and services up to 25 sailboats at a monthly cost of over \$500 for liveaboard boats.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Paradise News
August 22, 2019

Madeira Beach Seeks to Make Daniels Permanent City Manager
by Paradise News Team

Robert J. Daniels came to Madeira Beach in early July on a temporary assignment. His role as “interim” City Manager was to keep government operations running smoothly while the Board of Commissioners negotiated with James Drumm, to become the permanent City Manager. On Tuesday night at the City Commission meeting, that changed when Mayor Maggi Black, unbeknownst to the rest of the board, staff and the public, sought consensus from her fellow board members to offer **Daniels** the position permanently.

One by one, each commissioner offered commentary on their observations and experiences of working with Mr. **Daniels** over the past weeks. Each recognized his ability to hit the ground running, focus on short and long-term priorities, and create relationships with staff, the public, and commissioners. The Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to begin negotiations with Mr. **Daniels** immediately.

Mr. **Daniels** was gracious in his accepting the position and pointed out that there is plenty of work to do. “It’s teamwork and communication between the staff, the commission, and the residents,” said **Daniels**. “We’re all going to have challenges to get through, but the key is to work on them together. We’re not perfect, but I think if we all work together its amazing what you can do when you’re unified.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Today
March 13, 2019

Melbourne Beach town manager fired by 4-1 vote during special meeting

Rick Neale

Wednesday night, the Melbourne Beach Town Commission fired Town Manager **Bob Daniels** by a 4-1 vote. **Daniels** was hired in November 2017. This past December, town commissioners renewed **Daniels'** employment contract for two years and increased his salary from \$86,000 to \$96,500 per year.

Mayor Jim Simmons requested Wednesday's special meeting, calling for "discussion of leadership, including concerns with project planning, implementation and follow-through and staff morale," the agenda stated. "Over the past year, and especially in the past few months, I've witnessed numerous issues that I believe reflect systemic problems in our current town manager's leadership and follow-through," Simmons said during the special meeting. "Also over the past year, and especially in the past few months, I've been approached by department heads several times each, in which they consistently stated their dissatisfaction with the town manager's leadership, planning, implementation and follow-through," Simmons said.

Before Wednesday's vote occurred, **Daniels** rattled off a list of his accomplishments as town manager. "I have put my blood, sweat and tears into my work with this town. And I deserve a future greater than ending at this meeting tonight," he said. **Daniels** said he offered an open-door policy with town employees to discuss any issues. "Why they've never come to me, I don't know. It should have never come to this," he said.

Finance Manager Elizabeth Mascaro was appointed to serve as interim town manager. She will earn \$86,000, the same amount that **Daniels** earned when he was hired.

Commissioner Steve Walters cast the dissenting vote against firing **Daniels**. The commission did not discuss a future town manager job search.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Veronews
March 9, 2018

Fretting over growth of short-term rental

Written by Geroge White

Now that state legislators have apparently stalled on taking the lead on new rules for short-term rentals, beachside cities are planning their next moves in the ongoing struggle against the takeover by the “hotels next door.” With the rise of popular rental websites like Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) and AirBnB, it is easier to advertise and rent, causing an exponential rise over the last four years in the number of properties used as short-term rentals in Florida.

However, the main concern for Brevard homeowners was a recent warning by Satellite Beach officials and others of outside firms contacting residents to purchase their homes to add to their stock of vacation rentals. The homes would operate short-term rentals full time, which could add to parking and traffic problems, cause noise complaints and threaten the balance of city services. “This is their gold mine to them. They don’t care about your community, your standards or the people that live next door. They care about making money,” said Melbourne Beach Town Manager **Robert Daniels**.

While the Legislature seeks but remains unsuccessful in taking over the authority to regulate short-term rentals, Florida cities fall into two categories: those fortunate enough to have had an ordinance in place prior to 2011 (Satellite Beach, Indialantic), and those without specific regulations in place (Indian Harbour Beach, Melbourne Beach), who in essence are left with very little authority over short-term rentals. Satellite Beach allows short-term rentals, but only of over 30 days on the east side of SR A1A in all properties zoned RM-3 (primarily condominiums). Addressing concerns that those rules may not continue to be grandfathered in, the Satellite Beach City Council is working on including a referendum question on the November ballot to strengthen its position against vacation rentals. Indialantic allows vacation rentals in its tourist district, on the east side of SR A1A. Rentals on the west side of A1A are prohibited from short-term rentals and can face fines of up to \$250 per day, said Indialantic Town Manager Christopher Chinault. “We have people that we’ve notified. They’ve complained but they have come into compliance. People will point them out as being promoted as a vacation rental and we have to go after them,” he said.

Indian Harbour Beach had intended to pass an ordinance to identify and regulate short-term rentals, but that effort was put on hold pending consideration of the issue by the state Legislature. Melbourne Beach Town Council also is waiting to see what the state Legislature will come up with before addressing the issue on a local level, said Town Manager **Robert Daniels**. The town currently allows rentals but only in its multi-family districts. “It is a violation of our zoning unless it is in a multi-family district, and that’s where something like that should be, instead of in a single-family district where people pay good money for their homes there. A few years ago, nobody ever heard of vacation rentals being this popular,” **Daniels** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
February 25, 2015

North Bay Village police chief Robert Daniels fired

Author/Byline: JACKIE SALO

North Bay Village police chief **Robert Daniels** was fired last Friday by the Village Manager Frank Rollason in hopes that the police department could rebuild. Even though this follows recent complaints by residents about a string of burglaries, Rollason says the dismissal did not stem from a specific event, but rather an overall performance review of the department. **Daniels'** contract requires that he be given six months notice, so he was placed on paid administrative leave until August. His leave was effective Feb. 20. "I have been observing the police department for the year and a half that I have been here and I just feel the direction needs to change, [such as] the emphasis on community response," Rollason said.

Lt. Brian Collins will serve as the acting police chief until a replacement is determined. "Brian has got experience in the community here and he's been here many, many years," Rollason said.

At the Feb. 10 monthly commission meeting, residents of the Kennedy House, a condominium at 1865 79th St. Causeway, complained to the commission that the police department was ineffectively handling reported burglaries at the condo and that the investigations were unnecessarily prolonged. "We have a good police department, however I don't know where their priorities are I don't know why were are in the situation that we are," Kennedy House resident Jorge Brito said at the meeting. Brito, who is a former Miami-Dade County police detective, and other Kennedy House residents in attendance demanded answers from **Daniels**.

Daniels had served as police chief since July 2010 when he joined the department. Prior to his hiring, **Daniels** had 31 years of experience with the Boca Raton and Juno Beach Police departments, and served less than a year as police chief of Buckeye, Arizona. According to his terms of employment, he will receive three months' severance in addition to his accumulated vacation and sick days. He will also receive extended health benefits for the three months.

Village commissioners were not aware of **Daniel's** dismissal until Friday. "I did not poll the commissioners," Rollason said. "It was strictly my decision." **Daniels** could not be reached for comment.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/southwest-valley/2014/02/20/buckeye-police-chief-assistant-trade-roles/5638021/>

The Arizona Republic-12 News Breaking News Team
February 20, 2014

Buckeye police chief, assistant trade roles

By Matthew Casey

Buckeye Police Chief Larry Hall wants to inspire a shared vision in the department, continue to extend its reach by adding substations and prepare its next generation of leaders. Hall, 43, was sworn in Feb. 13. He now leads a department that has gone through tremendous changes as it has evolved from a small-town police force to a city law enforcement agency with complex challenges. “In talking to some of the people and getting their feedback we were able to craft a vision of what we’re looking for,” Hall said. “To be the best-trained, best-equipped, best-compensated, hopefully, police department in the state.”

Buckeye’s new top cop takes over the job held by Mark Mann for several periods since 2008. Mann, 55, has moved into Hall’s assistant chief post, where he expects to stay for the next 30 to 60 days, or until a new assistant chief is chosen. Mann wants to eventually serve as lieutenant or commander in Buckeye for the next few years. Mann plans to use the additional free time to continue doing mission work for his church. Earlier plans called for Hall to transition to chief in two years, but city officials sped up the change because Hall was ready to lead, Mann said.

Hall is now technically Mann’s superior, but Mann will still be paid a higher salary, according to Jennifer Rogers, Buckeye’s marketing and communications manager. Hall has 24 years experience in law enforcement. Before coming to Buckeye in 2006, he worked five years for the New York Police Department and 11 years for the Mesa Police Department.

Mann, who spent the early years of his career serving New York State police, said he worked closely with Hall soon after Mann joined the department. Hall had excellent command presence as well as strong leadership skills, desire and passion, Mann recalled. “I knew that he was the guy,” he said.

When Mann restructured the department and gave officers additional training, it forced Hall and other officers to mature quickly. Hall was promoted to assistant chief in 2010. In May 2011, Mann and Hall oversaw the department as it coped with the murder of Officer Rolando Tirado. Tirado was an 11-year veteran, and the Buckeye Police Department’s first death. The gunman who killed Tirado, Cesar Tomas Quiroz Leon, was fatally shot in an ensuing gunbattle with Officer Christopher Paz, who was working off-duty security with Tirado.

City Manager Stephen Cleveland hired Hall and the decision was announced to the City Council Jan. 21. Now that he has the top job, Hall plans to continue plans to upgrade the police building at Sundance Crossings so it can be used as administration building and substation, build a

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

substation at Festival Ranch and explore building a firing range. He also plans to pursue more professional development and leadership training for officers and help the department achieve Tier 1 accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Inc., within the next 18 months. “(Having Tier 1 accreditation) reduces liability and ensures you are operating by the highest-level industry standards,” he said. Hall said he was excited Mann will continue to serve the department. “This is an incredible opportunity because I still have my friend and mentor with me,” Hall said.

‘Unorthodox’ transition

Mann came to Buckeye in 2007, during a time when the department did not have a good reputation in the Valley. Buckeye used to be known as the place where officers went when they were in trouble or on their way out the door, Mann said. In 2008, Mann took over as interim chief after Dan Saban left to run for Maricopa County sheriff.

Robert Daniels, was appointed chief in 2009 and served for 10 months before he resigned. After **Daniels** stepped down, Mann was appointed chief.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to Robert Daniels is listed below. Omitted was information about the Baccalaureate programs, in which Mr. Daniels was not mentioned.]

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 20, 2012

North Bay Village’s police department budget raises concerns - Some commissioners raised questions about added positions for North Bay Village’s police department, which accounts for more than 60-percent of the municipality’s general fund. A proposed International Baccalaureate program for the local ele

Author/Byline: Lidia Dinkova

While North Bay Village commissioners may have tentatively approved a \$14 million budget for next year at their Sept. 13 public hearing, they have raised concerns about the cost of the city’s police department as well as the assets of the International Baccalaureate program proposed for the local elementary school.

At the meeting, Police Chief **Robert Daniels** asked the commission to add two part-time patrol officers in next year’s budget. The city already has two such officers. But **Daniels** said new positions are needed, noting that the existing part-time officers are sometimes on duty at a city event and unavailable. The police department takes up 63 percent— or \$3 million — of the general fund in the proposed budget. “You are trying to justify a 60 percent plus [budget],” Commissioner Stuart Blumberg told **Daniels** during the meeting, adding that residents have complained to him about the police department’s costs. “And now we are being asked to add two more”

Commissioners first voiced concerns about the police department’s spending at a budget workshop earlier in the summer when **Daniels** had proposed to add an assistant chief of police position. After much debate at the workshop, city staff recommended scratching that position. The tentatively approved budget did not include the expense for the two part-time patrol positions but Finance Director Bert Wrains said his staff is crunching the numbers to include the two positions. The proposed budget that will go for a second discussion in front of commissioners Thursday for a final vote.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 5, 2012

NBV residents worried about nearby sex-offender camp - Some residents of North Bay Village are worried about sex offenders wandering into town from across a bridge to the west.

Author/Byline: Lidia Dinkova

North Bay Village is one bridge away from the Shorecrest street camp to which sex offenders report at night — and that proximity concerns a handful of residents of the three-island city. “It bothers me,” said Eva Exposito, 67. “They are sex offenders. They can bother kids. If I had my grandkids here or they were nearby, I would be up in arms.” Since the media reported about a month ago that sex offenders had set up camp on a sidewalk along Northeast 79th Street and 10th Avenue, North Bay Village Mayor Connie Leon-Kreps has received about a half-dozen calls from concerned residents who fear that the sex offenders will wander into the city. The western North Bay Village city limit begins at the eastern edge of Pelican Harbor, a drive over the JFK Causeway from 10th Avenue.

The issue of where sex offenders need to be at night, and their living on the street, stems from a Miami-Dade County ordinance that dictates it is illegal for them to live within 2,500 feet of schools. An ordinance prohibits sex offenders from coming into a park where a child or teen younger than 16 years old is present. The only exception is for a sex offender who is the parent or legal guardian of a child in the park. The same rule applies for child-care facilities. The Miami Herald has reported that there are about 13 sex offenders living at the 79th Street camp, according to the state Department of Corrections. The department has denied that it directs offenders to the site when they are released from prison. The Shorecrest area is where they have to report at night. But during the day, they can “drive into any community they want to,” said North Bay Village Police Chief **Robert Daniels**.

To Jean Ferris, 69, the Shorecrest sex offenders’ camp is “unfair” to North Bay Village and Shorecrest residents, as well as to the offenders themselves. “It’s totally inappropriate for people to be put in that situation, no matter what crime they are convicted of,” said Ferris, of North Bay Village. “It is compromising the families who live nearby with children.” Ferris has been thinking about selling her North Bay Village home. But she thinks its value would decrease because of its proximity to the 79th Street camp. “Who is going to want to buy a house that is over the bridge from that?” she said. Ann Bakst, 74, of North Bay Village, said the camp does not bother her. The sex offenders “have paid their dept,” she said. “And they are not even giving them a chance.”

The 79th Street camp resembles a similar one set up about five years ago under the Julia Tuttle Causeway. About 100 men lived there due to county law restrictions. Drawing nationwide criticism, the camp was later disbanded. According to Miami Herald archives, the city of Miami will sue the state Department of Corrections in an effort to stop the influx of newly-released-from-prison sex offenders to city streets. In the meantime, there is no clear solution to the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

problem. The county Homeless Trust has said it would try to find homes for the sex offenders, but it is not prioritizing them over other people in need, The Miami Herald has reported. “Living on the street in that corner is nonsense,” Ferris said. “They cannot allow this to turn into another Julia Tuttle Causeway. And this is what is setting up to happen.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 25, 2011

North Bay Village keeps tax rate flat - North Bay Village tax rate stays flat and a trimmed-down budget gets final approval at a Tuesday meeting that included both financial discussions and criticism of the mayor.

Author/Byline: Lidia Dinkova

After a nearly four-hour commission meeting that often turned into a tug-of-war battle for the right to speak between commissioners, the vice mayor and the mayor, North Bay Village officials approved a \$16.7 million budget for the next fiscal year Tuesday night. The budget hinges on revenue generated by the city's tax rate, also approved Tuesday, of \$4.77 for every \$1,000 of taxable property, the same as the current rate. Commissioners Eddie Lim and Paul Vogel and Vice Mayor Connie Leon-Kreps voted in favor; Mayor Corina Esquijarosa and Commissioner Frank Rodriguez voted against. Esquijarosa tried unsuccessfully to push the final budget vote to the following week, saying the budget needed more work. Sept. 30 is the last day commissioners can approve the proposed budget for next fiscal year. "We have 10 days to make this a very good budget," she said. "We are almost there."

Esquijarosa said there was still "wiggle room" in the budget to partially pay for the addition of a \$130,000 International Baccalaureate program to Treasure Island Elementary School. Esquijarosa, however, said that North Bay Village would adopt the IB program only if Miami Beach pays for \$55,000 of the total cost — since out of 645 students enrolled in Treasure Island Elementary School, 280 come from Miami Beach, according to Esquijarosa. That would leave North Bay Village responsible for funding about \$75,000 of the total cost. She also said that if IB is added to the city's elementary school, more of the 336 vacant seats at the school would be filled. "We owe it to our residents to try to see if we can have this program," Esquijarosa said.

Leon-Kreps acknowledged the importance of education but said that she does not want the city to spend the money on the program unless they are sure that none of the expenses would be pinned on residents. Interim City Manager **Robert Daniels**, who is also the police chief, said funding for the program was uncertain. "I can't count on a grant that we do not even know where to find," he said. To balance the budget the city will reduce funds in the police, city clerk, finance and general government departments.

During the meeting, about half a dozen residents spoke during public hearing — some with funding proposals of their own. Ann Bakst, a North Bay Village resident for 38 years, said that the city might be able to find the money to fund the IB program if it has the county property appraiser conduct a study and see if property owners in North Bay Village were improperly claiming homestead exemptions — something of a politically charged issue in the city.

Shortly before the meeting started on Tuesday, the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust ruled that Esquijarosa had violated county ethics code and claimed a false homestead exemption on a Miami property she owns and rents out. The River Lofts condominium unit

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

carries a lien of \$3,109.70 due to owed back taxes. According to state law, the \$50,000 homestead exemption can be declared only on a principal residence, not on income-producing property.

The county ethics commission also found that Esquijarosa had not disclosed the income she receives from that property when she ran for North Bay Village mayor last year. Candidates are required by law to file financial disclosure forms, listing their income, assets and liabilities. The mayor is currently facing a recall effort, has maintained that she did nothing wrong, citing oversight or clerical errors as explanation for the discrepancies in her homestead exemption and financial filings. Supporters of the recall say the issue is reason enough for her to lose her seat. “I have a problem with her participating in the budget process when she has chaeated and not paid her own taxes,” said local activist Fane Lozman at Tuesday’s meeting. “Get you own financial affairs in order before you’re going to decide how you are going to spend the resident’s money.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 28, 2011

Commissioners deadlock on a host of issues - Commissioners could not agree on a preliminary tax rate, on whether there should be a new interim manager or what that position would pay. Meanwhile, the mayor has until Monday to launch her defense in recall effort.

Author/Byline: PAMELA DUQUE

Facing an approximate 35-percent drop in property values in the last two years, the North Bay Village commission could not agree on a preliminary property tax rate this week to determine next year's budget. They couldn't agree on the terms of contract for a new city manager, the status of current interim Manager **Robert Daniels** or whether to hire Randy Hilliard, a Miami Beach political consultant, as new interim manager. Meanwhile, Mayor Corina Esquijarosa has until Monday to issue a statement on the effort to recall her, veteran commissioner Paul Vogel has been absent from the dais for the last two meetings due to illnesses, and city officials are still searching for a new manager after Bob Pushkin resigned in June.

At the July 26 meeting, **Daniels** proposed capping the city's tax rate at 5.9 percent, up from the current 4.7 percent rate. **Daniels** said he didn't intend to raise the current rate, but wanted wiggle room in the event of higher costs or lower revenues. Esquijarosa and commissioner Frank Rodriguez opposed the measure, saying they did not want to increase taxes for residents. The commission deadlocked in a 2-2 tie and will take up the issue again during the September budget hearings. Property values declined by 7.1 percent in North Bay Village this year, one of the larger declines among Miami-Dade's municipalities. This comes after a 28 percent decline in property values last year in the city. City officials told commissioners that if they did not raise taxes, property owners would pay less in taxes than last year due to lower property values, resulting in less revenue in a budget that's already slim.

Daniels submitted a draft of \$9.4 million in projected expenses, about \$175,000 less than the current year's budget. The proposed budget includes approximately \$8,000 in bonuses for the city clerk, finance director, police chief and public works director, and another \$2,000 in raises to various members of the city's management team. Cuts come mainly from reducing the city's contributions to employee retirement accounts by 40 to 50 percent. The city's finance director, for example, was receiving \$12,000 in retirement contributions. Under the proposed budget, the city would contribute about \$7,000. "This budget will be tuned as we hear feedback from commissioners and the public," **Daniels** said. "This is the start of the process, this isn't the end. All of these numbers will be explained as we go through the workshop meetings." The mayor, however, objected to the bonuses and raises. "I will not approve increases to personnel and bonuses. I will not approve salary increases when everybody else is hurting," Esquijarosa said.

Esquijarosa motioned to fire **Daniels** over a controversy stemming from last month's meeting. Last month, residents spoke out of order during the meeting. The mayor asked city police to remove them, but the police didn't. The mayor told **Daniels** he should have taken actions against

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the police officers. He didn't. The mayor's motion was dropped after a 2-2 vote, with commissioners Eddie Lim and Connie Leon-Kreps voting against it, while Rodriguez sided with the mayor.

Rodriguez proposed another choice for interim city manager: political publicist Randall Hilliard. Only Esquijarosa supported his motion, which deadlocked at 2-2. "I think you're totally out of your mind. We're in the middle of budget," Lim said. "From what I've heard about Randall Hilliard, there's nothing positive about him." Hilliard is no stranger to North Bay Village politics. He ran former Mayor Oscar Alfonso's winning campaign in 2008. The city hired him as a public relations consultant last year, paying him \$15,000 for six months of work. He's also known for his role as a bribe-payer-turned-FBI-informant in a 1997 scheme that implicated Monroe County officials. The commission also disagreed on a salary for a new city manager. The search committee proposed a \$180,000-per-year package. Esquijarosa said the city should pay no more than \$115,000-a-year plus benefits. The commission deferred the matter until the next meeting.

Meanwhile, Esquijarosa has until Monday to submit a statement in response to the effort to recall her. Last week, the county certified the 414 signatures collected by former commissioner Al Blake to recall the mayor. According to Florida law, Blake needed at least 275 signatures of the city's 2,748 registered voters to force a recall election. On July 4, he submitted the 414 signatures.

The next commission meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 9 in the City Commission Chambers, 1700 Kennedy Cswy., #132.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 6, 2011

Police chief will take over as interim manager on June 14 - North Bay Village Police Chief Robert Daniels will replace City Manager Bob Pushkin after his retirement, effective June 14.

Author/Byline: PAMELA DUQUE

Following North Bay Village City Manager Bob Pushkin's recent announcement that he would retire later this month, city commissioners tapped Police Chief **Robert Daniels** to serve as interim. The change will be effective June 14, Pushkin's last day.

Commissioners Paul Vogel, Connie Leon-Kreps and Eddie Lim, who proposed the appointment, voted for **Daniels** at last week's commission meeting; Mayor Corina Esquijarosa and Commissioner Frank Rodriguez voted against his appointment. "I believe this process needs to be somewhat more transparent than today appointing somebody," Esquijarosa said, adding that her main concern was developing the city's budget, which must be approved by September. Last week, preliminary estimates from the county tax appraiser's office showed that North Bay Village's property tax base declined by 7 percent in 2011 over 2010. It was one of the largest declines in the county.

Esquijarosa said **Daniels'** expertise was not in developing city budgets and writing grant proposals. "Your resume is very impressive; I have no problems with you being an interim manager if it was any other time in the year," she told him at the commission meeting. "I have reservations because we don't have much time left for the budget to be submitted. I'm concerned because you will have to make tough decisions in this budget." Rodriguez, who has often questioned the spending in the police department, agreed with Esquijarosa, asking **Daniels** how he would handle a budget that does not raise taxes.

Daniels, 54, said he wants to develop a budget with equal cuts throughout each department. "Sometimes there are tough decisions, but I'm not going to hold back whether it is the police department because I'm the chief, or other department," he told the commission. "We all have tough decisions and my job is to bring you a balanced budget with realistic cuts so we don't have tax increases."

North Bay Village took a hit last year with property values declining by 28 percent, the second-steepest drop after Homestead. In October, the city cut a youth program, outsourced the garbage pick-up service and raised taxes. Pushkin did not say why he was retiring, other than noting "it's time to move on." He has been the city manager since July, when the previous commission approved a resolution to name Pushkin city manager after serving as assistant city manager and interim city manager since 2005.

"I don't have plans of submitting applications for a permanent position; I'm very happy being the chief," **Daniels** said. Lim said **Daniels'** extensive resume qualifies him for the position.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Leon-Kreps, meanwhile, likes **Daniels** for his knowledge of the city. “I don’t think our city can afford or endure going through interim city managers who are not familiar with our city,” Leon-Kreps said. “Chief **Daniels** has brought up his department to a professional level that we have not had in the last few years. If we have an individual here who already is familiar with our city, why are we going to go to the outside?” Vogel agreed.

Daniels, whose \$109,000 in an annual salary makes him the city’s highest-paid employee, will temporarily be both the police chief and manager. He said he’ll appoint someone to replace him in the police department if the situation deems it necessary. His salary will not change during this period.

The city’s official search for a new city manager will close on June 24. At the next regular commission meeting, commissioners will create a seven-member review committee, consisting of five residents representing each island and two outside professionals. The committee will recommend applicants to the commission, who will vote on the candidates. On July 26, commissioners will conduct public interviews of their finalists. A final choice will be made Aug. 9. The next commission meeting will take place at 7 p.m. June 14 in the commission chambers, 1700 Kennedy COSWAY., #132.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 28, 2011

City Commission meeting ends abruptly - The city commission meeting resulted in one group walking out and the mayor abruptly ending the meeting, after three commissioners did not support the group's call to revise the charter.

Author/Byline: PAMELA DUQUE

A newly formed activist group demanded North Bay Village commissioners to change the city charter or face a recall, but their requests were heeded by only two of the five commissioners at Wednesday's commission meeting. North Bay Village Voice, headed by city resident Kevin Vericker, requested four changes to the city's charter and an independent audit of the city's police department.

The charter changes the group sought were:

- To require a super-majority vote of the commission to raise taxes and grant tax concessions to developers.
- To require a five-member review board to approve city purchases over \$10,000.
- To require a five-member review board to approve nonunion employment contracts.
- To prohibit post-electoral employment or contracts with the city by all elected officials for three years following their service with the city.

The commission took up the police audit request, along with the charter amendments on the taxes and the \$10,000 purchase issue. None of the three measures passed. Mayor Corina Esquijarosa and commissioner Frank Rodriguez supported the two charter amendments, while commissioners Eddie Lim, Connie Leon-Kreps and Paul Vogel voted against them. After the first three requests by North Bay Village Voice were denied, Vericker stormed out of the meeting. Esquijarosa immediately ended the meeting. "The meeting was a travesty," Vericker said in an email to The Herald on Thursday. "The three, Vogel, Lim and Kreps had clearly prepared their stance together prior to the meeting and deprived residents of the opportunity to vote on these changes." Lim disputed Vericker's assessment: "He's a very dangerous man and he's making false accusations. We are all aware of the Sunshine Law and we don't talk about the issues outside."

Lim, Leon-Kreps and Vogel said they were concerned with the cost of the charter amendments. To make changes to the charter, the city would need to run a special election, which could cost the city up to \$25,000, according to city staff. North Bay Village took a financial hit when property values declined 26 percent last year, the second-biggest drop in the county after Homestead. The three commissioners also said a charter review board is needed before any charter revisions were made. Vericker said the group will start a recall against Vogel, Lim and Leon-Kreps later this year. Nancy Sonnet-Selwyn, a member of North Bay Village Voice, filed a memo with the city clerk on April 22 to begin a recall drive against Vogel. Meanwhile, only one resident not connected to either North Bay Village Voice or Citizens for Full Disclosure supported the measure to conduct an outside assessment of the Police Department. "I'm really

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

happy with the department,” said city resident Doris Acosta. “But I feel there’s a lack of transparency. I don’t see the problem of bringing someone from the outside to tell us what we’re doing right or wrong.” Other residents disagreed. “I’m not supporting this,” said resident Donna Verski, who told commissioners she was once married to a police officer. “The Police Department is managed by the manager, not by the commission.”

Lim, Leon-Kreps and Vogel argued that Police Chief **Robert Daniels** has been managing the Police Department adequately, and any intervention by the commission would result in micromanagement.

Vericker said the Police Department is spending too much money to conduct investigations on personnel issues, and believes the department will go over budget this year. The Police Department receives 70 percent of the city’s budget. “Passing this resolution will establish that the commission runs the city,” he told commissioners. “They will provide the help and guidance that the police chief needs to finally unite this department,” Vericker said. Leon-Kreps disagreed: “The micromanaging of our administration, or by our administration, increases the liability of unnecessary expenses.” Vogel agreed, saying commissioners should not manage the Police Department. Rodriguez countered: “I don’t call it managing the Police Department. If we are to succeed as a city, we need to take a harder look at how we are spending our money. This is absolutely necessary, we need to look at every corner of our city government.” Esquijarosa said the issue is not about the chief’s management, adding she’s happy with his work. “The cost of conducting investigations, labor issues, is draining the city,” she said. “The last amount I signed for the police was over \$30,000.”

But there’s a legal problem with the group’s demands, **Daniels** said, citing The Law Enforcement Bill of Rights. “Every officer is entitled to an investigation to clear their name, and if I fail to follow the statute, I’m in violation of that same law,” he told commissioners. “Such an action as demanded by North Bay Village Voice is illegal and unnecessary.” The commission unanimously agreed to create a citizens advisory board to assess the Police Department.

Meanwhile, the mayor’s issues are unresolved. Two activists, Al Blake and Fane Lozman, had asked her to resign by noon April 27, citing her failure to disclose financial information when she ran for office last year. She did not resign, and Lozman and Blake said that if she is not prosecuted, they will start a recall effort. The city clerk is researching whether such an effort can be undertaken in May or would have to wait until November, when Esquijarosa would have served a year. The Miami-Dade Property Appraiser’s Office cited the mayor last week for falsely claiming a homestead exemption for a Miami condo she was renting out. Florida law allows the homestead exemption to be granted only on a primary residence, not income-producing property. The appraiser’s office said she owes \$3,109.70 in back taxes and penalties and interest. She has to pay by May 20, or face a lien on the condo. Vericker, a supporter of Esquijarosa during last year’s mayoral run, said North Bay Village Voice does not support Lozman and Blake’s efforts to recall the mayor.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 25, 2010

NORTH BAY VILLAGE: New North Bay Village Police Department chief eager to mend staff, establish trust in community - Veteran police officer Robert Daniels, who has served in Boca Raton, Juno Beach and Buckeye, Ariz., has been hired to head the North Bay Village Police Department.

Author/Byline: CHRISTINA VEIGA

The North Bay Village Police Department is under new leadership. **Robert Daniels** has taken the helm of the department with hopes of reigning in spending, bridging gaps within the often-fractured department and reaching out to the community. "It's going to take all of us to move forward," **Daniels** said at his swearing-in ceremony last week. "I truly think this is a great organization." **Daniels** brings 31 years of police experience and a financial savvy to North Bay Village, which has been without a chief since March.

Daniels returns to South Florida after serving briefly as chief of police in Buckeye, Ariz. As assistant chief of police at the Boca Raton police department -- where he served for 12 years -- **Daniels** helped oversee a \$35 million budget. He also has a master's degree in public administration and is a certified government financial manager. "He's a talented professional," said Vice Mayor George Kane. "That's why I have faith in him."

Those qualifications will come in handy as **Daniels** helps prepare the department's budget -- which makes up more than half of the city's total budget. This year's cuts probably will include layoffs and furloughs as North Bay Village struggles with a 26 percent decline in property values, the second-highest decline in Miami-Dade County. "My job is to be able to continue delivering that high-quality service with less dollars," **Daniels** said.

Daniels also must work to make amends within the department, which has been split since a new union was voted in last year. Numerous internal affairs investigations have taken their toll on morale, some officers said. The new chief said he plans to meet individually with police officers in order to smooth out relations. "It's refreshing to know that at least this chief is not one-sided," Mayor Oscar Alfonso said.

The chief also plans on working with residents to help restore faith in the often criticized department. He wants to reach out to homeowners to put a "personal touch" on policing efforts. "We're here to be involved in the community and hopefully add value to the community," said **Daniels**, who counts photography as a hobby and enjoys spending time with his wife and son, who is a Cub Scout.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 18, 2010

Police chief hired in latest of shaky municipal shuffles

Author/Byline: CHRISTINA VEIGA

North Bay Village commissioners on Tuesday hired a police chief and continued to do a legal dance around the firing of their city attorney. Commissioners told their interim city manager to go ahead with the hiring of Chief **Robert Daniels**, even as concerns were raised about how much the city would pay for his salary. A contract has yet to be negotiated with the new chief, who will be sworn in Monday. **Daniels** has 31 years of experience with the Boca Raton and Juno Beach Police Departments, and served less than a year as police chief of Buckeye, Ariz. He resigned from that position, citing personal reasons and a pay cut.

Commissioners voted on the hiring without knowing how much **Daniels'** salary will be -- that still has to be negotiated. But residents worried that the new chief -- who left his position at Buckeye when his salary was cut from \$140,000 to about \$120,000 -- will cost more than the city can afford. "Folks, I think we have the right candidate, but the wrong time," Mayor Oscar Alfonso announced to the commission. "We cannot afford it."

But some cited **Daniels'** financial savvy -- he has a master's degree in public administration and is a certified government financial manager -- as reason to bring him on board. The department still hasn't realized budget cuts mandated for this fiscal year and faces layoffs and furloughs in the coming fiscal year. "This is a gentleman, I believe, we can't afford not to hire," said resident Steve Luben. "We have to take some serious looks at our police." Others argued that the department, rife with personal feuds and union quarrels, is in need of a leader. The police department has been without a chief since Roland Pandolfi resigned in March. "We can no longer go on with a table with one leg missing," said commissioner Reinaldo Trujillo.

As the clock ticked past midnight and commissioners packed up to head out of the meeting, city attorney Joe Geller handed out a resignation letter. In it, he proposed to resign after city elections in November. The letter also states that he will stay on as city attorney should that be the wish of the new commission, and recuses himself from any elections-related litigation which may arise.

In June, Trujillo ordered Interim City Manager Bob Pushkin to enter negotiations with the city attorney to orchestrate the lawyer's firing. Those negotiations have been unsuccessful. Geller insists he hasn't been fired, since no agreement has been reached. "This is exactly why he was fired: for playing games," Trujillo told The Miami Herald.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Robert Daniels** is listed below.]

<https://discover.pbcgov.org/criminaljustice/LEPCAgendaMinutes/LEPCAgenda050709.pdf>
May 7, 2009

PALM BEACH COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION
LAW ENFORCEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL
FINAL AGENDA

Clayton Hutchinson Agricultural Center
Exhibit Hall “B”
559 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, Florida

VI. Chairman’s Comments

- There will be a Law Enforcement only briefing regarding child predators at the conclusion of this meeting.
- The LEX Board of Directors Meeting scheduled to follow this meeting has been cancelled and will be rescheduled.
- Best wishes to Juno Beach Assistant Chief **Bob Daniels** as he leaves to become Chief in Buckeye Arizona.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
August 18, 2006

Council upgrades Juno budget
By Sarah Stover

With U.S. 1 improvements almost complete and \$369,000 in the contingency fund, Town of Juno Beach officials decided it was time to add some items to its budget. The proposed 2006-07 budget is \$6.9 million. The proposed tax rate is set at last year's rate of 3.4 percent but may decrease during discussions between now and September. The tax rate is set at \$3.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value for residents.

At the Aug. 8 council meeting, council members voted on a list of outstanding items that were not originally included in the budget. The council voted in favor of computer upgrades, a technology consultant, overlays on North Juno Lane, South Juno Lane, Jupiter Lane and Zenith Lane, an actuary study for the general employee pension plan, a roadside message board and aerators for Pelican Lake.

The town already has one road-side message board, but the need for another arose when U. S. 1 had to be closed in both directions because of improvements, so the town had to borrow one from another municipality, said town manager Jeff Naftal. The town's desire for technology upgrades and a consultant stems from wanting to resolve an issue within the current system. "The problem we have right now is, all of our computer needs for the Internet are through one system, so if one part malfunctions, they all do," Mr. Naftal said. The town hopes to keep outages to a bare minimum by hiring a consultant and adding software, servers and firewalls Mr. Naftal added.

After the voted items were added into the budget and deducted from the contingency fund, \$157,000 of the \$369,000 was left. The overage can be put into reserves, used to help decrease the tax rate or put toward other projects, finance director/assistant town manager Joseph LoBello said. The council will discuss what to do with the funds at its meeting on Aug. 23.

Some upgrades to the police department will be made this year thanks to forfeiture funds, which are funds from property seized or forfeited during arrests or investigations. These funds can only be used for items in law enforcement, Police Chief H.C. Clark, II, said. The funds will help pay for a portable range target system, an electronic fingerprint system and a child identification upgrade. Each officer has to be tested on their firearm ability every year, and Juno Beach does not have a true system for officers to practice on, chief Clark said.

Palm Beach County has a range officers practice on off Southern Boulevard in West Palm Beach. The portable system tracks the officers' hits, so they do not have to look over paper figures attached to the target boards anymore, assistant police chief **Bob Daniels** said. The electronic fingerprint system and child identification upgrade work hand-in- hand. Instead of the old system of having someone who is arrested dip their fingers into ink and then rolling them

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Robert James Daniels
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onto a piece of paper, they will now place their fingers onto a machine, which will show if they have a previous record. As part of the child identification kit, children will have their fingerprints uploaded into the system.

The police department is also getting some new furniture, firearms and an evidence- processing chamber. The chamber will probably be located in the public works compound behind Seminole Plaza, Chief Clark said. Previously officers relied on the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office to process evidence.

Other grant-funded projects are being discussed. A \$300,000 grant for a lighting project along Ocean Drive North has been awarded and is waiting for permit approval from the county. The lights will be north of Donald Ross Road and are turtle friendly; they will only shine west, so adult turtles and hatchlings will not be disoriented by them, Mr. LoBello said.

The council will discuss the budget at its Aug. 23 meeting. First reading is scheduled for Sept. 14.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
March 3, 2006

Town welcomes new assistant chief

By Sarah Stover

Meet **Bob Daniels**. He's the new assistant chief of police at the Juno Beach Police Department. Mr. **Daniels** was sworn in at a Town Council meeting on Feb. 22 by Chief Skip Clark. He began working for the department Feb. 6. Mr. **Daniels** worked as a police officer in Boca Raton for 27 years. His experience was a key factor in his selection.

The town received between 16 to 20 applications, narrowed the choices to five and then two, said Chief Clark. "After a discussion (about the final two) interviews, we both decided that **Bob** was the best fit for our town. So far, that has proved to be true," said town manager Jeff Naftal. "He's been in the position before, so he has a really good working knowledge of the position, so it was less of a transition," said Chief Clark.

While Juno is smaller than what Mr. **Daniels** is used to, it has its own advantages. "The environment is a nice town. I've known Chief Clark for a number of years, and I always thought he was a progressive chief," he said. As assistant chief, he oversees the daily operations of road patrol, investigation and dispatch. "There's a lot of talent here. A lot of the new technologies are being employed, so it's an exciting time to be an officer," he said.

Assistant Chief **Daniels** is commuting to work for now, but is looking to move closer to the area or into Juno Beach. "I hope to serve Juno Beach until my last dying breath," he said. He has some goals, both long- and short-term, regarding his work with the town. "Right now, short-term (goals are) to learn as much as I can about the agency and the community we serve. For long-term, I would like to take the knowledge I receive from Chief Clark and the town manager to increase production and efficiency of the agency."

Mr. **Daniels** said he knew he wanted to be a police officer in high school. "I got a calling, as I say. I have the ambition of life as a public servant. I have enjoyed it," he said. His fiancé, Michelle Melkin, pinned the badge onto his uniform after Chief Clark swore him in. "It's a very fortunate situation the town manager and chief have put me into," he said. "He's acclimating very well. I think he's a really great addition to our team," said Chief Clark.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
November 24, 2005

FRUSTRATED INTERIM FAU POLICE CHIEF QUILTS

Author/Byline: BILL DOUTHAT

Robert Daniels has resigned as head of the Florida Atlantic University Police Department after holding the position of interim police chief for more than five months. In his resignation letter, **Daniels** expressed frustration that the university is taking so long to name a permanent police chief to lead the 45 officers of the university's police force. "I have decided to withdraw from the process and resign my position with the university," **Daniels** said in his letter dated Monday and released by the university Wednesday. **Daniels** was among candidates seeking the permanent job.

A university spokeswoman said Dennis Crudele, associate vice president of financial affairs, will oversee the department until a permanent chief is selected. The department polices FAU campuses in Palm Beach, Broward, Martin and St. Lucie counties.

Daniels, an assistant police chief in Boca Raton before joining FAU in February as deputy chief, was named interim chief in June after the dismissal of former Chief Dolores Danser. **Daniels** had retired from the Boca Raton Police Department after 27 years of service. In his letter, **Daniels** said university officials told him that a chief would be picked by early October. "Unfortunately there has been a delay in making the final selection, long past the promised date," **Daniels** wrote. **Daniels** could not be reached for comment.

University spokeswoman Aileen Izquierdo said the university is reviewing applications and scheduling interviews for the job, but no hiring deadline has been set.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
June 21, 2005

**SEX HARASSMENT ALLEGED AT FAU - GRAPHIC POLICE REPORT CITES
FORMER OFFICER**

Author/Byline: Leon Fooksman

An internal Florida Atlantic University police investigation has found evidence that a lieutenant who resigned nearly two weeks ago sexually harassed three co-workers. In graphic detail, one of the women told an investigator that she was groped and touched last year by then-Lt. Darren Kirch at Patch Reef Park in Boca Raton during her first day on the job. She allowed it to happen because she feared losing her job or having Kirch take action against her, she told the investigator. She didn't want to complain to FAU Police Chief Dolores Danser because of Danser's friendship with Kirch, she told the investigator. The investigation report released Monday said Kirch allegedly made explicit remarks and advances toward two other female FAU police employees, including some on-duty incidents. One of those women also said she didn't feel comfortable reporting the harassment because Kirch and Danser "are best friends." Kirch resigned June 8 for unspecified reasons and Danser did not have her contract renewed last week. Danser, an almost 15-year employee of the department who earns about \$95,000 a year, is awaiting another job with the university. Her supervisors did not explain why they did not renew her contract, which expires at the end of the month. The internal affairs report is not clear on what, if any, connection Danser's employment status has to do with Kirch's case. But a police official said Monday that Danser was not one of the victims of sexual harassment.

Deputy Chief **Bob Daniels**, who conducted the investigation, will serve as acting chief until the university conducts a national search to fill the position.

The university's equal opportunity programs office is conducting a separate investigation concerning conduct within the Police Department. Kirch, who was hired in 1995 and earned \$58,000 a year, defended his actions by telling the investigator that his relationships with the women mostly involved flirtation and were consensual. But later, he admitted his comments and actions should not have happened, according to the report. Kirch was married at the time but told one of the women he had an "open relationship" with his wife. He acknowledged that he was aware of the department's and university's sexual harassment policy and attended training on the subject, according to the report. Kirch and his lawyer could not be reached for comment despite multiple attempts by telephone. The investigation found evidence that Kirch violated the university's code of ethics and other rules. He had been on administrative leave when he resigned voluntarily. The findings will be sent to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, which will review Kirch's law enforcement certification. Two of the women Kirch was accused of harassing still work for the department. Kirch did not directly supervise the three women, but one woman was assigned to him for orientation and equipment. Kirch had been investigated for other sexual harassment complaints but none could be supported, the report said.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
March 7, 2005

MOVING UP - ROBERT J. DANIELS

Name: **Robert J. Daniels**

Position: Deputy police chief for Florida Atlantic University

Place of business: Boca Raton

Recent accomplishments: **Robert "Bob" Daniels** was drawn to police work much like others are called to religious professions. "I had a calling for it, and for public service, and I've enjoyed every single day of it," he says.

Daniels, recently retired from the Boca Raton Police Services Department after 27 years. Prior to that, he worked for the Davie Police Department. He was promoted to sergeant in 1983, lieutenant in 1996, captain in 1999 and assistant chief in 2000. Last month he took a new job as deputy chief of police at Florida Atlantic University.

Daniels was born in Pennsylvania but moved to South Florida with his parents when he was 9 months old. "My whole family was in the construction field but a good friend of the family went into law enforcement and that's what I've wanted to do since high school," he says. **Daniels'** love of police work apparently rubbed off on his son Bob, who's now a Boca Raton police officer. "He had a calling, too," the older **Daniels** says, "and he's extremely happy." While he enjoyed his work with the Boca force, **Daniels** says he was in a retirement program that would have forced him to leave the city in two years. Taking the FAU job meant he wouldn't have to move, he could work on a campus he knew well, and his son would get more of a chance to shine on his own merits.

Daniels' call to service isn't exclusive to police work. He was ordained as a deacon at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Boca and is very involved in church work on the weekends. "I've always had a strong faith that I attribute to my wife and my mom," he said.

Daniels, second in command of FAU's police department under Chief Delores Danser, is responsible for operations, traffic and parking. The department has 45 sworn positions and 50 civilian jobs to protect students and faculty at the university's seven campuses in Palm Beach, Broward, Martin and St. Lucie counties.

FAU has a low crime rate, and **Daniels** plans to keep it that way. But **Daniels** stresses that students need to be vigilant, and that student safety is his top concern. "The average college student is away from home and they think they are invincible. We need to make them as safe as possible. If they put their dorm information and phone information on the Web, it could cause problems." **Daniels** says he's pleased to have the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills he has developed with the city in a campus environment. "The university staff has welcomed me with open arms," he says.

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Education: B.S., business administration; M.S., public administration, Florida Atlantic University. He also has completed training programs with the FBI and the Association of Government Accountants.

Age: 48

Personal: Married 30 years to Ellie. They live in Boca Raton and have three children: Rene, who is married and lives in Indiana; Bob Jr., a police officer in Boca Raton; and Robyn, a college student in Missouri.

Hobbies: Photography and working as a deacon at St. Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church.

Career highlight: "The day that I got to swear in my son as a police officer for the city of Boca Raton."

Quote: "I look to bring out the best in people, highlighting their strengths and turning their weaknesses into strengths."

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Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
September 29, 2004

BOCA'S HOTLINE HELPED RESIDENTS COPE WITH STORM

Author/Byline: STEPHANIE SLATER

In the aftermath of Hurricane Frances, a phone call came into the city's information hotline from a bank whose client, a blind woman, was stranded in her fourth-floor Boca Teeca apartment with only crackers to eat. Assistant City Clerk Diane King, who coordinated the hotline, immediately called her mother, who also lives there. "Do you want to be a good Samaritan?" King asked. Claire St. Jean climbed four flights of stairs and brought the elderly woman a sandwich. The call was one of 13,882 answered during a 10-day period by city employees manning eight phone lines in the Citizen Information Center at the Boca Raton Emergency Operations Center. Boca Raton was the only municipality in Palm Beach County to provide such a service. Employees gave updates on ice distribution, dispelled rumors about damage, listened to frustrated residents without power, and tried to calm the concerns of adult children whose parents refused to evacuate their beach condos. "We had calls from as far as Poland and Germany from people wanting to know how bad it was," King said.

The EOC, headquartered at the Municipal Services building on Northwest First Avenue, was a lot like mission control, said Mayor Steven Abrams, who slept there the night of the storm. Representatives from the city's key departments were stationed at desks and posted information onto white dry-erase boards as they received it. Assessment teams were deployed to identify damage. The data was compiled on a computer and recorded on a plastic map of the city. Downed trees were marked in green; downed powerlines in red. "We started with the most important - getting the streets accessible for police and fire vehicles, getting to electrical lines that were down," City Manager Leif Ahnell said. Throughout the clean-up period, officials also held 8 a.m. meetings, 1 p.m. conference calls with the county's EOC and afternoon briefings to discuss plans for the following day. At least two dozen employees worked at the EOC, including Public Information Officer Neil Evangelista, who provided newspapers and TV and radio stations with continuous updates on the city's status. Municipal Services Director Bob DiChristopher worked with Florida Power & Light to identify downed powerlines and coordinated debris clean-up with Pompano Beach contractor Ash Britt. The clean-up is estimated to have cost \$6 million.

The Police Fire Communications Center received 2,048 calls Saturday, Sept. 4, of which 230 were 911 calls. That's three times as many as usual, said Lt. Raul Travieso, communications coordinator. Firefighters, working 48-hour shifts, responded to respiratory emergencies, car accidents, people suffering from heat exhaustion and those injured while cleaning up debris. Six structure fires the Monday after the storm set a record for the department. "We really need to do some public service work to educate the community," said Deputy Fire Chief Jack McCart. "As soon as the storm is over, we want people to take down at least one set of shutters. In the case a structure fire, it hampers our efforts and certainly their escape capability from the house."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The hurricane lowered the city's crime rate, said Assistant Police Chief **Bob Daniels**. People stayed home, making it difficult for crimes of opportunity, and about 80 officers were on patrol at all times. There were no looting incidents, though there was a burglary at a jewelry store on North Federal Highway. The suspects removed plywood and broke a window, stealing \$25,000 worth of Rolex watches. They were later arrested by Davie police. About 15 people were arrested for curfew violations, however, in most cases the person had committed some other offense. "Traffic was our biggest problem, but our accident rate was lower than usual because we had so many officers out there directing traffic," **Daniels** said.

Department heads are now putting together after-action reports that will identify items in the hurricane preparedness plan that need tweaking, said Jackie Mabesa, a research and development specialist for the fire department who also coordinates the city's emergency plan.

Construction is already under way to enlarge the EOC.

According to the mayor, the biggest challenge was the Federal Emergency Management Agency, whose job was "locking up" critical supplies, such as fuel, generators, ice and tarps, and directing the items to the hardest hit areas. The city had to import generators from Seattle and ice from Virginia. "We still needed fuel or our power plant and wastewater plant would've shut down," Abrams said. "We have to look at what steps the city can take now to be even more self-sufficient . . . maybe investing in building our own fuel storage tanks or entering into contracts with private oil companies."

Ahnell said the tendency for TV and radio stations to focus coverage on the hardest hit areas also was an issue. "People in Boca still needed information and we were competing with other municipalities to get it out," Ahnell said. Another obstacle was making sure the information was correct and consistent. "We had two stations report boil water orders for specific neighborhoods and another station said it was city-wide. It was a significant challenge," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
July 14, 2001

BOCA DIVIDED ON ALLEY'S FUTURE - MERCHANTS SAY THEY'RE VITAL TO BUSINESS

Author/Byline: C. Ron Allen

Trendy boutiques and doctors' offices line much of South Federal and Dixie highways, two main thoroughfares in this fashionable city's downtown. But in the area between these roads is a little-known and somewhat seedy alley that has reignited a long-festering debate between city officials and merchants. That is: Are most alleys grimy relics peopled by the homeless and thieves? Or, when properly maintained, are they the capillaries of a healthy downtown, useful for merchants, drivers and even pedestrians?

Alleys were once as essential to cities and neighborhoods as fire hydrants and sidewalks. But these back corridors have fallen out of favor, at least with Boca Raton City Council member Bill Glass and many others who make the decisions on how this city will look. "Over the years, I know when I grew up, alleys were a part of the whole environment," Glass said at a recent Community Redevelopment Agency meeting. "I think over the years [it] was determined that they are conducive to criminal activity and pedestrians that you really don't want at night."

For most of the past half century, alleys have been slowly disappearing in American cities. Yet, with the advent of the "New Urbanism" doctrine of planning, which advocates pedestrian-friendly downtowns, and revivals of city centers across the country, alleys are being reconsidered. In several Palm Beach County downtowns -- including Delray Beach, Lake Worth, West Palm Beach and Palm Beach -- where strolling is a popular pastime, alleys have long been a part of the local landscape and of people's memories. "Most of all our utilities -- water, sewer and power -- are in our alleys, primarily in the rear of the building and in the middle of the block," said Ray Smith, planning director for Lake Worth. "That keeps them off the streets so we don't have power lines running up and down our streets." Smith said many planners "really talk up the use of alleys because it allows you to get a lot of the maintenance [and] institutional kind of traffic out of and away from the front of the building." Delray Beach relies on its well-maintained downtown alleys to get traffic off congested roads such as Atlantic Avenue and back to parking lots.

Though some cities still use their garbage trucks to collect trash in alleys, the trend in recent decades has been to close off such back lanes, thereby absolving the city from any responsibility for service or maintenance. The Boca Raton alley that has focused attention on the issue runs from Southeast First Street down to Southeast Eighth Street. It already has been divided by the sale of one block from Northeast Second Street to Northeast Third Street. The appearance of much of the alley seems to validate Glass' viewpoint.

Sections of the alley, which is about 2,016 feet long, are riddled with garbage and laced with potholes. The city's homeless find a haven there and "Dumpster divers" also mine trash bins

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

along the strip. The block to be closed once housed the Boca News. Since the newspaper moved to a newer building on Congress Avenue in July 1999, the building has been vacant. The building's bay, which abuts the alley, is littered with garbage. Merchants along the alley, however, said that despite the lack of maintenance, they need the alley for their deliveries, garbage pickup and as an employee entrance. Closing the section of the alley will take a chunk out of the passageway, merchants complain. Cars will no longer be able to go straight through. They would have to go east or west to Federal or Dixie then cut back to continue their journey.

Even though, according to city records, this is the first petition to close part of an alley that has come before the City Council, usually such petitions spring from a property owner wishing to convert a portion of the alley to an extension of his lot, making a slightly larger building possible, planners said.

Boca Raton Mayor Steven Abrams vehemently opposes the practice. Abrams said he has a "philosophical problem" with closing the alley. "I think that you're losing a great network when you abandon an alleyway, especially in the downtown," said Abrams, who was outvoted 3-2 in a Community Redevelopment Agency board meeting to keep the alley open. While the action must now go to the City Council to be official, the council acts as the agency's board.

Commissioner Carol Hanson was Abrams' other supporter. Abrams said he is suspicious of the city's latest effort to "revitalize" the downtown. "I am fearful that it will be a domino effect and that we are going to lose that whole strip, which runs a good distance through our downtown and I think it's been very useful," Abrams said. Boca Raton's development director, Jorge Camejo, and Abrams said they are not surprised at efforts to abandon the alley. They said they foresaw it more than a decade ago when both were neophytes on the city government. In 1987, the CRA approved a map showing the alleys in the city that the agency thought should be targeted for closure.

Armed with statistics from the city's Police Department, Abrams wants to debunk Glass' notion that the alley at issue harbors crime. Though crime statistics are not kept by alley, "From June 2000 to June 2001, we identified two cases in which the alley was specifically a factor, a business burglary and a loitering and prowling arrest," acting Chief of Police **Robert J. Daniels** wrote in a July 5 memo. **Daniels** also provided reports showing there were more than a dozen crimes in the surrounding area during the same period.

Some local business operators say there is no reason to worry about safety and alleys. "I've been here 38 years and there's never been a crime," said Dan Garber of Boca Raton Printing Co.. "I normally work late at nights. You might get some hangouts at the restaurants next door, but apart from that, we haven't had any problems. "Closing the alley would kill us. All of our delivery trucks use the alleyway," said Garber, whose company is on the Fourth Street block.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
December 9, 1993

BOCA POLICE PUSH SAFETY SEATS AND SOBER DRIVING

By JIM Di PAOLA

Don't drink and drive. Don't drive without buckling up, and for gosh sakes, don't drive without having your child strapped into a restraint seat. These are the life-saving messages the Boca Raton police will be persistently preaching for the next month. And they are backing up their words with action. A three-pronged program by police about safe driving for the holidays is under way. The officers are seeking the public's help.

Police are looking for old restraint seats from families whose children have outgrown them. "We'll take them and clean them up, and we'll give them to people who need them," police spokesman Sgt. Mike McCutcheon said. Sgt. **Bob Daniels** came up with the idea to recycle the restraint seats about a month ago. "We thought this is a chance to really make a difference," **Daniels** said.

Nationally, three children die and 260 are injured in car crashes each day, according to statistics from the Palm Beach County Safety Council. In Florida, the chances of children dying in a crash are twice as great when they are not in restraint seats. But the restraints can be costly. An infant seat - which can safely secure a baby under 22 pounds - costs about \$35. For a restraint that handles more than 22 pounds, the cost can jump as high as \$85.

State law says all children under 6 must be in a restraint while riding in a vehicle. Violators are fined \$155. **Daniels** said that while on patrol, he has found that many offenders of the child-restraint law were families who could not afford the seats. This program offers an alternative for those families. "When we give out the seats, an officer will tell the family how to install them properly," **Daniels** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
April 27, 1992

'POLICING' KIDS POLICE PROGRAM STEERS CHILDREN FROM CRIME, GANGS.

Author/Byline: By A.D. BURCH

BOCA RATON -- The question was simple. Before joining the New Pines enrichment program, did you bully or beat up people? "No," he said, then shrugged his nine-year-old shoulders. Are you sure? "Maybe I did. Sometimes," he said while kicking up tracks of sand. One more time. Did you give your buddies a hard time? "OK. Yes. But not anymore. I stopped fooling around. The officers say we should stay out of trouble and out of fights," he said matter-of-factly. The young boy got the message.

The program works. Just ask Jackie. Or Jennifer. Or Jason. Or Dennis. "The program keeps me out of trouble," said one 11-year-old. Stern, tough talk from four Boca Raton community officers are all in a typical day's work in the New Pines program for the youth of the Delray Manors/New Pines neighborhood in north Boca Raton. The four-month-old program offers children an alternative to drugs, crime and gangs. The program operates during one of the most vulnerable times in a child's daily routine: between 4 and 6 p.m., when they are unsupervised. "That is the time when children can go astray. Additionally, many of these children are straddling the fence, getting ready to decide if they want a positive life or life in the streets. We are helping them make the right choice," said Officer Wayne Barton, who created and coordinates the program. He patterned it after the after-school program for Pearl City children. Between 30 and 50 children meet at Sand Pine Park on Newcastle Street, which forms the southern border of the neighborhood. The working-class area is bounded by Coventry Street on the north and Federal and Dixie highways east and west. The children, between the ages of 5 and 17, participate in activities like bowling, picnics, trips to the beach and tours of the police station. They are encouraged to excel in school and to stay away from drugs. They hear the spiel from police, parents and community leaders.

The program has been financed through fund-raisers and personal donations, but officers hope to get a \$98,971 grant from the Children's Service Council. The City Council preliminarily approved the grant request recently, and the council is just waiting for word from the agency, said Sgt. **Bob Daniels**, who heads the community police unit.

For the officers who deal with these children daily, the project is a way to break down stereotypical images of police as intimidating, gun-toting Dirty Harry types. "I think one of the biggest benefits is to get to know us police officers on a personal basis," said Officer Vinny Nava. "Then the kids realize we are people who care rather than just somebody driving in a squad car." Added Officer Jeff Kelly: "We want the kids to know we do more than just arrest people." Boca Raton Police Chief Pete Petracco said the goal is also to break down the fear of police and to provide preventive guidance. "We would like to deal with children now, rather than once they are in the system," he said. An added benefit is that the children have become more racially sensitive. "This program teaches them to respect themselves and each other," said Angela

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
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Hudson, mother of two children in the program. "They used to call each other derogatory names. Now, they speak properly, or not at all."

On a recent afternoon, the children gathered at a couple of park benches and discussed the merits of the program. They were honest. Brutally honest. "Me and my brother used to steal from other people and tear up our mother's jewelry. I guess you could say we were bad. Now the only person I beat up is my brother," one 8-year-old said. Barton said incidences of vandalism, truancy and fights have decreased, though specific figures were not available. "I think we are making a real difference," said Officer Wayne Boxer. "A lot of the kids come from families with problems. Sometimes they are exposed to things like drugs. We give them a choice."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
April 3, 1992

POLICE TRAINING FOCUSES ON ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME BOCA OFFICERS' SESSION STRESSES AWARENESS

By: NEIL SANTANIELLO

BOCA RATON -- On the second floor of the police station one morning last week, 27 officers assembled for a training session. As the class got under way, it became clear the officers were not there to learn about traditional police things such as firearms or arrest procedures. Nor were they going to be briefed on the latest crime wave. Instead, the group listened to Capt. Linda Forst, a road-patrol supervisor, talk about ... pesticides. And water pollution. And recycling. "This is probably ... unique compared to the training we've had in the past," said Sgt. **Bob Daniels** during a break in Forst's four-hour "environmental awareness" class.

Swept up in the green revolution, police departments have started teaching their officers how to handle environmental crimes. The majority of Boca Raton's officers start such training in October. But first, the officers are learning how they can do their part to save the Earth. "There are little things we can do in everyday life to make a difference," Forst told the class. "You are very visible out there. People look to you as role models." Forst asked the class, "What are the world's most pressing ecological problems?" She got back several answers: pesticides, water pollution, ozone depletion. And "tires, tons and tons of tires." Later, the class watched two environmental videos, including one created by the Environmental Defense Fund. Forst said she conceived the environmental awareness class as a project for a graduate course she's taking in adult education at Florida Atlantic University. With Boca Raton Police Chief Peter Petracco's consent, she said she started teaching the class in January to the Police Department's civilian workers. Now she is instructing the department's uniformed and plainclothes officers.

Forst starts the class by handing out plastic blue-and-white coffee mugs and asking officers to use them in place of paper or foam cups. She also gives officers reading material: magazine articles and excerpts from books that contain such information as how to concoct Earth-friendly alternatives to insect repellent and what toxins are found in tap water. During the class last week, Forst told fellow officers she used to order two large cups of coffee from Dunkin Donuts during night duty until she realized "I was throwing those two Styrofoam cups into a landfill." Teaching police about how to be green-minded at home is a good place to start their training on environmental crime, said Forst, who practices recycling at home and is a Sierra Club member. "It gives them the desire to enforce the (environmental) laws," she said. Anonymous evaluations handed in at the end of every session show most officers find the class useful, she said. A few have responded by saying it did not seem relevant to police work, she said.

Daniels said he thought the class appropriate because he occasionally gets questions about recycling from city residents. Lt. Bob Hoffman, too, did not find the class out of character for police training. "We are human beings before we are police officers," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Robert James Daniels
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
April 19, 1987

REPEAT OFFENDERS MAKE LIST REPORT KEEPS TABS ON YOUTHFUL CRIMINALS

Author/Byline: By JEAN DUBAIL

For many youths arrested on minor criminal charges, a trip to the police station and a tour of the jail are enough to discourage them from ever again daring to break the law. Others, despite frequent court appearances, counseling and repeated terms in "reform school," are constantly rearrested. These youths represent just a fraction of the population of youthful offenders, but they account for a disproportionate number of crimes committed by juveniles.

In an effort to keep track of these youths, who might otherwise slip through cracks in Palm Beach County's judicial system, the state attorney's office each month compiles a list of those arrested four times or more on felony charges. The list, the centerpiece of the 2-year-old Career Delinquency Intervention program (CDI), is distributed to juvenile-division officers from police agencies throughout the county.

Juveniles often are released to their parents' custody with stern warnings and a pat on the back. But with this list in hand, officials hope, police officers are less likely to give a break to someone who does not deserve it. Those who make the list, if arrested again, also are more likely to be prosecuted as adults. The existence of the list is therefore an acknowledgement that some youths cannot be helped by the usual means. "If the juvenile system was working for them, they wouldn't be such recidivists," said Jeanne Howard, chief assistant state attorney in the juvenile division. "There does come a time when we've done all we can for them," said Sheree Cunningham, a juvenile-division prosecutor. "They're just protected by virtue of their age."

In a typical month, the list includes almost 200 names. New names are added from time to time, while others are dropped as they turn 18 or are charged as adults. These are not vandals or runaways. Many have committed as many as 15 felonies, including burglary, armed robbery and rape. Many have drug problems. "Those kids who make one mistake -- they're not on this list," Cunningham said. "But there are certain people we cannot permit to remain on the streets."

Law enforcement officials say they are grateful for the information provided through CDI. "It helps us identify people who are geared toward a definite crime avenue," said Sgt. **Bob Daniels**, chief of the juvenile division of the Boca Raton Police Department. "I feel it's something that's been needed for a long time," said Ed Brewer, a supervisor in the Palm Beach County School Board's security system. "It seems like a get-tough approach is the only way to go these days," said Lake Worth Detective Sue Pults.

Unfortunately, Howard said, few of the county's 39 police agencies are equipped to make full use of the information supplied through CDI. Less than 10 agencies have juvenile divisions, and many of these comprise only one officer who works on juvenile cases part time, she said. "We

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cannot convince the communities of a need to set up a special unit or person to do juvenile prevention work," Howard said.

Of all the police agencies, the Palm Beach County school system's security force would seem to be most in need of CDI information. "If it's valuable to anyone, it's valuable to us," security director Johnny McKenzie said. But state law limits dissemination of information about juvenile offenders to parents, social workers and court and law enforcement personnel, McKenzie said. School principals are technically forbidden to receive it. In practice, however, juvenile officials "sort of turn their back and say, 'Give it to who you want,' " McKenzie said. "I think there is some communication between the security person and the (school) administration," McKenzie said. "There has to be." School officials are trying to get the state law changed, McKenzie said.

Experience with the CDI program also has made it clear that probation, counseling and commitment to an institution -- the usual methods of dealing with juveniles -- are not enough to deter some youths from the criminal life, Cunningham said. Juvenile officials are trying to organize a program whereby youths charged with three felonies would be taught to apply for and hold down jobs. If the program works, these youths would "purchase what they want instead of taking it from a person's house," Cunningham said.

Research Compiled by: Shannon Farr
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 8

Glenn A. Irby

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

January 23, 2025

Mr. Colin Baenziger
Mr. Ron Williams
2055 South Atlantic Avenue, Suite 504
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Sent via Email to Recruit28@cb-asso.com

Dear Mr. Baenziger and Mr. Williams:

I recently found out the Town of Juno Beach is seeking applicants for the position of Town Manager. Research of this area and town leads me to believe it would be a good fit for me and my family. Therefore, please accept this letter and accompanying resume as my application for this position.

My resume outlines my entire career, which began as a police officer, but later I decided that governmental management was a tract that I should pursue; however, I sought this goal in a rather unique way. The 'normal' things I accomplished included graduating from an accredited university with a Master of Public Administration, but the 'abnormal' included running for and being elected Mayor of a city while at the same time holding full time positions in another city as both Finance Director and Assistant City Administrator. I needed management experience and the Mayor's position was categorized as "strong"; there was no manager and the Mayor was charged with daily oversight of city operations. From Mayor I applied for and was appointed City Manager of Mascotte, FL; a city whose population was more than 51% Hispanic. During the two years there, we accomplished many things, and we were able to bridge both communication and logistical gaps with citizens that had existed for decades. I left Mascotte on very good terms to take a position with the Lake County Sheriff's Office as a civilian employee.

As the Senior Director of Staff Services, I was responsible for all non-law enforcement functions such as preparation and oversight of an annual budget of more than \$51 million and all inventory and coordination efforts between the jail and law enforcement. However, it did not take long for me to realize that municipal government was where I was meant to be. I applied for and was appointed as the City Manager of Umatilla, FL.

The position with Umatilla allowed me to flourish as a Manager and build a solid team, the Council and I were able to accomplish a great deal related to economic development during my tenure. Again, documentation is presented within my resume.

From Umatilla I applied for and was chosen as Apopka, FL City Administrator. Similar duties as a manager; however, this government is chartered as a Mayor-Council form, and I answered directly to the Mayor. I was with Apopka for three years and my resume highlights some grand things we accomplished and set in motion for the future.

After the election of a new Mayor in Apopka, my contract was terminated. I was fortunate to be selected as Town Manager for Edgewater where I was employed until September 20, 2024. It was an amicable severing of my contract for the most part by a 4-1 vote of the City Council without cause.

I have all the necessary qualifications required for this appointment, but I will bring much more to the position. Working most of my career in municipal government, I have developed strong private business relationships as well as intergovernmental ties that have assisted in moving several cities forward beyond anything previously experienced. I can and will do the same and more for Juno Beach if given the chance.

Sincerely,



Glenn A. Irby

GLENN A. IRBY

223 Two Oaks Drive, Edgewater, FL 32141

Cell: (352) 636-2113

E-Mail: glennirby75@gmail.com

SUMMARY

More than 30 years of local government experience with expertise in the following areas:

- Charter Review Oversight
- Media Relations
- Financial Operations and Budget
- Grants Administration
- Water and Sewer Utility Management
- Collective Bargaining
- Personnel Management
- Community Redevelopment
- Public – Private Partnerships
- Governmental Leadership
- Municipal Management
- Customer Service
- Land Use and Public Planning

An innovative leader with demonstrated and proven analytical, communications and organizational skills successfully using a participatory management style. Experienced in managing change and specializing in turnarounds. Achievement-oriented with foresight; a dedicated team player accustomed to working cohesively within an organizational framework.

RELEVANT LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

City Manager, City of Edgewater, FL

07/2019 – 09/2024

Edgewater is in southeast Volusia County on the shore of the beautiful Indian River and is approximately 24,000 residents strong. It covers nearly 25 square miles and is a full-service community with 225 employees. It is chartered as a Council-Manager form of government.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Manager:

- Appointed by the City Council and charged with the responsibility of coordinating and integrating the administrative and executive functions of the city as directed by the City Council and consistent with approved policies.
- Oversee the daily operations of more than 230 employees.
- Oversight of preparation and administration of the City’s operating and capital budgets, which for the current fiscal year totals \$70 million. \$19 million general fund, \$20 million for all utility funds and \$11 million in capital appropriations.

Achievements:

- When appointed to the position of City Manager with Edgewater, there was no fire or police chief, and morale in both departments was low. I was able to find excellent leadership in both departments and appointed new chiefs. I stressed the need for community involvement by both departments and both answered the call. The police department held the first ever National Night Out event, a Fishing with a Cop event (for children) and participated in reading events at the elementary schools. They also held a community pancake breakfast fundraising event to purchase equipment for the volunteer program. The fire department has participated in barbecue and chili competitions, parades, elementary school readings and other events throughout the community.
- Successful in persuading the City Council to reinstate a Police Traffic Motorcycle Division.

- Successful in persuading the City Council to allow the beginning of semi-automated solid waste collection and purchase of larger trucks. This new system will enable trucks to finish a complete route and empty them at the County landfill instead of making multiple trips to an antiquated city-owned transfer station.
- Successful in receiving several grant awards totaling millions to mitigate flooding, harden buildings, extend reuse water lines, and install new sidewalks.
- Negotiated a contract with an architect to design a new Public Works facility.
- Led renovation efforts to portions of an aging City Hall and Police Department.
- Supported efforts to provide the Police Department with a new training facility complete with a new classroom and office space for a Range Master. Once completed, the Police Department began hosting area wide law enforcement training.
- Saw the completion of renovations to the City's largest boat launch park damaged during a hurricane.
- Assisted a Council appointed Charter Review Committee which saw several voter supported changes.

Unemployed**July 2018 – February 2019****City Administrator, City of Apopka, FL****2015 - 2018**

Apopka is home to approximately 50,000 residents, covers more than 34 square miles and is the second largest city in Orange County, Florida (population 1,200,000). Located 12 miles northwest of Orlando, it is a full service community offering Centralized Water and Sewer, Community Development, Fire, Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, Police, Solid Waste Sanitation collection, Public Access Reuse Water for irrigation and Stormwater. Apopka is chartered as a Strong Mayor form of government.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Administrator:

- The City Administrator is appointed by the mayor and is responsible for coordinating and integrating the administrative and executive functions of the city as directed by the mayor and consistent with policy approved by the city council.
- Oversee daily operations including more than 400 employees.
- Oversight of preparation and administration of the City's operating and capital budgets, which for the current fiscal year is \$124 million.
- Negotiation with public and private sector entities on a variety of issues ranging from economic development and growth to service contracts.
- Responsible for the City's compliance with County, State and Federal regulations such as health, environment and EEOC.

Achievements:

- Successfully negotiated a Sales and Purchase Agreement for city owned land for the purpose of a private developer designing and constructing a new downtown center. The area is comprised of approximately 34 acres and when finished will showcase a multistory hotel, specialty shops, restaurants, public gathering places and other long awaited and desired amenities.
- Apopka is complemented by its proximity to Orlando and other suburbs. There are three major expressways entering Apopka from these areas: State Roads 414, 429 and 451. A new 120-bed hospital recently opened near the State Road 414 and it is expected to bring substantial growth

to an area that is now sparsely populated. Unfortunately, the Central Florida Expressway Authority did not plan for the new hospital and growth that will surely follow and failed to see a need for an interchange. Fortunately, an area developer and I recognized a need and opportunity. Together in an extremely complicated commitment, I was able to forge a Public Private Partnership with this developer to construct a half interchange to State Road 414 costing more than \$6.5 million.

- When I began work with Apopka, I was reintroduced to a DOS based computer platform and an extremely outdated financial software package. Over the course of the first year of employment, I directed transition to a Windows based environment. The finance department completed a full software conversion at this time. Some employees have been with the city for more than 25 years and have never experienced anything other than DOS. It was a true learning experience for them, but it is doubtful any wish to go back to the old way.
- Directed the retrofitting of a security system for City Hall. Until just recently, a person could walk in and access any area and office. Unfortunately, in today's world, this is not safe. Key cards, cameras and other additions were added for the safety of both customers and employees.
- Recently implemented a program whereby all Directors meet together with me every other week to discuss both new and ongoing projects. This has proven to be beneficial for not only me, but all the directors. Actually, it is a time departments have become proud of because they are each able to see on a large screen monitor their individual progress as well as progress of other departments. In a way, it has instilled a sense of pride.
- The city is currently near completion in construction of its fifth fire station and recently opened a sixth in temporary quarters offered by the new hospital on its property.
- This fiscal year will see continued construction on a new wastewater plant expansion. When complete, it will increase the current process of 4 million gallons a day to 8 million gallons (MGD) of raw sewage. Cost of the plant will be \$61 million. It is believed this capacity will see the City through at least 2028.

City Manager, City of Umatilla, FL Airport Manager

2006 – 2015

Umatilla is a city of 3,600 citizens covering approximately 3 square miles. It is located in northeast Lake County, Florida (population 301,000). While small, it offers a majority of the amenities of much larger cities such as Police, Fire, Public Library, Centralized Water and Sewer, Stormwater and a General Aviation Airport.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Manager:

- Chief executive officer of a municipal government with 39 employees and a \$7.5 million budget. Oversight responsibility for the following functions: Airport, Finance, Fire, General Services, Public Library, Parks and Recreation, Personnel, Planning and Zoning, Police, Roads and Streets, Stormwater drainage and Water and Sewer utilities and Sanitation.
- Implementation of City Council directed policy. Administration of the City's daily operations as well as identification and strategies toward resolution of issues and long range planning.
- Preparation and administration of the City's operating and capital budgets.
- Negotiation with public and private sector entities on a variety of issues ranging from economic development and growth to service contracts.

- Media representation of the City including news interviews for television as well as interviews with the print media and preparation of press releases.
- Responsible for the City's compliance with County, State and Federal regulations such as health, environmental and EEOC.
- Oversight of the City's General Aviation Airport as the Airport Manager.
- Comprehensive Plan development, i.e. zoning and code modification necessities

Achievements:

- Umatilla has a General Aviation airport that had not been profitable and relied on property taxes of the General Fund to operate prior to 2008. Today, this airport is fully operational on its own accord with 13 relatively new hangars and one large communal hangar. A fueling facility was added in early 2011 with the assistance of a public-private partnership. Today the airport has a new tie-down ramp for nine aircraft and a partial parallel taxiway added for safety. Since my appointment as Manager, the City has successfully utilized available grants from both the Florida Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration that have kept Airport funding match requirements to low minimums. Construction costs of the fuel facility alone were approximately \$200,000 of which the city paid only \$3,800 by using grants and a Public – Private Partnership. This airport now hosts a flight school and witnesses approximately 500 flight operations each month. Fuel sales average 5,700 gallons per month of which the city shares profit but not maintenance expense.
- Umatilla now hosts more festivals than ever, drawing thousands of visitors each year. These events include and old fashioned "Cracker Christmas in the Park"; Florida Black Bear Festival; Wing Cook-off competition; Barbecue Cook-off competition; Chili Cook-off Competition and Movies in the Park [a free event for the community and hosted by the City]. All events were either non-existent or being held in areas of the city not conducive to festival growth. Electrical upgrades to the park and direct involvement with community leaders saw these events come to the park and expand and grow with both participants and festival attendees.
- Began revitalization efforts of the Community Redevelopment Area [CRA] by developing a plan by which the money collected for this use could be used for its intended purpose – revitalization of the City's core downtown district. Since 2010 the CRA has seen a resurgence of interest not realized for at least 25 years prior.
- Finished a potable water reserve well and oversaw interconnection to the City's system. This project had been inactive for several years due to misconceptions and mindset that the City did not have the financial resources to "bring it on line".
- Worked directly with FEMA to address flooding of one major roadway and a service alley. The poor condition of the alley had caused businesses to flood for years and the major roadway became impassable to school buses as well as passenger vehicles. Both road and alley now drain and clear during the heaviest of downpours.
- Oversaw large scale redevelopment of the City's only sewer treatment plant. Designed and built during the 1970's, this plant was in dire need of rehabilitation. Through 2011 the total cost of redesign and rehabilitation of the plant was \$4.9 million. Of this amount, the City expended \$114,199 of its own money. The remainder of necessary funding was made possible through intergovernmental relationships forged with the State of Florida, which produced both grants and special budget appropriations by the Legislators.
- Umatilla is in the process of having two traffic signals installed along a major state road. These projects required a three-way intergovernmental relationship to be forged between the Florida Department of Transportation, County and the City of Umatilla along with negotiations with CSX

Railroad for the purchase of property owned by them. Willingness on the part of the City to allow redesign of City owned and maintained streets was paramount to the State allowing these signals, and understanding of these requirements by citizens and City Council was paramount.

- While small, Umatilla sees a need to grow and has identified specific areas outside its current boundaries that make sense to target for future annexation. Negotiations with a private developer will see another public-private partnership with the City to construct a large capital water line to serve one of these areas. Negotiations resulted in the water line being installed at no cost to city residents.
- Implemented the City's first Stormwater Utility whereby businesses and residents pay a monthly rate for future retrofitting of necessary Stormwater infrastructure either non-existent or in need of replacement.
- Because economic woes have not bypassed Umatilla, directions were given to department managers one year in advance to reduce or keep their budgets equal to the year prior. This direction kept Umatilla from experiencing sudden layoffs and allowed the City to continue a necessary level of operations.
- Informed the Council of the need and ability to leverage Infrastructure Sales Tax; revenue which is restricted to capital improvements and equipment, by utilizing short term debt to fund near term capital equipment acquisition, pledging future revenue streams. This endeavor has allowed outdated and unsafe equipment to be retired sooner and enabled the staff to produce more timely output.

Senior Director of Staff Services, Lake County Sheriff's Office, FL**2005 – 2006**

The Lake County Sheriff's Department is among the largest employers in Lake County.

Duties and Responsibilities of Senior Director of Staff Services:

- Chief Financial and Administrative civilian official for the Sheriff. The Lake County Sheriff's Office employed more than 700 employees. The Senior Director's position was established as one of three command staff positions directly below the Sheriff. This position was responsible for oversight of the business operations of the Sheriff's Office including budget and finance, purchasing, IT, personnel and payroll. The Sheriff's budget was \$51 million.

Achievements

- Oversaw and directed the first true census of this agency giving the Sheriff knowledge of existing staffing and at what levels. This enabled the Sheriff to know exactly where personnel were assigned and where additions or deletions in staffing were needed.
- Automated the operating budget for the agency making the annual process easier.

City Manager, City of Mascotte, FL**2004 – 2005**

The City of Mascotte is a full service community providing Police, Fire, Water and Solid Waste removal.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Manager

- Chief Executive Officer of a municipal government.
City Manager, City of Mascotte

- Preparation and administration of the City’s operating and capital budgets.

Achievements:

- Lead a successful effort to interconnect the City of Mascotte’s potable water system to a neighboring city. In times of emergency where water volume or pressure may fall for one city or the other, an interconnect would allow water to flow to the city needing it most.
- Directed the effort to construct a capital water line in a remote area of the City’s utility district to protect its eastern boundary from annexation by a neighboring city.
- Fully automated solid waste removal enabling the city to redirect manpower. This was accomplished by purchasing sanitation trucks that required only the driver to pick up garbage cans using a robotic arm. Sanitation crews consisted of three employees per truck prior to this conversion.
- Determined the need to drill a new potable well and located financing necessary to do so after Public Works reported having to continuously flush a required and redundant well. This had been recurring for several years and wasting water, manpower and electricity.
- Mascotte was on the cusp of losing a State Stormwater grant. Granting agency was persuaded to grant the City an extension. Beyond adding additional time to complete the project and keep the grant, the City was able to augment the project by successfully gaining another grant from another agency.

Assistant City Administrator and Finance Director, City of Tavares, FL	1993 – 2004
Elected Strong Mayor, City of Minneola, FL	1999 – 2000
City Accountant, City of Tavares, FL	1990 – 1993

The City of Tavares, a city of 9,000 residents is the County Seat of Lake County, FL and is a full service community providing Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire, Public Library, Water, Sewer and Solid Waste Removal.

Duties and Responsibilities as Assistant City Administrator and Finance Director:

- Represented the City Manager in her absence and oversaw the daily operations of the Finance Department. Responsibilities within the Finance Department included submission of the annual operating budget and preparation for the annual audit. Directly responsible for the first of eight Government Finance Officer’s Association’s Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Duties and Responsibilities as Elected Mayor of Minneola:

- Minneola was a city of approximately 3,000 residents and grew to approximately 4,500 during this period.

Strong Mayor of Minneola (Continued)

- Elected by the citizens and served as Mayor at the same time as holding the positions with Tavares.
- The Strong Mayor was seen as the daily administrator for the City.
- Minneola suffered low water volume and desperately needed a new well. One was designed, permitted and constructed and another was designed and permitted during this tenure.

- The City was under a law suit brought by the State of Florida that prohibited any future building growth until a sewage treatment plant was constructed. Worked with a key developer to design, permit and construct an oversized package plant that satisfied the State of Florida and the suit was subsequently dropped.

City of Tavares Accountant:

- Hired as the City’s first accountant. Responsible to the Finance Director.
- Reconciled General Ledger, performed accounts payable and payroll functions.
- Prepared closing of financial books for annual audit.

Owner of a Lawn Maintenance Company

1985 – 1991

Owned and operated a small lawn maintenance company providing service to 40 private individuals while completing a BSBA degree at the University of Central Florida. This is being shown to explain resume gaps.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Police Officer, City of Eustis, FL 1976 - 1985
 The City of Eustis was home to approximately 12,000 residents. First sworn as a road patrol officer and advanced to the rank of Corporal. During this tenure I served as shift command officer, motorcycle command officer, plain clothes detective and narcotics investigator.

EDUCATION

Troy State University	Master of Public Administration
University of Central Florida	Bachelor of Arts
Majored in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting.	
Lake Sumter Community College	Associate of Arts

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Florida City/County Manager’s Association (FCCMA)
 International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
 Leadership Lake County, Class of 1998

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Appointed to the Team Volusia Economic Development Board of Trustees	2023 – 2024
Appointed to the Team Volusia Economic Development Executive Board	2023 - 2024
Elected as President Elect of the Southeast Volusia Kiwanis Club for 2021	2020 – 2021
Lake County Chamber Alliance, Treasurer	2005 – 2011
South Lake County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Treasurer	2003 – 2007
Community Involvement and Personal Achievements (Continued)	
Appointed Member of the Lake County Solid Waste Study Committee	
By the Lake County Board of County Commissioners	2002

GLENN A. IRBY

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East Central Florida Regional Planning Council Board Member	
Appointment by the Lake County League of Cities	1999 – 2001
Elected President of the South Lake Kiwanis Club	2005
Elected Member of the Board of Trustees for the Clermont – Groveland Elks Lodge	2005 – 2007

Candidate Introduction

Section 8**GLENN A. IRBY**

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, Troy State University, AL (Florida Region)
 Bachelor of Science, Business Administration/Accounting, University of Central Florida
 Associate of Arts, Lake-Sumter Community College, FL

EXPERIENCE

City Manager, Edgewater, FL	2019 – 2024
City Administrator, Apopka, FL	2015 – 2018
City Manager, Umatilla, FL	2006 – 2015
Senior Director of Staff Services, Lake County Sheriff's Office, Tavares, FL	2005 – 2006
City Manager, Mascotte, FL	2004 – 2005
Assistant City Administrator & Finance Director, Tavares, FL	1993 – 2004
Elected Strong Mayor, Minneola, FL	1999 – 2000
City Accountant, Tavares, FL	1990 – 1993
Owned and Operated a Lawn Maintenance Business, Eustis, FL	1985 – 1991
Police Officer, Eustis, FL	1976 – 1985

BACKGROUND

Edgewater, located in Southeast Volusia County, FL is known to many as the “Hospitality City” due to its welcoming environment. It is famous for being home to the Mosquito Lagoon and saltwater (Red) fishing. Today, Edgewater is home to 26,500 residents encompassing approximately 25 square miles. Edgewater is a full-service community providing Police, Fire/EMS, Water, Sewer, Reuse, Parks and Recreation, Development and Environmental Services.

Edgewater’s total operating budget beginning October 1, 2024, is \$73 million. Its General Fund budget is \$29.7 million. It has 240 employees with eight (8) departmental directors reporting to the City Manager directly. It is chartered as a Council-Manager form of government.

The three most significant issues facing the City are:

- A. **Mindset of its citizens.** Edgewater is a bedroom community to the Daytona Beach area. This means there are many more homes than commercial ventures, which translates to a shortfall of needed property taxes. Single family residential units consume and demand more services than typical commercial establishments yet pay less in property taxes. Regardless, the city has maintained a steady 6.22 mils tax rate for the last three years. Although it has instituted a Fire Assessment fee on all structures of \$50 per year (with

Section 8**GLENN A. IRBY**

some exceptions, such as veterans) to ensure the majority pay something in property taxes. Unfortunately, most citizens do not understand the economics of this and demand services the town cannot afford and when they do not materialize, they become boisterous and take to social media to plead their case.

- B. **Growth**. Like most of the rest of the State of Florida, Edgewater citizens want all growth to stop and believe recent flooding has been caused by growth in and on wetlands. This being despite 21 inches of rain falling during Hurricane Ian during a King tide, which would not allow canals to flow. Citizens want a moratorium on all future construction and are unwilling to listen to attorneys arguing land use rights.
- C. **Lack of a defined downtown**. Edgewater has never had a downtown. Over the years, the city has grown, but few have shown much interest in the creation of a walkable downtown. However, property west of the city has development rights to build not only more single-family dwellings, but thousands of acres of commercial establishments, which would foster several small villages. This concept is also being met with resistance from the community because they believe with all the new features looking to become a part of Edgewater, the existing community will be forgotten.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

As the saying goes: Location, Location, Location. The Town of Juno Beach, situated on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean will assist it continuing on a path to even greater future successes. It is apparent the town has positioned itself well using long-range planning.

I have found that “Participatory Management” is my niche. My participation in the past has not been limited to assistance in the decision-making process. I have been known to roll up my shirt sleeves as an elected and appointed official and assist with utility line breaks and clearing of streets after major storm events. I want to know as much as possible about the progress of ongoing projects to ensure up to date information is available to citizens and the elected officials. I have also found that this style of management assists in “growing” employees. They learn from my past experience, and I learn from them.

Most employees I have worked with have taught me something, but as we all know, all employees are never going to be in total agreement with management. My most recent staff would report that I am fair and listen to them regardless of whether they have a suggestion, complaint, or personal issue. They would also likely tell you that they did not always agree with decisions I had to make. They would also tell you that I functioned as their advocate for the best working conditions and equipment possible and empowered them to do their jobs. They would further say that I am firm but fair and expect a great deal from them as professionals. Lastly, they would tell you that I am interested and care about them both as an employee and person.

Most elected officials I have worked with in the past would tell you that I am a results-oriented manager and expect the best for our community. They would tell you I am knowledgeable of all

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facets of local government and how it must operate. They would tell you that I continually strive to improve both the image of the community and government. They would also tell you that I am not one to take praise for the work done by our employees and always give credit where and when it is due to those “making it happen”.

My greatest strengths are listening and networking. Listening enables me to learn what the greatest needs of a community are. Networking with others both within and outside the community has tended to enable me to gain assistance needed by my cities. This assistance has come in the way of grants and State Budget Appropriations. I also teach this to my department directors because they are often in positions to both listen and network with others, not only to/with their peers, but other elected officials as well. During my five-year tenure in Edgewater, this strength reaped more than \$18.3 million in grants for public utility upgrades that the town could not have ever accomplished on its own.

We all have weaknesses, and I know that I have at least two. First, I am often too compassionate toward others, which facilitates the second weakness: I have a difficult time with terminating personnel. This is not to say that I cannot and have not terminated personnel, because I have had to do so, but I do struggle with it.

Regularly scheduled staff meetings in Edgewater have proven useful for a variety of reasons. Not only are individual department issues aired, but projects are reviewed and discussed. Ideas for future community needs are also vetted. Using this venue ensures that we are following the direction of the Council, on time with projects or determining why we are not and remaining focused on not only current opportunities but always looking to the future for ways to improve our community and add benefit to our citizens.

When appointed by Apopka as the Administrator, a new Florida Hospital was just breaking ground near a major collection of new state highways (SR 414, SR 429 and SR 409). A grand addition to the town and area, the hospital was sorely needed, but no access to any of these highways was considered. Shortly after my appointment, I met a developer owning land in the same area and his land was contiguous to SR 414. Within a year I was successful in forging a public-private-partnership with the developer whereby his company negotiated with the Central Florida Expressway Authority and paid to develop and construct an interchange. As growth occurs in this area, the town will share increased revenues from transportation impact fees and property taxes from the developer. In a complicated agreement, the developer has only 10 years to recoup his investment from the date of the agreement. If growth does not afford repayment by the town, the developer cannot collect past the 10th year. Now completely constructed, these ramps have opened this otherwise desolate area to a great deal of both residential and sorely needed commercial development such as apartments and grocery stores.

My largest failure for me personally is when I left my position as City Manager of Mascotte, FL. and went to work for the Lake County Sheriff as his fourth in command. I had been with Mascotte for two years and the city was moving in a positive direction. The newly elected

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Sheriff and I had been Police Officers and close friends during the 1980's and he recruited me. The pay was excellent, and I saw this as a rare opportunity to go back into Law Enforcement, albeit as a civilian. It did not take long for me to find out that Law Enforcement was a closed chapter in my life, and I was destined to be a City/Town Manager. I should have stayed in Mascotte.

Termination is never an easy thing to cause to happen and I do have a difficult time with it. Not to the point of agony and when I decided to terminate an employee, a great deal of investigation has gone before the actual deed to ensure that I am correct in that decision. I also cope with this necessary deed by recalling what a mentor City Manager once told me: "You never fire anyone, they fire themselves"; possibly viewed as callous, but seemingly true.

The current challenges I believe facing the Town of Juno Beach are:

- ❖ Like most local governments within Florida, aging public infrastructure will be an issue for some time to come, if not forever. Because it is expensive to maintain and replace, the town must create long-range plans on what it will need in the future and how it will pay for it. Two resources I have used are Grants and State Appropriations through the assistance of legislators, grant writers and lobbyists.
- ❖ Reserves are in very good condition with the help of an internal policy stipulating they must equal 50% of the operating budget. According to the 2023 audit, this was just shy of a full 12 months of reserves. This is most important for a coastal community due to hurricanes and the costly damage they can cause.
- ❖ The town has very limited abilities to generate revenue with its largest contributor being property tax, which provides more than 40% of the budgeted revenues. This is concerning since state legislators continue to push for property tax relief for citizens in ways like increased exemptions. Adding to this concern is the Palm Beach Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) for fire services. This cost to the city residents is equal to 3.4581mills and could keep it from raising its own millage should the need arise. It certainly reduces the margin between the current millage of 1.8195 and the cap of 10 mills.

During the first six months of employment my efforts will involve:

- ❖ Meeting with elected officials, staff, citizens groups and county and state officials to assess town operations, concerns, positions, and dynamics. Since all my governmental career has been in Florida, this should be a short learning curve to navigate.
- ❖ Learning the Town Council's goals and perspectives. This will be key in determining and formulating appropriate strategic directions.
- ❖ Assessing the Town's financial position and reviewing anticipated future trends of both revenues and expenditures.

Section 8**GLENN A. IRBY**

- ❖ Review of Personnel and other Policies to ensure they are satisfactory or identify necessary changes to be compliant with Federal Law, State Statute, and desires of the Town Council.
- ❖ Joining at least one charitable organization such as Rotary and/or Kiwanis Clubs to become part of the community.

Overall, I work very well with the media. I believe when they inquire about something good or bad that all information is freely available to them (depending on State Statues). Of course, there are times when information cannot be given freely, but this is usually met with understanding and a request to let them know when it can be given to them. I have always considered it a paramount requirement that anytime I speak with the press, the council is made aware of the conversation as soon as practical and dependent on circumstances after an interview.

There is nothing in my background that if it became public knowledge would be embarrassing to me or to The Town of Juno Beach.

Social media can be an especially useful tool to local government, and I believe the Town of Juno Beach has a Facebook Page. News and upcoming events can be easily displayed along with pictures of past events and show the progression of ongoing projects in town. Juno is also using YouTube to broadcast its meetings allowing citizens to watch from the comfort of their own home and I would follow these same practices.

A minority of Edgewater citizens seem to have found their voices and are convinced I am either the direct or indirect cause of homes flooding during two recent hurricanes. However, being a City/Town Manager can cause activists to contrive things they would like others to believe are true when they are not. Others can be downright hurtful in what they say. If this occurs, I will be most happy to respond and defend myself with fact and diplomacy.

During brief periods of spare personal time, I enjoy spending time with my wife and now 16-year-old daughter. I also like to fish, garden, read, watch NFL football, and visit the North Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee Mountains.

SIX ADJECTIVES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- ❖ Enterprising
- ❖ Ethical
- ❖ Knowledgeable
- ❖ Passionate
- ❖ Persistent
- ❖ Professional

Section 8**GLENN A. IRBY**

REASONS FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT POSITION

I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Edgewater. However, on September 20, 2024, a motion was made at the beginning of a specially called meeting to cancel my contract without cause.

MOST RECENT SALARY

My ending annual salary with the Town of Edgewater was \$176,363.

Section 8

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
GLENN ANDERSON IRBY**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Volusia County, FL	No Records Found
Orange County, FL	No Records Found
Lake County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Volusia County, FL	No Records Found
Orange County	No Records Found
Lake County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	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
GLENN ANDERSON IRBY**

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
GLENN ANDERSON IRBY
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Glenn Anderson Irby

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 / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
Facebook only.
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:

Glenn Anderson Irby
Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Aaron Wolfe – City Attorney, City of Edgewater, FL 386-253-1111

Mr. Wolfe began working with Mr. Irby when the latter was hired as City Manager in 2019. They worked closely together, and Mr. Wolfe thought Mr. Irby's job performance was excellent. He made good decisions as the City Manager. He listened to the input of his staff and council and made decisions after thoroughly considering everyone's position on the topic. He made informed decisions.

Mr. Irby is fiscally conservative. He always looked at the bottom line and made sure their responsibilities could be met with the current budget situation.

Mr. Irby is customer service oriented. If a concern was raised, he would delegate to the appropriate city staff or director and make sure it was addressed in a timely manner. He communicated well with his staff and the public. He prefers to operate behind the scenes as a manager. He does not need to be in the spotlight. He managed the hurricanes and storms the City had throughout his tenure very well. Mr. Wolfe never saw him stressed out to any great degree, so he managed stressful situations very well.

Mr. Irby managed his staff well. He made good hiring decisions. If he had to fire someone, he went about it according to the books. There was nothing in his conduct that could be construed as controversial or embarrassing to a potential employer.

The City of Edgewater has many problems with stormwater management that date back many years prior to Mr. Irby's position as City Manager. It would be extremely expensive and difficult to fix the underlying issue because there is no easy solution. The public got upset with flooding issues and needed someone to blame it on, and unfortunately, Mr. Irby was the scapegoat. Mr. Wolfe was sad to see him go, but the City Council voted three out of five for the termination of his contract. Mr. Wolfe highly recommends Mr. Irby as City or County Manager elsewhere and wishes him well in his search.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Hard working,
- Communicator,
- Fiscally conservative,
- Responsible, and
- Ethical.

Strengths: Good manager of the City staff.

Weaknesses: He received criticism from others because people did not think he was out in the community enough. However, Mr. Irby did not have an Assistant City Manager and was incredibly busy because of that. He did not have the time or resources to be out in the community as much as he would have liked.

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Jeff Lariscy – Fire Chief, City of Edgewater, FL 386-690-3314

Mr. Irby promoted Mr. Lariscy as Fire Chief for the City of Edgewater. Mr. Lariscy's office was not on site, so they did not interact every day, but they did at least twice a week. Mr. Lariscy appreciated that he was able to call Mr. Irby at any time and he would always answer his phone. He was approachable and made himself available to others, especially in the public safety sector, no matter the time of day.

Mr. Irby prefers to be behind the scenes when it comes to community interaction, because he is not a politician. He is a matter-of-fact kind of leader. He keeps up with his directors and makes sure they stay on their feet. The previous City Manager was a politician, and very popular with the residents. He preferred to be more out front, but Mr. Irby lets the Mayor and Councilmembers shine while working behind the scenes. He relies on his directors and makes sure they are on point with their responsibilities. The previous manager let his directors slack off a little bit while he took over everyone else's responsibilities. When Mr. Irby came on board as City Manager, he required his directors to step up and own their own responsibilities, which was somewhat of a difficult transition for some of them. Ultimately, it was a better way to run the City, and he made the correct decision to straighten out the City.

Mr. Irby is always nice and respectful, but he does not suffer incompetence or things like people being late for meetings. He expected his staff to work hard and show up on time. He is a leader who knows how to take charge.

Because Mr. Irby has a background in law enforcement, he does not get rattled easily. The City went through two hurricanes with Mr. Irby, and he did a fantastic job each time. He was ready to take charge and available to answer any questions. He inspires confidence in his leadership capabilities.

Although Mr. Irby was a fantastic City Manager, the City of Edgewater's new Mayor did not get along with him. The Mayor is very young, elected at only 17 years old, right out of high school, and he did not like Mr. Irby's style of leadership. Mr. Irby worked with him for two years before leaving. There was nothing controversial in his personal conduct and Mr. Lariscy wishes the City of Edgewater could have him back. Mr. Lariscy highly recommends Mr. Irby.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Quiet,
- Strong,
- No nonsense,
- Serious,
- Subdued, and
- Calm.

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Strengths: Good decision maker.

Weaknesses: Although he always makes good decisions, he does not always explain his decisions to others unless they specifically ask, in which case he is happy to sit down and explain what went into his decision-making process. He does not share his thoughts unless asked.

Jonah Powers – Former Councilmember, City of Edgewater, FL 386-689-2717

Mr. Powers worked alongside Mr. Irby as a Councilmember from 2020 until 2024. He only had positive interactions with Mr. Irby and considers him an excellent Manager. Mr. Irby has a high regard for integrity and factual information.

Mr. Irby made good decisions as their Manager. He is a strong leader. He knows how to assess the situation and knows when to let his team do their job, and when to take the leading role. He built an effective staff, including appointing both the police and fire chief in their positions. Both of which are phenomenal at their jobs. He knows how to identify talent and put the right people in place.

The employees in Edgewater were woefully underpaid when Mr. Irby came in. He led a massive initiative to substantially increase the baseline rates for employees. He also purchased new ambulances, enhanced public safety in the police department, purchased property for a new City Hall complex, and was instrumental in moving the economy forward and planning for the future.

Mr. Irby is an effective communicator. He gave all the necessary information in comprehensive reports. Residents are sometimes confused as to what the local government is responsible for, but Mr. Irby helped them understand the City's role by providing the right amount of information to the public. He was heavily involved in the community including various Chamber of Commerce events, acting as a member of the Kiwanis Club, and participating in nonprofit organizations in the community.

Mr. Powers has never seen Mr. Irby act unprofessionally. Even in highly stressful meetings, he always stuck with the facts on hand and kept his cool. Although Mr. Irby inherited problems that were not his, there was nothing controversial or embarrassing in his personal background or conduct. The community was heading in a direction that needed a different set of eyes on the problem. The Councilmembers answer to the public, and there was increasing pressure to enact a change, through no fault of his own. He will make a fantastic manager elsewhere because he was a great manager for Edgewater. Mr. Powers highly recommends him for any leadership position.

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Customer service oriented,
- Forward thinker,
- Factual,
- Effective, and
- Calm.

Strengths: Fiduciary expertise. Mr. Irby led them through many projects. He has a strong base of knowledge and experience in leading municipal local government.

Weaknesses: Sometimes he did not fully include the council members with all the details that went into the solutions to the problems. He did an admirable job of resolving issues, but they wanted to be more appraised of the situation.

Wayne Clark – City Manager, City of Port Orange, FL 386-506-5501

Mr. Clark has known Mr. Irby the entire time the latter was City Manager at Edgewater. The City of Port Orange is about five miles from Edgewater. Along with monthly meetings with all the City Managers in the region, Mr. Clark and Mr. Irby also participate in a monthly breakfast with the four City Managers and Mayors in their immediate area.

Although Mr. Clark does not interact with Mr. Irby on his day-to-day operations, he considers him a quality City Manager and a level-headed person. They worked together on preparations for storms, growth patterns, and a regional-level animal control shelter. Mr. Irby has a police and manager background, whereas Mr. Clark has a background in different arenas. They help each other and collaborate using their various strengths to help their cities grow and improve.

Mr. Irby is a clear communicator. Although he is one of the quieter people in the room, he knows how to get the right amount of information for the necessary parties. Mr. Clark appreciated how Mr. Irby was able to connect him with the right people when Mr. Clark needed assistance. Their cities got along well and partnered on many initiatives.

Edgewater was hit with a few heavy rainfalls during the summer of 2024 before the hurricane season. The excess water made people nervous, especially in some of the older subdivisions with an open-ditch drainage system. The public showed up in droves to council meetings and were upset with how the drainage was being handled. Because of the public outcry, the Council elected to not keep Mr. Irby on as the City Manager. Mr. Clark was surprised at how quickly it all happened. There was nothing negative in his personal conduct. He handled himself very professionally throughout all the abuse the public gave him. He never actively engaged or yelled at anyone in retribution. He was calm and reserved throughout the process.

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Mr. Clark is disappointed with how the City handled the situation, because Mr. Irby is a fantastic manager, and the issues were out of his hands. He wholeheartedly recommends Mr. Irby as a manager for any other location.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Steady,
- Methodical,
- Thoughtful,
- Patient,
- Calm, and
- Levelheaded.

Strengths: Mr. Irby is patient and calm in his political environment.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Danny Robins – Councilman, Southeast Volusia County, FL 386-235-2274

Mr. Robins never gives anyone a 10 out of 10, because that means that there is no room for improvement, so he gives Mr. Irby a strong 8 out of 10 recommendation. He is a top-notch individual. They talked on biweekly, or monthly intervals, including the monthly breakfast with all the other Mayors and City Managers in the District once a month.

Communication between the City and the County significantly improved under Mr. Irby's leadership. Stormwater and park issues improved as well as the overall collaboration between first responders and the County.

Mr. Irby's tenure and experience speaks for itself. He does not need to try to prove himself. He has the wherewithal and experience already. Whenever there was an issue or storm that needed all the cities on board with emergency operations, he was always there and worked well with the county and his staff members. He is calm in stressful environments.

Mr. Irby was wrongly targeted after the most recent hurricane. He was not involved in anything controversial; it was mostly a case of an immature Mayor acting his age. Mr. Irby could not do anything differently. The Mayor and Council were looking for an excuse or a scapegoat to blame their situation on and unfortunately, it landed on Mr. Irby. Mr. Robins recommends him as City or County Manager for any municipality.

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Honest,
- Open,
- Calm, and
- Knowledgeable.

Strengths: Well versed in all things involved in being a City Manager including Parks and Recreation, maintaining and building roads and bridges, stormwater management, and others.

Weaknesses: Like many other public figures, Mr. Irby does not like to pat himself on the back when he does a good job. Mr. Robins encourages him to let people know that he hears them and to let them know about the good things he and his team are accomplishing.

Mike McKinley – Chief of Police, Apopka, FL 407-468-7346

Chief McKinley worked with Mr. Irby between 2015 and 2018. Chief McKinley's career had primarily been with the sheriff's office, where he did not have to report to city officials. He was concerned about this change, but was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to work with Mr. Irby.

Mr. Irby is customer service oriented. He listens to the residents' concerns and does what he can to find a compromise. During council meetings it was not uncommon for members of the audience to compliment him on how well he treated them and helped them resolve their problem. He makes himself available to the public.

As a manager, Mr. Irby allows his department heads to oversee their areas with little interference. When a situation arises in which he must become involved, he leads his subordinates through, rather than telling them what to do. He keeps an open-door policy and holds bi-weekly senior management meetings. He ensures that everyone is made aware of anything happening in the city that might even remotely affect them.

Mr. Irby is always looking for ways to improve the city's operations. When staff come to him with their own ideas, he is willing to listen and try those changes. Many of the changes made have been extremely beneficial. On a rare occasion he has had to reverse a change because it did not work as planned.

Finance is a strong suit of Mr. Irby's. He is meticulous with the budget. He does a great job of getting what each department needs, but not necessarily everything they want. He has helped put the financial wellbeing of the city in a more positive position.

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Mr. Irby cares about the community. Each decision he makes is weighed in his mind to determine whether it will benefit the citizens. He has not been involved in anything controversial.

Chief McKinley highly recommends Mr. Irby. Any organization would be lucky to have him.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Asset,
- Matter of fact,
- Empathetic,
- Available,
- Organized, and
- Knowledgeable.

Strengths: Pleasant to work with, supportive, listens to all sides before making sound decisions, and decisive.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Sam Ruth – Former City Commissioner, Apopka, FL 321-231-3943

Mr. Ruth worked with Mr. Irby for three years, from 2015 to 2017. Mr. Irby did the best he could in a tough situation.

Apopka had a mayor in office for over 63 years. The operations had become stationary, and the processes were way behind. Mr. Irby was hired by the mayor that followed the departure of the long tenured mayor. Mr. Irby came into an organization that did not understand the inefficiencies present. He followed the direction of the mayor, but also helped point out needy areas.

When change has been avoided for so long, it is difficult to get people to accept and support modernization. Mr. Irby faced many obstacles along his way. Trying to teach new technology was tedious, but he never lost his patience.

Perhaps Mr. Irby's greatest strength is finance. He went through the past financial paperwork that allowed him to understand the depth of incompetency that was in place. He made appropriate changes and implemented new policies and procedures to eliminate the problems.

Mr. Irby is a fantastic public speaker. He is comfortable in front of an audience. He listens to the residents, then addresses their concerns. He does not interrupt or make the person feel small. He has not done anything to embarrass or contribute to controversial situations.

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Mr. Irby is the perfect candidate for city manager of a smaller municipality. His knowledge of local government is well rounded. If Mr. Ruth were on the hiring committee, Mr. Irby would be number one on his list for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Proficient,
- Patient,
- Professional,
- Gets along well with others, and
- Will to make changes.

Strengths: Honest, integrity, finance and general knowledge of local government.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Bill Arrowsmith – Former City Commissioner, Apopka, FL 407-421-1580

Mr. Arrowsmith was on the commission when Mr. Irby was hired in 2015. Although Mr. Arrowsmith left the commission in 2016, he has remained in contact with Mr. Irby and continues to rely on his expertise.

Mr. Arrowsmith voted against hiring Mr. Irby because he thought the city needed someone with experience from a larger community. Mr. Irby surprised Mr. Arrowsmith and did a superb job for Apopka. He was constrained by the inexperience of the Mayor however, which held him back from being able to make some of the most needed changes.

The mayor had no experience managing employees, running a budget, or anything to do with the management of a city. Mr. Irby was luckily there to guide and assist when he could. He worked well with the other elected officials by keeping them informed.

Mr. Irby does a phenomenal job of explaining situations in layman terms. He understands that not everyone has the same knowledge as he does but wants them to know what is happening so they can make solid decisions. During public meetings if a resident had a detailed question, the mayor turned to Mr. Irby for the explanation.

The citizens made a push for higher-end restaurants and shopping, not the car parts stores that have been surfacing around the city. Mr. Irby handled the situation expertly by helping them understand that Apopka does not have the ability to sustain or recruit the types of businesses they are requesting. Although they were not happy about his explanation, they were satisfied that they were heard.

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

Without the ability to hire, Mr. Irby was forced to work with people that were not as experienced as he is. For instance, the CFO put him at a disadvantage when it came to finding ways to save money.

Mr. Irby would never do anything to embarrass or create controversy. He should be highly considered for a City Manager position.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Reserved,
- Thoughtful,
- Analytical,
- Integrity, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Responsive, vast experience, and patient.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Adam Bolton – Chief of Police, City of Umatilla, FL 352-308-6936

Chief Bolton has known Mr. Irby since 2006 and worked closely with him from 2012 when he became the Chief of Police until Mr. Irby left in 2015. Mr. Irby was the best supervisor Chief Bolton has ever had.

Mr. Irby was an excellent manager. He took the time to listen to others even when he did not agree with their viewpoint. He hired quality staff. He demanded a high-performance level from employees and set a high bar for Directors. He kept everyone very well informed. He worked harder than anyone in the organization.

The quality of Mr. Irby's decision making was evident in the noticeable and incredible differences in the downtown area. Prior to his arrival, Chief Bolton would not have spent time in the downtown area, now he would.

Mr. Irby is innovative and can think through a problem. He finds solutions to exceedingly complex issues. He lived in the community and was very well known. Residents believed he was their friend. He attended community events and worked very well with residents in every setting.

Chief Bolton was overseeing a crime scene where a car was at the bottom of a pool completely black with algae, but they needed to gather evidence. Mr. Irby arrived at the scene to help the fire department and assemble the resources. It would have cost over \$1,000 to pay Chief Bolton and the other officers to secure the crime scene while the pool was drained, a process that would take

Reference Notes Glenn A. Irby

approximately eight hours. Mr. Irby has ties with an individual who owns a pool company. This person came to the scene with an industrial pump and drained the pool in a little over an hour. He did not override the Directors at any point during the process. They went to him with a problem, and he handled it.

Mr. Irby is very customer service oriented. He met every deadline and demanded that staff did as well. Chief Bolton would ask Mr. Irby for advice on his personal finances. Mr. Irby gave advice on opening a business which has been successful thus far.

The former police chief resigned, which was very controversial. Mr. Irby handled complaints about a water pipe breaking, but he has never been involved in anything negative. Nothing in his background is remotely embarrassing. Earlier in his career he served as a police officer and a detective.

When the former Chief Foster managed the police force he spoke poorly and inaccurately of Mr. Irby and every officer believed him. Because of that, Chief Bolton was initially wary of working with Mr. Irby. Within two years he earned a 100% approval rating among the police officers, they all thought the world of him. While rumor mills exist in every community, anyone who knows his ethics and personality will never have a problem with Mr. Irby.

Chief Bolton looks up to Mr. Irby. If his business succeeds, he hopes to hire Mr. Irby to manage it. Mr. Irby is an exceptional manager; he has done much to help and mentor Chief Bolton.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Irby:

- Fair,
- Committed,
- Very intelligent,
- Witty, and
- Wise.

Strengths: Listens to directors before making a decision, extremely versatile, can handle problems outside the normal scope of a manager.

Weaknesses: When a citizen approaches him with a problem, he personally resolves it. He spreads himself very thin when he does not have to.

Prepared by: Amanda Jenkins
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Click Orlando
September 20, 2024

Edgewater fires city manager at special meeting amid flooding crisis
Christie Zizo

The Edgewater City Council fired City Manager **Glenn Irby** Friday night during a special meeting, despite concerns from residents and some council members that firing **Irby** during a critical time would leave a vacuum in leadership. The council voted to conduct a nationwide search for a new city manager. **Irby** was hired in 2019 after the council suddenly ousted its previous city manager in 2018. **Irby** had held various positions in city governments around Central Florida for more than 20 years. The council held a special meeting on Monday, Sept. 16, but it was overtaken by frustrated residents who have been dealing with flooding issues in the Florida Shores neighborhood. At that meeting, several people defended **Irby**. One person said he was simply executing the vision of the council, and if the council voted for bad policy, there wasn't much he could do.

Another person said this was not the right time to replace **Irby**. "It's the wrong time for our community, the wrong thing to be doing," the resident said. "Do I think Mr. **Irby** has done a perfect job, or that he has held some of his subordinates accountable for their actions, or lack of actions? No. But again, this is not the right time for our community to be doing this. We have much bigger issues at hand, and this is just going to delay or impede these issues from being addressed."

"I have to agree with most of you, this is not the time, we're in a crisis right now, this is not the time to get rid of a city manager," said Councilwoman Gigi Bennington. "Not even to start looking for a city manager. The least we need is an assistant city manager for when he has time off or he isn't here." Councilwoman Debbie Dolbow said the problem was she felt that it was part of the city manager's to nurture and guide the council, and she didn't always feel that way. "I don't know what I don't know," she said. **Irby** will get a total severance package of \$131,790.01. Another resident complained that it was a waste of money to spend thousands of dollars to search for a city manager, on top of his severance package. She suggested creating an action plan and working with **Irby** to solve issues. The decision to end **Irby**'s contract was made independently of the flooding issue. During a four-hour city council meeting on Friday night, residents from the Florida Shores neighborhood voiced their concerns about flooding they allege is caused by new subdivisions, prompting the council to take action.

The meeting, packed with residents and lengthy public comment, resulted in the council instructing city staff to draft a moratorium on new home construction. However, no official decision has been made, and the council will discuss the ordinance at a later time. Homeowners in the Florida Shores neighborhood claim that newer subdivisions are being built at higher elevations than existing homes, causing stormwater to flow into older areas. Last Saturday, some residents posted videos online showing streets flooded to the point where kayaks were being used. Many residents expressed their frustration and fear during the meeting, urging the council

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to act. “I have lived here 26 years, and I’m scared,” one resident said during the public comment period. “If it rains for two hours, it’s going to be in my house.” Another resident, who has lived in the area for eight years said, “I have never seen standing water like I do now, even after hurricanes.”

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Glenn Anderson Irby
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Hometown News
July 17, 2024

Edgewater City Council considered a series of ordinances that would allow construction of an apartment complex east of U.S. 1 and north of Roberts Road.

By: James Bojaciuk

When the central legislation was rejected, the series essentially fell through. The apartments would have been built on behalf of TRB Edgewater LLC, a partnership formed between Ormond Beach and Kentucky business people. “The City Council heard a case for apartments on U.S. 1 near Edgewater Landings,” City Manager **Glenn Irby** said after the meeting. “It failed. Apartments out of this case will not materialize.”

Edgewater is undergoing a soft housing crisis. There is not nearly enough housing to accommodate everyone seeking to live in the community, particularly lower income workers. However, among those who attended the meeting, public sentiment was overwhelmingly against the construction of an apartment complex. They cheered for every member of the public who spoke against it. Three members of the council essentially spoke in favor of construction of the apartment complex in whole or in part. “Edgewater is growing left and right,” said Councilwoman Gigi Bennington, “whether we want it to or not. We already don’t have places for our children to live. They can’t afford to buy the houses that are going up. We’re getting a lot of snowbirds coming down, and they’re plunking a lot of cash down for their homes. (Our children and locals) need a place to live. We need to plan for the future.

“What this connectivity is, is planning for the future. It’s trying to make the best out of what we have now for the future,” Councilwoman Bennington continued. “It will cut down on traffic because we can walk to stores. I’m sure there will be schools put within walking distance. When I moved to Edgewater in '76, there were 3,000 people here. Now there are 26,000. (It’s going to keep growing, so we need to make sure we have housing so we don’t have these people living in the streets. My daughter had to live in a tent for awhile because she couldn’t find a place that she could afford on what she was making. We’re forgetting the next generation. We’re thinking about how it’s going to impact us. We need to look toward the future.”

Councilwoman Charlotte Gillis’ only concern was the amount of space along U.S. 1 that could be used for apartment complexes, but sees the need for legislation that ultimately prepares for the future. Councilman Jonah Powers raised concerns Florida’s Live Local Act could allow developers to build within a city, ignoring city ordinances, as long as they meet the state’s requirements (additionally, the city would only receive a percentage of the taxes generated by such developments). Legislation like this would allow the city of Edgewater to have a say in affordable housing built within the city. He believes that apartment complexes in Edgewater is a matter of when, not if, and he wants the city to be at the table. However, no council member made a motion to approve the ordinances for the apartments. They failed by default. It is the second apartment complex that has been rejected this year in Edgewater.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)
March 18, 2024

Edgewater planning new city center - Set to be located on 70-acre property
Brenno Carillo

For decades, Edgewater has known that its operational demands have outgrown the current city hall building on Riverside Drive. That's why it has been the city's intention for just as long to move to a new city hall — somewhere bigger, where the city, a fast-growing Volusia County municipality, can better operate. The plans are still in very early stages, but the project's location is set. The city last year purchased a 70-acre property on West Indian River Boulevard for around \$2.4 million, which is expected to be home to more than simply City Council chambers, according to Mayor Diezel Depew. "It will be home to a police station, a new fire station," Depew said in an interview. "We're actually hoping to have enough room for a civic center as well." The idea is for the property to become a new city center, "centrally located within Edgewater, planning on future development, and it's right when you get off Interstate 95," he added.

What will the new Edgewater city center look like?

Depew said the city has outgrown the current city hall "at least for 30 years." "Ever since Edgewater has really started to grow," Depew said. "We have little office space left. We've outgrown it for several years." In an interview, City Manager **Glenn Irby** also emphasized the importance of the project. "The (new) fire and police stations are very important, because we lack fire and ambulance service in that area," **Irby** said. "We also lack an emergency operations center." He said the idea is for the two stations and the EOC to be located in different areas of the same building. Another building would house the city hall, civic center and other office spaces. Even an amphitheater could be part of the project, though not initially. "We don't have a civic center at all now," **Irby** said. "This would give the people a place to meet." **Irby**, who has been in the post for five years, said the new location would be a "boom for the whole community." He also mentioned that the property has a 52-acre lake, which could offer the opportunity to design the project in a similar fashion to Port Orange's city center.

City growth and necessary funds

One of the advantages of bringing the project to Indian River Boulevard is the property's centralized location within the city's master plan for the next 20 years. Most of that is due to the planned Farnton development, part of which is coming to the west side of Interstate 95 in Edgewater, where the city expects to see 6,600 new homes in the first phase of that development. "In the end, that development is going to more than double the current population of Edgewater," **Irby** said. "And that, if everything goes as planned, will happen probably within 10 to 15 years."

According to Ryan Solstice, the city's development services director, Edgewater's current population is between 24,900 and 25,000 people. Census data showed the city had approximately 20,700 people in 2010. "Based upon unit count entitlement and using Bureau of Economic and Business Research's 2.3 population extrapolation," the upcoming first phase of the Farnton

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development "will add roughly 18,230 persons" to the city population, Solstice wrote in an email. The Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida "provides statistical information for demographics and economics within the State of Florida," he added. The city's fast growth is part of the reason it has taken so many years to move along with the project, according to **Irby**. Another factor is the necessary funding for the project, which Depew estimates to be around \$40 million. "We're going to, at some point in time, have to take on debt to do it," **Irby** said. But for the city to take on that much, "there has to be a voter referendum," he added.

When will the project be done? How could it benefit Edgewater?

Depew said discussions are ongoing between city government and residents as to what they would like the new city center to look like. He said a design similar to what Port Orange has "is not out of the question." "That's something that we are looking at," Depew said. "I think the Port Orange center is a lovely area and space." The mayor said he hopes the project can be completed "within the next five to 10 years," but there is no official estimate as of now. The city is currently working to hire an engineer to "come up with a shell design," which would provide a color rendering of what the project would look like in the end, **Irby** said. "It would be a great benefit to the city, because it could be a gathering place, a place for concerts," **Irby** said. "Plenty of land."

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Daytona Beach News-Journal
September 11, 2019

Edgewater taxes, utility bills set to rise
Casmira Harrison

Edgewater resident Georgia Keeling's family of four moved into her Mariner's Gate home three years ago and she is frustrated by the rise she has seen in her utility bill since then. "I've had a 100-percent increase over the past three years," said Keeling, saying her first bill was \$117 and the last was \$225. Keeling, like several other residents at City Hall on Monday, feels the city's utility bills are too high and asked the City Council to shoot down a proposed increase in water, wastewater, stormwater and garbage rates — the four expenses tucked into the city's utility bill. The effort mostly failed. While leaders agreed to table the proposed garbage rate hikes, the remaining water, wastewater and stormwater rates are set to rise over the next five years.

Beginning Oct. 1, water and wastewater rates will increase 9 percent each year for three years, and another 3 percent each year for two more years. Stormwater bills will increase 10 percent Oct. 1, followed by a 13.6 percent hike in 2020, another 8 percent in 2021, 7.4 percent in 2022 and an additional 6.9 percent in 2023.

While residents did not ask what those hikes might mean in dollar figures, the city later posted an example of the 2019 increases on its social media page, explaining that the average household would pay an additional \$7.04 per month. "For households that use an average of 3,000 gallons per month, this means an increase of \$2.17 for water, \$0.22 for utility tax and \$3.65 for sewer per month," the post stated. "The stormwater increases by \$1 per month and there is no solid waste increase at this time." Of course, homes and businesses that use more than 3,000 gallons a month would pay more for both the water and infrastructure fees. Councilwoman Christine Power, seeking to lessen the impact of the rate hikes, suggested putting the garbage rates on hold for about four months while they consider outsourcing the city's solid waste pickup, which is currently done in-house. Other officials agreed.

Originally, the garbage rates were set to increase 6 percent each year for the next four years and another 3 percent in the fifth year. But the deferment did not do much to soothe souls at City Hall. "This is just ridiculous," said Melissa Williamson. "Nobody can afford these over a five-year haul." Resident Michael Christmas said his existing utility bill is already difficult to pay. "The last couple of months, I've been behind on my bill," said Christmas. "I just can't afford them as it is. ... The extra fees are taking groceries out of my refrigerator, and there's not a lot in there to begin with." Councilman Gary Conroy, along with Councilwoman Megan O'Keefe, said they couldn't support the proposed fee hikes in the utility bills, and Conroy asked City Manager **Glenn Irby** what items could be removed from the budget to alleviate some of the increases or level them off.

But Monday's meeting was the second-to-last in a series of budget discussions that began months ago. "We had three workshops," said Mayor Mike Thomas. "You're waiting until the 11th hour

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and you're putting staff on, just ... I don't know how they're feeling right now." "I know how the finance director is feeling," **Irby** interjected. "Queasy." **Irby** suggested that while it was possible to drop all the rate increases to zero, it was too late to change that much without throwing the entire budget into turmoil. "Governmental accounting is a different animal," said **Irby**. "Any time that you take from here, you've got about four other spots that you've got to go to fix ... (the finance director is) at the 12th hour by the state of Florida's laws."

In the end, the majority of leaders, Councilwoman Kim Klein-Yaney, Power and Thomas, voted 3-2 to keep the remaining utility fee structure as planned and work on going out to bid for a waste disposal firm. Later in the meeting, city leaders also set a tentative property tax rate at \$6.70 per \$1,000 of property value. That's the same as the current tax rate — and a steep drop compared to the \$6.96 proposed rate voted on back in July — but it remains an increase under state law because it is higher than the city's rolled-back rate of \$6.16, which would produce the same revenue as the current rate, using new assessments of the same properties. That means the owner of a \$150,000 home with a \$50,000 homestead exemption would pay \$670 instead of \$616 at the current rate, representing an 8.6 percent property tax increase. The budget increases will go toward raises for city employees, several additional positions and the design of a future public works complex, among other items.

Finance Director Bridgette King said in an email that several items on July's wish list, like the public works building design cost, were saved despite the drop in the tax rate because the city dipped into the \$900,000-plus City Hall fund, once set aside for a new city hall building that was not used for that purpose. The council can vote to lower — but not increase — the rate before a final vote Sept. 23.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)
June 5, 2019

Edgewater leaders split on manager search - All like interim Irby, but differ on whether to give him the job permanently right now

Casmira Harrison

In a split 3-2 vote, elected officials decided to offer interim City Manager **Glenn Irby** the job permanently. The vote late Monday to begin contract negotiations with **Irby** was based in part on what leaders feared they could lose, rather than what they suspected they could gain by doing a nationwide search for a permanent chief executive. But some residents accused the council of breaking a promise to conduct a nationwide search. “Mr. **Irby** was on the short list of temporary or interim city managers, not on a list of permanent candidates for city manager,” said Bob Andrejkovics, a resident who was among 16 people left in the audience by the end of the meeting. “I just request that you honor that agreement that you said to the citizens of Edgewater, that you’re going to have an advisory committee, that the citizens have input.”

Mayor Mike Thomas reminded Andrejkovics that leaders only agreed to a search and advisory board “if needed” and a draft resolution stating so had been in limbo until the District 2 seat was filled, so it never passed. “The citizens elected me to this position and I think I can handle that,” Thomas said.

Councilwoman Megan O’Keefe said she wanted to hire **Irby** now, because her biggest concern was if the city began a new search, they might lose a good find in **Irby**. “We lost a lot of people, too (in the earlier search). People went to other places,” O’Keefe said. “So my concern is, if we start looking for other people, we’re going to lose him to somebody else and maybe not get somebody as great.” Mayor Mike Thomas agreed. “Right now I feel like we’re spinning our wheels in Alabama mud and I would like to get some of these projects done,” Thomas said. “I want to get that boat ramp done. I want to get Gateway park done and I think it would help to have a permanent city manager.”

Irby has said he was very interested in leading the city long-term. He has held the temporary job since Feb. 19, when he took over for then-interim manager Brenda Dewees. Dewees, the city’s environmental services director, had been thrust into the high-profile temp position after elected leaders suddenly ousted former city manager Tracey Barlow in October. But Dewees didn’t want the job, so city leaders held an emergency search and plucked **Irby** from a handful of candidates. **Irby** earns \$125,000 annually plus health benefits as the interim manager. Barlow earned a little over \$147,000 annually. **Irby** has spent decades leading several municipalities across Florida, including most recently, the city of Apopka. O’Keefe began to make a motion to hire **Irby**, but City Attorney Aaron Wolfe stopped her before she could finish, saying he thought leaders should allow time for citizen and other council member comments.

At least five citizens spoke in favor of conducting a search and one felt leaders should make the decision without an advisory board. But those who voted against extending a contract to **Irby** —

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Councilwoman Christine Power and newly elected Councilwoman Kim Klein-Yaney — felt that despite their strong approval of **Irby's** performance thus far, a new search was warranted. Power said she wanted to bring former city manager Ken Parker back in to ask him whether there might be a large difference in conducting an interim search versus a search for a permanent manager. Parker had helped the city conduct the interim search.

Klein-Yaney said **Irby** was “highly, highly qualified” and she liked him but agreed with Power about completing the process. “I ran on transparency, and I honestly believe that we owe it to our community to advertise and vet out the possibility,” said Klein-Yaney. “I don’t think Mr. **Irby** has any problems putting his credentials up against anyone else's.” In the end, most leaders wanted to get on with city business and plan to let **Irby** get comfortable at the helm. City Clerk Robin Matusick said Tuesday negotiations may take a while, but as of now, she expects to see a draft contract on the agenda for the next City Council meeting July 1.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel
April 13, 2018

New Apopka mayor Bryan Nelson boots city administrator, taps Seminole official
Author: Stephen Hudak

Apopka Mayor-elect Bryan Nelson has begun shaping his executive team, informing city administrator **Glenn Irby** that he will be replaced by Edward Bass, who served as the city's finance director under the late mayor John Land. **Irby**, formerly city manager for Umatilla in Lake County, was hired as Apopka city administrator in January 2015 to replace Richard Anderson, who left the chief administrative post to serve as a highly paid consultant and lobbyist for the city. Anderson was later fired after his personal vehicle was involved in a near fatal hit-and-run accident in Lake County and he was charged as the alleged driver. Nelson, set to be sworn in as mayor April 24, said **Irby** "will be staying on for 90 days to help with the transition" between Nelson's team and outgoing Mayor Joe Kilsheimer's administration.

Irby drew a salary of \$139,125, one of eight department heads who were paid at least \$100,000 to work for Orange County's second-largest city. He didn't immediately respond to a message seeking comment. He served as Umatilla's city manager for eight years. Before that, he served in several posts in Lake: two years as Mascotte city manager; 13 years with Tavares as assistant city administrator and finance director; and two years as mayor of Minneola.

Nelson didn't criticize **Irby**, but said he preferred to assemble his own team to run Apopka during his first term as mayor. He also said **Irby** could leave his post sooner "with my blessing" if he finds another job. Bass left the city when Kilsheimer was elected in 2014 and since Nov. 10, 2014, has worked for Seminole County. Nelson said Bass still lives in Apopka.

In Seminole, Bass was the resource management director and was paid \$139,660 a year. Nelson, a former state legislator and current Orange County commissioner, won the mayor's post in a landslide March 13, defeating Kilsheimer. The outgoing mayor, a former Orlando Sentinel reporter, plans to return to a communications company he created after he left the newspaper.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Apopka Voice.com
July 11, 2017

Proposed Apopka budget \$121 million; no change in tax rate

The Apopka City Council held the first of six budget meetings yesterday and began the process of crafting a proposal into a financial plan for the City of Apopka. The Council learned that the fiscal 2018 budget has increased 16%, but the proposed millage rate will remain the same as 2017. Apopka Finance Director Pam Barclay, City Administrator **Glenn Irby** and Mayor Joe Kilsheimer all described it as an austere, bare-bones, no-frills, budget. “What was proposed in the General Fund was \$60-million, and we trimmed that down (to approximately \$44.5 million), Barclay said. “We presented a balanced budget meaning the revenues match the expenditures.”

Kilsheimer described it as the best that could be done without increasing revenues or utilizing the general funds. “Everything that is being requested by department heads is needed,” he said. “However, if we are not going to raise taxes, and we’re not going into reserves, there’s just no money for some of the things our department heads have asked for. This is an austere budget.” **Irby** found the process in many ways unprecedented and warned that budget cuts could not continue forever. “I’ve been putting budgets together like this for over 20 years, and usually there is fat... and you learn over the years where departments tend to store it and you go and extract it,” he said. “We found that this year. It’s no different. But what I noticed this year that I’ve never seen before is these budgets weren’t really extravagant. We have things that are wearing out. We have police cars with over 100,000 miles on them. Pursuit vehicles of that type are dangerous. They need to be retired. This is the first time in my career that I had to face the directors and tell them ‘I can’t give you any of this’. And I do understand why and that’s what I told them. We have marching orders from last year. And just to get a half-mil rate increase was difficult. So what you have is a no-frills, bare bones budget. There is no padding – none. And I’ve said this to Council before – this is not sustainable. Something has to give. And what that is I don’t know.”

The proposed FY 2018 budget is \$121,050,345 for all funds, which is an increase of \$16,966,829 or 16% over the 2017 budget. However, the proposed General Fund Budget would decrease approximately \$4.7 million (\$44,506,298) or 9.7% compared to last year’s budget. No reserves and no additional bank notes were used to balance this year’s General Fund budget. In order to do so, all requests for capital expenditures, with the exception of costs to complete Fire Station No. 5, and all requests for additional employees were eliminated.

Budget Highlights

Significant factors included in the proposed budget include:

- λ Prior Year’s Millage rate of \$3.7876 per \$1,000 of assessed value; no change from the previous year.
- λ Tax base increased by \$295+ million, which provided an additional \$1,061,939 in ad valorem tax revenue.
- λ No reserves were used to balance the General Fund budget.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

- λ No bank notes were used to balance the General Fund budget.
- λ No Capital costs were included in the General Fund budget, with the exception of the final cost of construction of the new Fire Station #5 (\$742,830) (almost \$14 million was requested).
- λ No additional employees were included in the General Fund Budget (51 positions were requested).
- λ Additional Division (Utility Plant Maintenance) was created in the Public Utility Enterprise Fund.
- λ 20 new positions added to the Water and Wastewater Utility Fund workforce.
- λ Health Insurance Costs increased 3.0%.
- λ Property and Casualty insurance increased 5%.

Barclay and **Irby** ended their signed letter to the City Council (within the 763-page budget proposal document) with this conclusion: “Last year we discussed the need to remain focused in order to achieve future success. We focused on what we could afford to do to maintain our quality of life during the most troubling economic situation in decades. During the year we invested time and resources into expanding our economic development efforts, planning for the future and keeping our community safe. Although economic indicators continue to point toward recovery, history shows it could be a slow recovery. This year we should continue to focus on economic development, sustainability and keeping our community safe as these proactive measures will position us to recover faster and ensure our future success.

We believe this budget is a prudent and responsible financial plan that funds the top priorities of the City Council and provides funding to maintain our services and infrastructure. We hope you find this information useful in developing an understanding of the financial plan of the City of Apopka. As we strive to better serve our residents, we look forward to working with the City Council and the public to continue to build a strong financial base and to continue to make Apopka one of the finest communities in which to live, work and play.” The City Council meets again tomorrow from 3-6 PM in its second workshop at Apopka City Hall.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Apopka Voice.com
May 11, 2017

Breaking News: City Revises plan for Splash Pad

Open house planned to discuss ideas with the designer

The City of Apopka today announced a revised plan and timeline for the construction of a water splash pad in Kit Land Nelson Park. The revised plan was developed after an initial bidding process attracted no bids. Under the new process, the City engaged Booth, Ern, Straughan, Hiott (BESH), a Tavares engineering firm, to provide design criteria for the project. BESH served as the design criteria professional for splash pad projects in several Central Florida cities, including Leesburg and Clermont.

The revised process is designed to invite input from Apopka children and parents about the features they would like to see at the splash pad. BESH and the City of Apopka will partner to host an open house at 6:30 p.m. May 22 and 24 at the Apopka Community Center, 519 S. Central Ave. The BESH team will lead residents through a series of discussions that will design criteria for the project to be bid to building firms.

BESH aims to present the conceptual design criteria to the Apopka City Council at its meeting at 1:30 p.m. June 7 at City Hall, 120 E. Main St. Bid documents should be released later in June. The City will post a request for proposals from design-build teams to create the facility. The timeline calls for awarding a contract and beginning construction in August. Apopka City Administrator **Glenn Irby** said the decision to hire BESH came after city staff interviewed construction companies who previously had indicated an interest in building the splash pad.

“The challenge for us is that as Central Florida’s economy gets stronger, construction companies are finding that engineering companies are in high demand. Our previous bidders were interested in building the project, but they couldn’t find an engineering company to partner with,” **Irby** said. “Based on the very tight timeline that BESH and our staff have developed, we anticipate being able to complete construction by mid February of 2018,” **Irby** said. “I wish we could do it sooner. This is as quick as the marketplace will allow us to go.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Apopka Voice.com
April 7, 2017

Former Apopka employee files federal whistleblower lawsuit

Glen Brooks, a former manager at Apopka’s wastewater treatment facility, has filed a federal whistleblower lawsuit against the City of Apopka. Brooks alleges he was dismissed for raising concerns about potentially dangerous conditions at the plant, according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit alleges that Apopka Mayor Joe Kilsheimer, City Administrator **Glenn Irby**, Public Services Director Jay Davoll and Assistant Public Services Director Kevin Burgess; “knowingly conspired to cover up and violate the law as to the illegal conduct and unsafe conditions and violations of State permits of the Defendant’s water treatment plant and as to the grounds for the termination of the Plaintiff”.

Brooks worked for the City of Apopka from 2002 until 2016. He began as a maintenance worker, and was promoted into management before his termination. He received above average performance reviews during his tenure, according to the lawsuit. In June of 2016 Brooks stated that he repeatedly warned of illegal contamination and permit violations at the wastewater treatment plant, “that posed physical and psychological damage to employees working at the plant and posed a threat to the health and safety of the public.” The plant, which is over 40 years old, was sent a letter from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection detailing 14 violations FDEP discovered during a two-day inspection that ended on December 1st of 2016. The violations were judged by the FDEP to be “minor but significant” but did not find them to be a threat to the plant employee’s health or to public health or safety.

According to Brooks (as stated in the lawsuit), he received no support from his supervisors and filed a whistleblower report with the City of Apopka, the FDEP and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. The complaint also alleges that Brooks was wrongfully terminated by the City in September 2016 for falsely accusing him of lying. The lawsuit says that Brooks was never told what he was allegedly untruthful about.

The lawsuit seeks back pay for Brooks, unspecified damages, and attorney fees. It also seeks damages for defamation for the city’s claims that Brooks had lied. According to Apopka Public Information Officer Robert Sargent, the City does not comment on active or pending litigation. Frank Kruppenbacher, an attorney with Morgan & Morgan, is representing Brooks. Kruppenbacher was the Apopka City Attorney for 30 years but resigned shortly after Kilsheimer became mayor. He had no comment on the lawsuit.

[CB&A Note: We asked Mr. **Irby** about the above article and this is his response:]

Executive Summary

I have re-read the article and have outlined in detail below what really happened. The bottom line is Mr. Glen Brooks was fired for making false statements and was untruthful to upper management and an elected official – not because he was a whistleblower as he alleged.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Article

An internet background check revealed a newspaper article about the City of Apopka being sued in Federal Court for termination of a ‘whistleblower’. The article states the lawsuit alleges the Mayor and myself along with the Public Services Director and his assistant conspired to cover up and violate the law as to the illegal conduct and unsafe condition and violation of State permits of the City’s wastewater treatment plant. This is written to counter this past employee’s claim.

The Actual Events and Background

On Friday, June 24, 2016 the Chief Wastewater Plant Operator (Brooks) spoke with the Assistant Public Services Director advising he had been summoned to a restaurant in an adjacent city by an “attorney” with FDEP. This “attorney” wanted to speak with him about the unsafe and illegal operations of the City’s wastewater plant. Brooks claimed to have met with the “attorney” and provided verbal information he used to write a statement that Brooks signed.

On Monday, June 27, 2016 the Mayor received a facsimile from “attorney” Frank Kruppenbacher. The content of the fax was the statement Glen Brooks had given to the supposed FDEP “attorney”. Kruppenbacher is a private “attorney”, not an “attorney” for FDEP. The Mayor and I took the fax to Public Services to discuss it and its contents with the Public Services Director and his assistant. It was then we were informed Brooks had told the Assistant Public Services Director about the restaurant encounter. We asked for Brooks to be called to the conference room. When he arrived and saw the Mayor and me it was visibly apparent he was most uncomfortable with the situation.

During this meeting Brooks was shown the written statement. He confirmed he signed it but did not write it. The Mayor asked why he gave the statement and why he signed it. Brooks advised he was afraid and nervous and fearful of losing this license. During this conversation Brooks was asked who the person was he gave the statement to. He continued to state he did not know him. He was shown a picture of Kruppenbacher from a website and instantly recognized him; however, he then claimed he did not know him. Both the Mayor and I told Brooks several times his job was safe if he were telling the truth.

After this meeting I spoke with the City’s Police Chief and asked if there are/were laws about impersonating a state employee, like an FDLE “attorney”. In turn, he contacted an acquaintance with FDLE and was told such a law did not exist; however, because FDEP was concerned about the entire situation, they agreed to ask some limited questions of Brooks.

An Inspector with FDLE met with Brooks and showed him a copy of the statement written by Kruppenbacher. Brooks confirmed it was the same document he had reviewed and signed during a meeting with Frank Kruppenbacher. Brooks told the Inspector he was given Kruppenbacher’s name and phone number by a friend who advised him Kruppenbacher was an “attorney” and he could reach out to him for guidance. Brooks further told the Inspector he met with Kruppenbacher to get protection from retaliation for speaking to FDEP in the past about wastewater plant issues. Brooks continued to tell the Investigator that at no time did Kruppenbacher portray himself as an agent of FDEP. Brooks told the Inspector he had called the

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

FDEP concerning issues that the wastewater treatment plant was dealing with regarding an industrial user.

During 2016, the Apopka wastewater plant experienced multiple upsets finally traced to a heavy industrial user. Multiple tests were conducted and an outside firm did a complete inspection of the entire plant. While violations of FDEP rules were found, they were all considered to be minor and not dangerous to humans. FDEP requires violations of rule be reported within 24 hours of occurrence. There were times during 2015 and 2016 that operators (including Brooks) did not report within 24 hours, but again, these violations were considered of a minor nature. The City was fined and written policies and procedures have been enacted to keep this from occurring in the future.

Glenn Brooks was terminated after many conversations with the City's labor attorney for multiple infractions of the City's Personnel Policies, not because he spoke with FDEP or even Kruppenbacher. Glenn Brooks admitted to the FDLE Inspector he knew who Frank Kruppenbacher was when he assisted in crafting the statement about the wastewater plant yet he told us he did not know him and believed him to be an attorney for FDEP. Brooks made false statements and was untruthful during interviews with his superiors to include myself and the Mayor. Brooks was not fired for malicious reasons related to anything he reported to FDEP or Frank Kruppenbacher.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Apopka Voice.com
March 2, 2017

Olympic –sized swimming facility goes to the back burner

It was only a month ago that the City Council and Michael Cooper, owner of the Cooper Sportsplex, took the initial steps toward bringing an Olympic-sized swimming facility to Apopka in what would have been an unprecedented public-private partnership. Unfortunately, after only one discussion between Cooper and Apopka Recreation Director David Burgoon, the idea to bring a swimming pool to Apopka is off the table. “We met with Mr. Cooper this week about a partnership,” said Burgoon. We had a nice discussion and decided doing a private-public partnership just wasn’t feasible at this time with everything that’s going on at Mr. Cooper’s facility. He is busy basically from 5PM-10PM during the week, and he’s got things going on in there on the weekends from now until summer at least until July. So it’s not a good time to try to do a partnership because he has a lot of business at the complex and not a lot of openings for us to come in and run a program.”

Okay, well nice try every one. A little bit of a tease, but no harm no foul Mr. Cooper, City Staff, and City Council. You’ll get ’em next time. But wait... Like a made-for-television movie, or perhaps a more modern comparison would be a Netflix Original Production, the plot takes a significant turn. Listen to how Burgoon ends his presentation to the City Council... “But if we wanted to entertain the idea of possibly purchasing the complex, that would be something Mr. Cooper would be willing to take a look at if Council is willing.”

There was a somewhat surprised discussion among the Council before City Administrator **Glenn Irby** jumped in to lay out a realistic approach to a would-be City purchase of a multi-million dollar facility. “There’s actually a route that you have to take to get to that point (of purchase),” he said. “First it would have to be appraised. Or he (Cooper) could also have it appraised and the two appraisers would get together on a price somewhere in the middle. You (Council) would have to accept one or both of those. The next step would be to take it to referendum (which is a general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision) because this would be General Fund Debt and likely a bond would be needed because we are talking about upwards of \$10-million. And to do that with General Funds when you are paying for it with property taxes, you would have to take it to a referendum.”

Irby went on to explain that a referendum would illustrate whether the public wishes to tax itself to pay the debt service on the bond. If a majority of voters approve the referendum, it passes. As it turns out, Cooper already has the Sportsplex up for sale. “It’s listed at \$6.2 million, but it’s probably going to appraise at over \$10-million,” he said. “It’s a good investment. Cooper’s concern was that people would wonder why he would sell the Sportsplex if the facility is as busy and successful as he described, but he simply wants to get back to his primary business. “We’re a construction company. We’re not managers of sports complexes. We’re out there busting our chops, but we’re not really designed to do that – we’re a construction company. We have a lot of offers to build sports complexes like this one. It’s been a good ride, but I think it’s time for us to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

get back to what we do, but it would be a tremendous opportunity for the City.” There is no telling where this discussion might lead. It doesn’t seem as if it’s anywhere near the City’s radar, given its current City Center, Fire Station and Wastewater Treatment Plant projects on the horizon. But give the City Council, City Staff, Commissioner Billie Dean and Cooper a little credit for entertaining a forward-thinking idea and running with it to its logical conclusion.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Apopka Voice.com
March 2, 2017

Anuvia at least one week away from resuming operations with wastewater plant

Apopka City Administrator **Glenn Irby** disclosed additional details from Wednesday’s meeting between City of Apopka officials and Anuvia Plant Nutrient executives that do not paint an optimistic picture for the Zellwood-based fertilizer company to get back online with the wastewater treatment facility anytime soon.

After receiving a Cease Discharge Order from the City on Monday, Anuvia has been shut down and seeking options. But at the conclusion of the discussion, they remained offline and had no clear timetable for a restart. “Today’s meeting was an encouraging step towards restarting service with the city of Apopka,” said Anuvia Chief Executive Officer Amy Yoder on Wednesday. “While a firm resolution has not been developed, many ideas were exchanged between the city, Anuvia and the Department of Environmental Protection. We look forward to working through these ideas to come to a resolution as quickly as possible, and we are exploring every solution available to Anuvia.”

Irby concurred with Yoder’s assessment of the meeting, but also said that it would take time before Anuvia will be allowed to send waste to the plant. “Staff explained to those present (at the meeting) that Anuvia must reduce the chemical loading to the plant to equal the new numbers presented in the proposed new agreement between them and the City,” **Irby** stated. “We explained that we could not accept waste from Anuvia until the City’s plant returns to normal operations, which could be 10 or more calendar days (from Wednesday). Anuvia offered a variety of proposals to come back online. It is to-be-determined on whether or not we can come to an agreement on how and when Anuvia can resume sending waste to the City.”

However, 10 or more days may be longer than Anuvia is willing to wait. “We are exploring every option to restart as quickly as possible,” Yoder said. “Including multiple options outside of Apopka.” Also undetermined is the new permit Anuvia will have to agree to if they are to continue once the wastewater treatment plant is stable enough to accept their waste again. However, it seems as though both sides are far apart in negotiations on that as well. “Staff’s position was that the elements of the proposed agreement are our minimum requirements,” said **Irby**.

On Monday, Yoder seemed to say the new proposed permit requirements were too stringent for Anuvia to reach. “The parameters the city proposed are impossible to meet quickly,” she said. “They are significantly lower than what was suggested in the Woodard & Curran report, and I believe we will need to adjust those levels if we are to continue doing business with the City of Apopka.” However in her statement today (after the Wednesday meeting) it sounds as though the two sides are at least a little closer to a resolve. “There are multiple steps we believe will lower the levels, but we must run to test any proposed steps before knowing for sure,” she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Irby also disclosed what happened at the plant over the weekend to cause the City to send the Cease Discharge Order to Anuvia. “The plant went into an upset condition over the weekend. It is not possible to say specifically what caused the disruption. Based on testing we’ve done and on the report of our outside consultant, it is our firm belief that elements of Anuvia’s waste stream arrived at the plant in such quantities that the plant is unable to process it.” He also acknowledged that Anuvia never broke its original permit parameters. “The elements of Anuvia’s waste stream believed to be at the heart of the disruptions were not required to be measured in the original permit, nor were they required to be measured by the FDEP (Florida Department of Environmental Protection).”

And while **Irby** and the City sympathize with Anuvia’s work stoppage, keeping the wastewater facility safe and stable is their priority. “We value Anuvia, and we understand the disruption this has caused to their business,” he said. “At the same time, the City has an obligation to operate its wastewater facility to protect the environment, the public health and the safety of our employees. Both the City and Anuvia must be mutually assured that Anuvia’s operation does not disrupt the City’s wastewater facility. We are open to discussing any and all realistic solutions.” But those discussions will have to wait. According to Yoder, future talks will happen, but a schedule will not be set until the wastewater treatment plant’s system is stabilized.

Apopka Voice.com

March 2, 2017

Anuvia pushes back on paying for cleanup of WWTP

The City Council voted 5-0 at its Wednesday meeting to award Shelley’s Environmental Systems a contract to remove the excess biosolids and sludge from the Wastewater Treatment Facility. The job will take approximately 12 weeks and cost the City \$63,400 according to the City Council agenda packet. But during the Council’s discussion period, a familiar name came up about who is at fault for this WWTP issue and who should pay – Anuvia Plant Nutrients in Zellwood. “Other than repairs we need to make on our water plant, will this get us out of the danger zone as far as what we’ve dealt with on this recent issue? Commissioner Doug Bankson asked. “It’s a step,” said Assistant Public Services Director Kevin Burgess. “We did a 14-day composite sampling in January on Anuvia, and we came to the realization that they were severely organically overloading our plant. We can’t get it out of here fast enough. We’ve been in meetings and discussions this week and last. Their new permit is drafted. There are conditions put on them that are going to be enforceable. We’ll get this problem under control, and we’ll get control of our wastewater treatment plant back.”

Anuvia Plant Nutrients opened its fertilizer production facility on Jones Road in Zellwood last summer. The state-of-the-art \$98 million plant has the capacity to produce greater than 200 tons of product daily, but has also been pointed to as the primary cause of the problems the Wastewater Treatment Facility is experiencing. “If that’s what created the issue, are we asking them to shoulder some of the expense?” Bankson asked. “We will be going back to them for recourse,” Burgess said. “To get some money back yes. There is a condition in their existing permit where we can go back and recoup dollars.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Mayor Joe Kilsheimer brought a different perspective to the discussion and a brief history of Anuvia and the City of Apopka. “There is other information that has never come to light, and that is Anuvia has already paid the City of Apopka \$1.5 million in impact fees. That occurred when the city issued their permit. The City of Apopka signed Anuvia up as a customer in March of 2014... which again is before I was elected. We cemented our relationship in October of 2014 with this payment of \$1.5 million, and then we issued the permit sometime in 2015.

But Bankson didn’t see this as a payment for the issues the plant is facing. “What they paid was what they would have paid for impact anyway. It wasn’t a punitive charge, was it?” “No,” said Kilsheimer. “But what they paid was none-the-less an impact fee.” “This is something beyond what they paid to impact our system,” Bankson said. “So they should be held liable to help deal with this.” Kilsheimer asked City Administrator **Glenn Irby** to weigh-in. “The composite sampling for 14 days that was done by the City (at a cost of \$18,700), they (Anuvia) should definitely pay for that in my opinion,” **Irby** said. “Some of the things we’ll be demanding in the new permit is that they (Anuvia) buy their own composite sampler, and it will be online for 365 days, and they will provide us with 365 days of composite sampling.”

Irby believes Anuvia contributed to the issues the plant is dealing with, but not all of them. “As far as taking the sludge out of the tanks, it may be difficult to pinpoint how much they (Anuvia) contributed to the tanks. This didn’t happen overnight. This has been building over time. It could have been months to years. It can’t be pinpointed. So to say it’s all Anuvia’s fault, I don’t think you can do that. They have done some things they should not have done. The fine structure is not as good as it will be next year. And we do not anticipate this happening again. And if it does it’s going to cost them.”

Commissioner Billie Dean called for a cancellation of the Anuvia contract, but **Irby** explained it may not be in the best interest of the City to do that. “If we can get them to comply (in the new contract), there is good in it for the City,” **Irby** said. “We make quite a bit of money from the processing of their waste. It’s a good thing for the city revenue-wise.”

The contract with Anuvia expires on Monday, March 6th. Burgess said the next contract with Anuvia would be only one year instead of the standard five-year contract. Anuvia CEO Amy Yoder also referenced the hefty impact fee as payment for any issues the City of Apopka is facing. “The city and Anuvia signed a contract, which included a \$1.5 million payment from Anuvia for any impacts to the city,” said Yoder by email. “We are in full compliance of this contract and, while we appreciate the efforts the city is making and desire to be a great partner, we believe the \$1.5 million we have paid is what should be used. In addition, the Woodward & Curran report clearly stated there are many reasons for the issues at the wastewater plant, with the majority being internal, having nothing to do with the water coming from Anuvia.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Glenn Irby** is listed below.]

Apopka Voice.com
November 18, 2016

Alfonzo Williams Park getting a new community center

Alonzo Williams Park is getting a new community center building, thanks to a newly awarded \$750,000 federal grant presented through the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. “Thank you Team Apopka! More than a dozen dedicated staff members who work for the City of Apopka collaborated to pursue this grant opportunity, and I am grateful for their hard work,” Mayor Joe Kilsheimer said. “Alonzo Williams Park has the potential to serve many purposes for Apopka residents, from organized after-school programs to pick-up games of soccer and basketball. The new community center will enrich everyone’s experience and serve its surrounding neighborhoods for many years to come.”

“I would like to congratulate the City of Apopka for not giving up,” said Bradford. ” (City Administrator) **Glenn Irby** and his staff are to be commended. This is really going to be a major plus for South Apopka. Hopefully citywide events can be held at this location after the new community center is completed.” Apopka businessman Rod Love believes it is a great first step, but it will take the people of Apopka to tap its full potential.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Apopka Voice.com
May 6, 2016

City Center deal misses another deadline

The City Commission voted 5-0 to give Taurus Southern Investments another 30-day extension to negotiate a developer's agreement. This extends the due date until June 2nd. And while the vote was unanimous it was not without hard questions and several revelations about the likelihood this deal will close.

After a brief explanation and recommendation by City Administrator **Glenn Irby** that Council approve the extension, Mayor Joe Kilsheimer asked for a motion, but City Commissioner Diane Velazquez asked **Irby** why they needed so many extensions. "John Keating is their (Taurus') attorney and I've known John from another life," said **Irby**. "He told Taurus that he knew 60 days was not enough time to negotiate, and we're not sure this additional 30 days is going to do it either. Taurus wants to believe it will. So you may be asked again for another extension. Hopefully not."

Commissioner Kyle Becker then grilled **Irby** on the merits of continuous extensions. "What's the reality that they're going to have something in play in 30 days? Can we condition this thing to say you get it to us in 30 days or this thing isn't going to happen? Why are we going to continue doing extensions? What's the purpose of it?" "To allow more time to negotiate," **Irby** said. "Well let's get a realistic time frame," said Becker. "I don't want to belabor the point, but it makes no sense to me to keep on allowing them to miss a deadline."

"I don't think the deadlines are something we've missed," said Kilsheimer. "What we have run into is the level of detail. For example the size of Martin's Pond and the size of how much land can be developed around Martin's Pond. If you look at the high-water mark for Martin's Pond, it eliminates four acres. So four acres that everyone thought would be developed is no longer developable. That changes the whole scheme of things because four acres has now been taken out and so that changes the economic calculations. But the ultimate idea is...and I probably shouldn't say..." "I don't think you should either," said **Irby**.

"Okay, so there's an ultimate idea," said Kilsheimer. The Mayor went on to explain the complexity of the deal with Taurus makes it difficult to predict the time frame or the certainty it will close. "In all fairness to Taurus and the the City Staff, we think there is a reasonable prospect that we can pull this deal off, but as we have peeled back the onion and started to discuss some of these hairier issues it turns out that it requires a depth of discussion that no one originally envisioned."

"How confident are we that we're at the middle of the onion?" Becker asked. "How confident are we that the known issues are known?" "We can let you know after we see the latest draft," said Kilsheimer. "That's the truth. I don't have a better answer than that."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Commissioner Doug Bankson then asked when the next workshop would be. “If I can get the staff to say ‘this is a good deal’ and the staff can say ‘we will recommend this to the Council and to the public’ then we’ll schedule a workshop,” said Kilsheimer. “The staff is very protective over City assets. And the staff wants to make sure this is going to be successful. At the same time the developer wants as much flexibility as possible. They want to agree to as little as possible so they can go back to their investors and say ‘hey we got a great deal in Apopka, let’s begin.’ It’s a natural tension and these negotiations are hard. And I’ll go back to what I said from the beginning. If this were an easy deal it would have been done already. It is not an easy deal.”

“But I want us to be able to say to the citizens, we got a good deal,” Bankson added. “Well sure,” said Kilsheimer. “And believe me, everyone is watching this deal. And negotiating in a very public way doesn’t lend itself necessarily to success. But it’s the nature of the beast, and we’re in this situation because we’re in this situation.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Apopka Voice.com
February 8, 2016

City Administrator and Candidates to Meet on Budget

The Apopka Voice has learned that two budget meetings will take place between the candidates for Council Seat#3 (Commissioner Sam Ruth, Doug Bankson and Alice Nolan), Council Seat #4 (Commissioner Bill Arrowsmith, Kyle Becker and Young Kim) and City Administrator **Glenn Irby** tomorrow and Thursday. The meetings will not be open to the public.

“We are offering a meeting with candidates seeking office purely as a courtesy,” said City Administrator **Glenn Irby** through an email to The Apopka Voice. “We will be discussing the operating budget for 2015-2016 and capital projects currently underway or soon to be started. Governmental budgets are difficult to maneuver if you do not work with them.”

Irby also explained how it ended up being two meetings instead of one for the four non-incumbent candidates. “I did not believe the two incumbents would care to join in on this courtesy meeting and planned to have one meeting for the challengers. When both Commissioners Arrowsmith and Ruth expressed a desire to attend, I had one of two choices: 1) advertise a public meeting, or 2) hold two separate meetings. By holding two separate meetings, Commissioner Arrowsmith could attend one and Commissioner Ruth could attend the other.”

It is a meeting Doug Bankson has wanted for quite awhile. “I had asked over a month ago to meet with the city administrator over questions I had with the budget and was told at that time they were working on meeting with everyone together to answer any questions,” said Bankson. “I would have preferred to be able to meet with him directly, but it appears to save time they wanted to meet together. I did question whether there was a sunshine law issue and was told they were keeping the two seats separate so as not to create any infractions.”

Irby explained that one-on-one meetings are not off the table, but that two meetings may be more time-effective. “I considered one-on-one meetings but decided the group idea would not take as long to disseminate the same information. At the forums I will explain to the attendees they can request a one-on-one with me at a later date.”

Kyle Becker, candidate for Seat#4 welcomes a chance to talk about the budget. “From how it was presented to me, this is a forum for the candidates of both seats to ask any questions pertaining to the budget. I think it is a good idea, and something I am looking forward to,” Becker said. “I am really open to any forum, at the end of the day it is an opportunity for me to ask detailed questions directly to city staff leadership.”

Irby went on to explain why the public is not invited to this budget discussion. “If the public were to attend and were allowed to speak and ask questions, the candidates would not necessarily receive the personal attention they need to answer questions possibly asked of them during the campaign,” he said. “If the public ever has a specific question, I can and always do make myself

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Glenn Anderson Irby
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available to answer.” “We have two meetings per month and both are open to the public. We had numerous budget workshops where the entire budget was open and fully explained. The public was invited to the workshops. The budget is posted in its entirety online at the city’s website. All capital projects are discussed in the open and voted on by the Council where public input is always welcome.”

Alice Nolan, candidate for Seat #3, will bring the public’s questions with her as well as her own. “I am excited to sit down and speak with **Glenn Irby** about questions the public has and questions I have,” Nolan said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

http://stpetebeach.granicus.com/DocumentViewer.php?file=stpetebeach_a7faf2f1445c79f01b7269bedaf381cf.pdf&view=1
September 29, 2014

Two cities trying to work out differences without litigation

Author: PETE SKIBA

Two south Lake County cities might settle their utility-rights dispute without throwing any legal punches. Mascotte and Groveland city staffs worked out a compromise giving Mascotte rights to sell water and sewer on 460 acres and Groveland utility rights on about 640 acres in the Casa de la Loma mansion area, off Villa City Road, officials said. "This gives us some high and dry land," **Glenn Irby**, Mascotte city manager said, "which lends itself to upscale development."

Since utility districts have preceded annexation in the past, real- estate taxes on upscale developments might be an underlying reason for the cities to gobble land into their utility areas. Both city staffs are at work drawing up maps and wording describing the compromise to present to their respective councils, officials said.

Groveland's City Manager, Jason Yarborough, said he was satisfied with the deal and expected his city council to approve it in about a month. **Irby** hopes for approval in a couple weeks. The contention about the utility-service district arose in March when Mascotte adopted a district overlapping parts of Groveland's previously adopted district. "Basically we get the mansion," Yarborough said, "and Mascotte gets the 460 acres across Villa City Road from the mansion." The deal separates 460 acres for Mascotte to administer from an 1,100-acre piece. Groveland will administer the rest of the acreage.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
September 5, 2014

Flags go missing in Umatilla

Author: Austin Fuller

The commander of the American Legion post in Umatilla says more than 100 flags disappeared from veterans' graves in Umatilla cemeteries about six weeks ago. Carl Ludecke, the post commander and owner of Umatilla's Olde Mill Stream RV Resort, said the flags are put in three cemeteries in the Umatilla area, one in Altoona, and one in Paisley every November before Veterans Day. The old ones are picked up the next year. He said he was at a World War II Medal of Honor recipient's grave in Glendale Cemetery when he noticed the flags were missing. "Then I started looking around and there's no flags in the whole cemetery," Ludecke said. Ludecke said he called the city clerk about it and was told none of the maintenance people knew about it. Ludecke said an article about the missing flags appeared in a newspaper in Umatilla, and then someone who had been hired at the Olde Mill Stream RV Resort said a supervisor instructed him to pick them up as community service after getting a DUI. Once they got back to the yard, he was then told to throw them in a dumpster, according to Ludecke.

Umatilla City Manager **Glenn Irby**, who was not told of Ludecke's complaint on the day he called, said he told his assistant public works director to find out what was going on. **Irby** said the community service worker approached the supervisor with dead flowers and a flag. "Our employee turned around to him and said, 'We don't remove the flags. This is done by a man that comes in in November and he replaces all the flags once a year. Put that flag back'" **Irby** said. **Irby** said the community service worker came up two more times with flags and the city employee told him to put the flags back. "Mr. Ludecke...has decided to try and convict our employee from information he has received from a person that was convicted of a crime and we were good enough to put to work," **Irby** said. Ludecke said there would be no reason for the community service worker to lie. "There's no reason for this kid that I hired to lie about it," he said. "Why would he lie about it? I mean, he admitted he took the flags. If anything he would have covered it up knowing everybody was concerned about it." **Irby** said he has repeatedly offered to have the city replace the flags, but he needed to know the size of the flags and where to get them or have a receipt for them.

"I asked Ludecke to let me replace the flags because regardless of what happened to the flags, it was either the community service worker, convicted of a crime, which is in my opinion probably more likely that it occurred because they've been putting these flags in the cemetery for years and our employee has never removed a flag, never," **Irby** said. **Irby** said Ludecke called two weeks ago and decided he would get the flags. **Irby** said the city would assist in placing them on the graves and told Ludecke to bring him a receipt so the city could reimburse him for the flags, but Ludecke wanted the city employee to replace the flags on Saturday. **Irby** said they cannot do that because the employee works Monday through Friday. **Irby** said he has been told the city employee spent his own money to buy flags and put them back on the graves. "If I can get a receipt from somebody, because nobody seems interested in bringing me a receipt, I'll reimburse

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Glenn Anderson Irby
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him too, because I don't think he did it," **Irby** said. Ludecke said he ordered 144 replacement flags but saw new flags up in Glendale Cemetery on Wednesday and he will use the newly ordered flags for the annual Veterans Day flags. Ludecke said the community service worker told him he also took flags from the Umatilla Cemetery on Golden Gem Drive.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
August 15, 2014

Elder care facility Lakeview Terrace completes first part of expansion

Author: Austin Fuller

Lakeview Terrace in Altoona has completed construction on a new residential tower and villas, with plans by year's end to build a second rehabilitation center and a new clubhouse at the retirement community. "We feel it's a very important addition for Lake County, serving seniors and, of course, with job growth here in the county also," Executive Director Judy Gibbs said of the latest addition of 54 independent living units. With existing garden homes, a three-story apartment building, and a five-story apartment building, the community now has a total of 271 independent living units. The last of seven new villas was completed about three weeks ago and the villas are 57 percent occupied and reserved, Gibbs said. Each villa has two floors, with two units on each floor, but both floors have ground access as they are built on a hill. The tower has 26 units on four stories and an underbuilding parking lot, Gibbs said. She said 62 percent of the tower is reserved or occupied and it was finished about a month ago. The 105-acre community also plans on building a second rehab center and a new clubhouse that it hopes construction can begin in late fall, Gibbs said. The clubhouse will have an auditorium, a dining room and a room for informal dining. The major dining will move from the current community center to the clubhouse, but there will be some type of food service kept at the community center as well.

As the demand grows, Lakeview Terrace will build another residential tower, Gibbs said. "We feel that certainly upgrading and building new is also a way of sustaining our position here as a leading senior living community," Gibbs said. Construction of the villas began in February 2013 and the construction of the tower began in May 2013, with infrastructure work starting in 2012, Gibbs said. The cost of the tower and villas was \$15 million, according to Gibbs. Gibbs said the expansions were necessary because capacity was being reached. "We were reaching 96, 97 percent and we knew that there was a demand for this type of continuing care retirement community," she said.

About 325 residents now live there. In addition to the independent living, the community has a healthcare center that has a rehab and skilled nursing facility, an assisted living facility, and a home health certified agency that serves residents, Gibbs said. They have a complete rehab, physical, occupational, and speech therapy department, she said. "It's almost like an umbrella here of all comprehensive services, and it's a continuum that they can move back and forth through these particular services all under (the) same Lakeview Terrace banner," Gibbs said. Lakeview Terrace added eight new employees because of the expansion, Gibbs said. Gil Owens, 79, moved into the villas with his wife in April. Owens said he lived in The Villages from 1999 and four years ago started looking at Lakeview Terrace, but decided to wait for the new buildings. He said they moved to be in a place where their kids would not have to worry about them. "They're happy that we're here and that we don't have to worry about maintenance and if we need help it's right here,"

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Owens said. He said he liked the community's concept with the independent, assisted, and skilled nursing there and them cooking the main meal each day. "It's a beautiful view. It's a beautiful concept. The price is right. Everything is going very smooth," he said. Lakeview Terrace annexed into Umatilla in May 2008. "I see it as a tremendous asset to the city. Lakeview Terrace is a good business partner with the city, too.

They're excellent people to work with," City Manager **Glenn Irby** said. **Irby** said last year the city allowed Lakeview Terrace to use its tax exempt financing designation in order to get a very low interest rate loan with no liability to the city. He said the city set it up to bond \$65 million. Of that, the community has borrowed \$35 million to date and plans to borrow another \$6 million for the new clubhouse and skilled nursing and rehab center, Gibbs said. The bond money was used to finance the expansion, Gibbs said. **Irby** said one of the reasons the community is important to the city is the residents are active and come into town to shop, which lends to commerce. **Irby** said annexing Lakeview Terrace allowed the city to get to the intersection of State Road 19 and County Road 42. The east side of County Road 42 was rerouted to that intersection and a blinking light was turned into a regular traffic light in recent years. "I immediately saw it as the next growth area for Umatilla," **Irby** said. It would be beneficial if the area gets restaurants, shopping and entertainment that residents could walk to, Gibbs said.

During the road work, the city put utilities in the intersection, **Irby** said. While Lakeview Terrace has its own water system, **Irby** said the expansions tripped a Department of Environmental Protection requirement, based on the number of residents, for the community to have a redundancy for its water system. He said the community has a second well, but did a cost analysis to get it running and decided to connect to the city's system. He said Lakeview Terrace built the city a new 12-inch water line from where the city's line terminated all the way to County Road 42. The city manager said changes in state law have allowed the city to annex in the Kangaroo convenience store and property north of it, even though they are not contiguous with Lakeview Terrace.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
August 9, 2014

City officials planning to make several renovations to Cadwell Park
Author: Austin Fuller

New restrooms and a new sidewalk were recently completed at Cadwell Park, but more long-term changes are anticipated in the park's nearly half-million dollar master plan. The park is the site of most of Umatilla's major events, including the Florida Black Bear and Wildlife Conservation Festival, Chili Cook-Off, Collins Community Barbecue and North Lake Relay for Life. City Manager **Glenn Irby** wants to see more events there, especially since the park is downtown. "It yields itself to grander things than it has," **Irby** said of the park. Plans call for a sidewalk encircling the back field in the park, as well as new pavilions, shade trees and a new event stage. The park is heavily used on weekends by families, said **Irby**, who believes adding more amenities will bring more people to downtown and Umatilla.

The city manager also noted that there are apartments downtown and having a more user-friendly park within walking distance for families with babies or toddlers would be a good thing. The park also affects nearby businesses, he said. "If people come up here to do nothing but recreate at the park, maybe they've never been here before, they say, 'Oh look, there's a Beef 'O' Brady's, heard it was up here just didn't know where it was,'" **Irby** said. "They might not go to Beef 'O' Brady's or the ice cream shop then, but they're likely to come back and spend even more time." The park had portable toilets as well as restrooms in a building that were opened for events. The new restrooms were finished in May. "We had the ability to build the restrooms. We saw that as the most necessary thing to have," **Irby** said. "The events in the park have grown tremendously over the past seven, eight years and those poor restrooms in the building, they don't keep up." The park currently has an event stage, but there are space constraints as events continue to grow, **Irby** said. The new stage is planned to face a field, and **Irby** said people could bring lawn chairs.

Other changes on the park master plan include more sidewalks in the front part of the park, a pedestrian bridge and a new play structure, city documents show. The plan also calls for the city to acquire a piece of land that partially separates part of the park from the back field. **Irby** said there is a cracker-style house there that could be used for things such as weddings or parties. However, he said he has reached out to the owners and they are not interested in selling.

The new and old bathroom facilities in the park are ADA accessible, **Irby** said. "We want people, regardless of their health, to be able to enjoy as much as possible and to come out, too," he said. The timeline for the changes is dependent on funding, according to **Irby**. He said they are going to try to get some Florida Recreation and Development Assistance Program Grant money and they believe the sidewalk system could qualify. He said the park is in the Community Redevelopment Area and in 2016 they could be back to look at funding park work with that money. The estimated total cost of the park master plan would be \$499,917.24, city documents show.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

While it is not a part of the master plan, **Irby** anticipates a parking lot near both city hall and Cadwell Park will soon be repaved and expanded. Landscape and lights will also be added to the parking lot. “We believe that the parking lot is extremely important because of the events held in the park,” **Irby** said. He said, if approved, the parking lot would be partially funded through CRA and penny sales tax money. He expects the parking lot work to take place after the first of the year, as there are a lot of events scheduled between now and December.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
June 10, 2014

State helps fund water, stormwater projects

Author: Austin Fuller

The cities of Umatilla and Tavares have received a combined \$6 million from the state to help fund stormwater and water projects within the two cities. Umatilla got money for three projects, including one for a \$4 million project that will allow the city to replace water lines and valves, as well as to loop more water lines into the system, according to city manager **Glenn Irby**. Dead end lines create stagnant water and looping them will prevent this and increase fire flow, **Irby** said. The city has a meeting scheduled for Friday with engineers to figure out how they should proceed with the work, **Irby** said, before the plan is presented to the city. “Our recommendation is going to be that we’re going to... first apply the money to what we believe are the worst of the worst areas of town,” **Irby** said, adding there are new sections of pipe in the city’s water system.

State Sen. Alan Hays, R-Umatilla, who chairs the General Government Appropriations Subcommittee, which covers the budgets for 18 different state agencies, cited a water main break last October — which led to the entire system having to be shut down — as a reason for the city getting the funding. “That tells me that they need some significant improvement to the project, to their water system,” Hays said. Umatilla also received \$677,050 from the state, which **Irby** hopes to use for a new 750,000 gallon storage tank that will complement their existing 150,000 gallon tank and will allow the city to take its water tower offline. The money also will go to three new variable drive pumps that ramp up and down according to need, **Irby** said. The city manager said if there was a fire in the city, all of the pumps would be working, but late at night they would barely be in use. He said they are more efficient and are more powerful. “To me it’s phenomenal. The fire flows will be nothing like the city’s ever experienced before,” **Irby** said. Umatilla also received \$605,000 to help fund an estimated \$3,629,200 project that will create a pond to capture stormwater for treatment, turning it into reusable water which would be mixed with reuse water from the wastewater plant for irrigational purposes, **Irby** said. The project is being done to capture and treat stormwater that would otherwise go into one of Lake Yale’s basins, the city manager said.

While Lake Yale is not in city limits, and a large part of the stormwater comes from outside the city, **Irby** said the project will help expand the city’s existing reuse operation and assure the St. Johns Water Management District that they have alternative water sources. “Everybody’s in it together these days. We feel good that we can help and at the same time assist us, if you will, with St. Johns (Water Management District),” **Irby** said. Money is also coming for this project from the Lake County Water Authority, Lake County government, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Environmental Protection is also working on a grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency, **Irby** said. “There’s no way that we would ever be able to get to the level of funding necessary to do these projects on the backs of the tax payers,” he said. “That’s how huge it is.” He credited Hays with helping the city get the money. “Alan Hays was a God send,” **Irby** said. Tavares received \$750,000 in state funding,

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

which Utilities Director Brad Hayes said will help with a project to build a large stormwater pipe underneath Ruby Street in downtown Tavares and a stormwater treatment pond. He said stormwater currently discharges into Lake Dora and the pond will capture nutrients before the water is discharged into the Dora Canal which flows to Lake Eustis. “It’s helping to clean up that entire area so that we’re not dumping nutrients into the lake which create algae blooms and fish kills and it will enhance and clean the area up for recreational sports,” Hayes said of the Wooton Park and Lake Dora shoreline. He said the second phase of the project will include putting more infrastructure in the downtown area to get water to the pond. The majority of the money will be spent in phase one of the project, according to Hayes. He said the phase one construction cost is \$2.5 million and the overall cost of the project is \$8 million, with the state money keeping stormwater rates low. Hayes also thanked Sen. Hays for helping secure the funding for the city. Sen. Hays said the Tavares project will help the health of Lake Dora and the other lakes in the Harris chain. The lawmaker said there are backlogged projects across the state and funding is allocated based on individual merit. “I’m quite pleased that I was able to get the funding for these projects here at home, but I’m also glad that we were able to help other communities throughout the whole state,” Hays said.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
June 5, 2013

Embattled police chief allowed to retire

Author: Millard K. Ives

The Umatilla City Council voted Tuesday night to allow its suspended police chief — who was on the verge of being fired — to remain on administrative leave until his 52nd birthday in November so he could reap his full retirement. The unanimous vote during the council’s regular meeting came as the city manager was considering terminating Chief Doug Foster after a number of supervisory problems of his seven officers and after at least one termination meeting had been postponed.

The 51-year-old Foster will be allowed to use his vacation and sick leave until his Nov. 19 birthday. “We felt it was a good resolution,” said Shaina Thorpe shortly after the meeting. Thorpe is an attorney who works with the city on labor and employment matters.

She said Foster would have lost 3 percent of his pension if he was fired. Foster said he also thought the decision was in his best interests, although he disputed the allegations. “It’s political mismanagement,” he said outside of city hall after the meeting. Foster was placed on administrative leave in early May after what City Manager **Glenn Irby** said was a number of supervisory problems, including allowing his officers to detain and question two 13-year-olds suspected of battery without their parents being present. A memo on the subject cited a similar incident with an 8-year-old in 2004 that resulted in the chief being counseled. “I cannot find good cause or reasoning behind why the parents of the children arrested were not allowed to be in the interviews,” **Irby** stated in the memo.

Foster also allegedly allowed an officer to respond to a vehicle accident outside of the city’s jurisdiction. Foster said he wasn’t aware until after the interviews that the children had been questioned by officers without their parents. However, he said there have been Supreme Court cases that has ruled it is OK in some circumstances to allow officers to question juveniles without their parents or guardians being present.

Sheila and Dayle Thornton and Lisa Sabournin, parents of the two sets of the teens, said they were upset about the decision not to fire Foster. “They are basically paying him for wrongdoing,” said Sheila Thornton, after the meeting. Foster, who has been the city’s police chief for 21 years, makes \$55,000 a year. He said he plans to find another job in law enforcement.

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Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
October 7, 2012

Umatilla to float \$60M bond issue

Author: Greg Jones

With no citizen opposition, the city of Umatilla is moving forward with a \$60 million bond issue needed to help a local retirement center expand.

City Manager **Glenn Irby** said an investment firm is negotiating to buy the revenue bonds sought by the Lakeview Terrace Retirement Community. Officials hope expanding the facility, which sits on more than 100 acres at 331 Raintree Drive near Highway 42 and State Road 19, will create new jobs and kick start commercial development in the area.

"As far as the public hearing, no one from the public showed up, but the project still moves forward," **Irby** said. "They (the bonds) are in the process of being bought by a financial institution. They will have the ability to buy the bonds and re-sell them. The investment house will have the ability to sell the bonds at a premium to their clients, and whoever buys them will get the invest payments."

Irby said the investment house will be able to sell the bonds to its clients for as little as \$5,000 per bond. Money raised will help Lakeview Terrace grow from 325 residents to more than 600. City officials believe the additional residents and employees might lead so the area getting its first full-service grocery store. "It is a great deal to the city to be able to double the size of Lakeview Terrace," he said. "We value Lakeview Terrace, and it is a very good asset to the city," **Irby** said.

By using a special financing vehicle allowed under the Internal Revenue Code, Umatilla can obtain the tax-free bonds but Lakeview Terrace will actually sell them and be responsible for their repayment since they will not be backed or secured by the city's taxing power, its finances or credit, or any other public revenue sources.

Although Umatilla will not be able to float any of its own bank-qualified debt -- a tool used by government entities that guarantees lower interest rates and better terms overall -- while Lakeview Terrace is selling its bonds, the company has agreed to pay the city any difference in lost savings it sees if it has to borrow money another way.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
September 21, 2012

Umatilla may roll the debt dice

Author: William Koch

Are Umatilla city officials making the right decision in borrowing \$65 million in bonds to help a local retirement community expand? City taxpayers need to find out. Lakeview Terrance Retirement Community, a not-for-profit organization, is making some big promises. Its expansion will create 45 new jobs and help boost the city's commerce.

Umatilla is a nondescript city of 3,500 residents tucked quietly away in the northern portion of Lake County, just a couple miles south of the Marion County line. The city doesn't have a major chain shopping center and south Marion County residents often travel through the city to get to Eustis and other points south. Providing a good reason to get motorists to stop, shop and visit Umatilla naturally might get city officials' attention.

But here's the big question: Is Lakeview Terrance's package of goodies too good to be true? If everything proceeds as planned, Lakeview Terrance will expand and, as a result, more businesses will set up shop. And more shoppers will spend money in Umatilla. But what if Lakeview Terrance, which is privately owned and controlled, doesn't deliver? This is, after all, public money going toward a private endeavor. If Lakeview Terrance fails, who pays the bill? The \$65 million bond, which is borrowed money, doesn't just go away. (The bond duration and payment amounts weren't immediately available late Thursday.) Local taxpayers would have to pay the bill.

Municipalities throughout the country are defaulting on their bond obligations. The national and local economies are still struggling. City Manager **Glenn Irby** said "we believe (Lakeview Terrance) is going to be right for growth. So much so, we are running water lines all the way to (Highway) 42." City officials may deserve credit for this arrangement, especially the part where Lakeview Terrance pays the bond bill entirely. This may turn into a smart and very worthwhile investment in the city's financial and commercial future. But this is still a big gamble. And Umatilla's taxpayers will have to pay the gambling debt if this turns into a losing proposition. We urge city residents to attend the public hearing on the bonds 7 p.m., Oct. 2, at city hall to get educated and to offer input.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel – Orlando, FL
Apr 20, 2012

Gov. Scott vetoes money for local sewer projects

Author: Ludmilla Lelis

A sewer overhaul for Umatilla, a Minneola sewer connection to the state prison and funds for the Lake Technical Center were the three Lake budget items vetoed by Gov. Rick Scott. Scott this week rejected \$142.8 million from the state's nearly \$70 billion budget.

Umatilla City Manager **Glenn Irby** was disappointed that the budget ax fell on \$352,163 for a major sewer system overhaul. The city still has terra cotta pipes more than 50 years old that need replacement. During the dry season, sand infiltrates the lines and causes problems when the sand reaches the sewer plant. During the rainy season, raw sewage can leak, as happened during Tropical Storm Fay in 2008. Replacement of those pipes would cost less than \$1 million and the city already has a \$650,000 federal community development block grant.

The appropriation would have covered the rest. The city's approximately 900 utility customers couldn't afford paying for it, he said. "Trying to put that on backs of utility customers would break them," **Irby** said. "It's enormously expensive." He said he will try to complete as much of the project as possible with the existing grant but will have to find another grant or try again during next year's state legislative session to cover the rest.

Florida Tax Watch, a government watchdog group, had recommended rejecting the Umatilla project and many other water projects because the state doesn't have a good review system to analyze and prioritize projects. The governor also vetoed \$300,000 for a wastewater line that would have connected the Lake Correctional Institution on U.S. Highway 27 to the sewer plant in Minneola.

Officials of the south Lake city have been working for several years to connect the state prison to its \$20 million sewer plant. Minneola could have not only enjoyed the income from the prison connection, but the plant, running well below its capacity, would run more efficiently, City Manager Mark Johnson said. The prison has an aging package plant on site that treats its sewage. "I think this would have been a good partnership between agencies," Johnson said. "But I understand the state is in difficult times, just like the rest of us."

Scott also vetoed \$52,314 for the Lake Technical Center, one of two charter vocational-training centers in the state. The other center in St. Johns County had its funding request vetoed. Past budget cuts have left the center with less money, while student enrollment has increased as people have lost their jobs and need training for different careers, Lake Tech Director Diane Culpepper said. The appropriation would have restored some of the funding lost in past years, she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
December 12, 2011

City buys computers for council members

Author: Gerbasi, Chris

The Umatilla City Council has entered the technological age. The council used laptop computers for the first time at its Tuesday meeting, saving hundreds of pages of paper by viewing the agenda electronically. "I was a little apprehensive about how it would go, but there were no hitches at all," city Manager **Glenn Irby** said. "They were able to follow it, everything was right there, and everybody was really pleased."

The city recently bought 11 HP laptops at a holiday sales price of \$5,400 from Staples. Each computer was discounted from \$598 to \$491. The computers will be used by all boards that meet in the council chambers. The city can easily make up the cost in savings on paper. Up to now, the city had been creating multiple paper agendas and packets of backup materials for boards and staff, which not only required reams of paper but was also time consuming. City clerk Karen Howard had to make 11 copies of the same material for bimonthly council meetings, and nine or more copies of agendas for subcommittees and other boards. The work often required a full day or more.

Now, Howard will have to prepare one agenda one time, and the materials will be distributed electronically to board members and staff. **Irby** said Tuesday's agenda and packets would have used about three reams of paper, or 1,500 sheets. Instead, 11 two-page paper agendas were printed for council, staff and press to follow, or 22 sheets. He did not have an individual breakdown on paper costs because they are wrapped into an office supply account.

Irby said the city may have been slow to provide the council with computers because agenda packets were typically small. But with more activity and projects in the city in recent years, packets have grown to hundreds of pages for meetings involving the comprehensive plan or land development requirements, for example. So the computer-savvy council asked staff to cut down on paper and look into purchasing Ipads or laptops, he said. Council members eventually settled on the choice of laptops. Now that the city has upgraded the chambers with computers, there may be no stopping it. **Irby** said the city will also beef up its WiFi capabilities in the chambers so attorneys and other staff members can research items on the fly if necessary during meetings.

Howard said that the city also plans to revamp its website soon. The meeting agendas should be available to the public online sometime after the first of the year. The laptops' first run went well, and **Irby** thinks they will be a positive addition, but he may feel more comfortable after next week. "We have a huge agenda coming up for the Planning and Zoning meeting next week," he said. "We made the choice to implement them on a slow agenda. The real test will be next week."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
September 1, 2011

Umatilla police chief suspended

Author: MILLARD K. IVES

Umatilla's top police has been suspended for 10 days amid several allegations, including that he hogged the department's only computer to play online video games, locked himself in his office while secluding himself from officers and refused to come to crime scenes.

Police Chief Doug Foster, who's headed the Umatilla Police Department for 19 years, is also accused of using meetings to belittle, demean and bully officers, having his staff run his personal errands, taking away their shotguns, neglecting department vehicles and requiring officers to submit a list of medication they were taking. "Morale among officers is very low and you are the are the direct cause," stated City Manager **Glenn Irby** in a memo to Foster which announced the suspension.

Foster couldn't be reach by phone for comment Wednesday. But in a written response to **Irby**, he refuted or addressed some of the allegations -- citing he only played games during his lunch break and after business hours and only asked a sergeant to pick up a tenant's rent. Foster also submitted proposals to rectify the issues which includes closer interaction with officers, encouraging feedback and attending a management course. In an interview with the Daily Commercial on Wednesday, **Irby** called the proposed rectifications "a good start." However, **Irby** added that he believes that external and personal issues have clouded Foster's effectiveness and warned that any further violations would be grounds for immediate termination.

Irby said he became of internal issues in the police department after an "emotional" officer Joel Cooper told the city manager he wanted to resign because he "believed that he had no other choice." Cooper later presented **Irby** with a "lengthy written chronology of concerns, encounters and outright complaints stemming from both personal and professional issues with the Umatilla Police Department." **Irby** said out of the approximately 10 complaints with Foster, he found seven of them to be valid and in violation of city policy. **Irby** said out of the five years he's been city manager, he is unaware of any other reprimands leveled upon Foster in his 25 years with the Umatilla Police Department.

Irby added before the recent complaints came up, he was unaware of any problems that officers had with Foster's leadership. "They were very ill at ease in coming to me," **Irby** said. **Irby** said he now hopes officers would find it easier to come to him with any concerns. Sgt. Chris Bell will fill in for Foster until his scheduled return of Sept. 12. Some complaints of officers' on Umatilla Police Chief Doug Foster and his written response to the city.

Uniformed officers being asked or directed by Foster or his assistant to conduct personal business for him, including payment of a personal invoice for his mother-in-law and collection of rent from his tenant.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

- Foster: Only asked Sgt. Chris Bell to pick up a renter's payment. Did give a city employee money to purchase a Power Ball lottery ticket.
- Foster secluding himself within his office between the hours of 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. and not opening the door to officers needing advice; and refusing to assist officer on possible crime scenes.
- Foster: I have never refused to come to a scene when requested by a officer unless I was completely out of the area.
- Foster issuing a written directive requiring all officers to provide him with a list of all medications they were currently taking.
- Foster: I wrote a guideline in an attempt to ensure officers wouldn't be working on the job while on medication which may effect their judgment or ability to perform the job task. I never requested the officers disclose their medical condition.
- *Officers complained about Foster disallowing use of shotguns by ordering them taken out of their cars.

Foster: I have restricted usage of shotguns and computers about two to three years ago. During a periodical vehicle inspection, I discovered a shotgun missing. I searched other vehicles and failed to located the weapon. When I called officers, no one seemed to know where the weapon was located. This wasn't an isolated incident.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel - Orlando, Fla.

March 22, 2011

Umatilla Airport sets sights higher

Author: Christine Snow

Years ago, a fence wrapped around this city's tiny municipal airport, making it unapproachable for residents. But now City Manager **Glenn Irby** is committed to transforming the Umatilla Municipal Airport into a viable resource for residents and businesses in hopes of elevating the local economy. About 90 people attended an open house at the airport in late January in an effort to make the airport more accessible to those in the area. "It's a community airport, not a country club," **Irby** said. "It belongs to everybody."

As a way to promote the economy, the airport began offering fuel services for planes in January. This allows pilots, mostly those flying small planes for business or for fun, to make a stop in Umatilla to fuel up, access the airport's wireless Internet and check for weather conditions. **Irby** said he anticipates this will encourage pilots to make extended stops at nearby businesses and give the city an "economic boost." "What we're hoping is that with having the fuel, it will be a draw to Umatilla for restaurants and shopping districts and the Ocala National Forest," he said. He also hopes other recent improvements to the airport, which has existed for decades, will be an attraction for pilots. The airport added 13 new hangars to hold aircraft. A new security system was established, including a surveillance video cameras, lighting and two new gates. The surveillance cameras are expected to help foil future situations, such as Lake County's largest drug bust that occurred at the airport in late 2010. Law-enforcement officials found nearly 800 pounds of marijuana at the airport. Because of the airport's rural location, city and airport officials weren't surprised by the criminal activity. The new cameras, however, should limit suspicious incidents.

Officials have also stepped up efforts to be more of a visible force in the aviation community. The city plans to increase advertising of the airport in aviation magazines and websites at a low cost or for free. "We found out that word of mouth is actually working quite well," he said. "It's a unique entity," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
March 1, 2011

Ready for takeoff

Author: Ell, Larry

A series of fortunate events has things looking up at Umatilla's airport. Over the past few years, the city has capitalized on a series of government grants and well-timed private interactions to transform an asset -- one that City Manager **Glenn Irby** described as "underutilized and in very bad condition" -- into an aviation success story.

The facility's evolution began by focusing on the airport's most pressing deficiency. "It had a very short, almost unusable runway when it started several years ago," **Irby** said. That changed after city officials hired a consultant to explore the availability of federal and state grants through the Federal Aviation Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation. **Irby** said the consultants concluded that the city needed to build hangars to entice people to use the airport. FDOT didn't agree.

When state transportation officials came to look at the site as part of the grant process, they reportedly told the city there was no way they were going to advocate for hangars when the runway was in such deplorable condition. However, FDOT said it would, instead, grant money to the city to widen, lengthen and upgrade the runway. "That was when it started becoming something," **Irby** said. The runway project began in 2004 with a price tag of nearly \$1.5 million -- too much for the city to handle on its own -- so it embarked on what would eventually result in a series of shrewd and sometimes lucky partnerships. With sizable grants from the FAA and FDOT, Umatilla's financial commitment for the expanded runway totaled \$37,812.97.

Improvements over the years followed with equal attention to frugality.

At the time the runway was completed, the airport had only one hangar and it was crowded with five airplanes. So the next phase of facility upgrades included the addition of more storage capacity. From 2006 through 2009, 13 hangars were built at a total cost of \$933,031--\$186,606 which was borne by the city. **Irby** says all but four are occupied. "Then we started hearing the reason why nobody comes to Umatilla and nobody rents the hangars is because we didn't have fuel," **Irby** said.

That sparked perhaps the most fortuitous sequence of events.

To help build the estimated \$300,000 fuel farm, the city applied for--and won--an FDOT grant. But since it required 20 percent in local matching funds, city officials turned the state cash down. **Irby** said, for some reason, FDOT kept the grant alive, so he kept presenting options to the city council to take advantage of it. Last year, an opportunity for a public-private partnership finally led to Umatilla being able to complete its airport vision.

A pair of fuel tanks at Leesburg International Airport had reportedly been repossessed by the bank and were available for purchase at a large discount. **Irby** said a local businessman agreed to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

cover FDOT's local matching requirement of \$53,719 and pay for a load of fuel. Two months ago the tank was finally put in. "Over the last month we've pumped somewhere between 1,000 and 2,000 gallons of fuel." **Irby** said. "And for three weeks, it wasn't even advertised." The blossoming of Umatilla's airport has been a thing of beauty for Jerry Byrd. As a self-described "airport bum," Byrd acts as the volunteer caretaker of the facility.

As a pilot himself for the past 20 years, he knows the value a full-service airport can bring to a community. "A lot of general aviation pilots just love to have a small place to fly into, park their aircraft and go out for a bite to eat," Byrd said. "It's a good way to patronize the city of Umatilla." Making it as easy as possible for visiting pilots to venture into town, a courtesy car will soon be made available at the airport.

Irby said the city recently auctioned off a couple of out-of-service police cars for \$6,100 and was offered a used car by the family of a deceased Umatilla resident for only \$3,500. Once the car is ready for use, officials feel the airport will have the complete package--and with proper marketing--will become a true jewel in the city's crown. "We are the only other airport in Lake County that has a paved runway," **Irby** said. "I think people will say, 'Wow, I didn't know that.' So it's something to be proud of."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel – Orlando, FL
December 23, 2010

“Its better than a good thing”

Author: Katie Adams

Lake County law-enforcement agencies received new equipment and upgrades thanks to nearly \$179,000 in federal grants. For the Umatilla Police Department, for example, about \$7,000 in grant money means new bulletproof vests, cameras, safety goggles and training pistols. among other equipment. The money came from the 2010 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant award, from the national federal Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Umatilla City Manager **Glenn Irby** said he's excited about the opportunities the grant has brought his city. "Anytime a city of our size is able to come into any kind of grant where our taxpayers aren't impacted, it's a good thing," **Irby** said. "It's better than good thing." Umatilla police Chief Doug Foster said the money is a great help. "Everybody gets a little bit of extra help with their needs because [with] our economy at this point, we don't have a lot of extra cash," Foster said.

"Every little bit helps."

Any municipality or department interested in grant money can apply. In Lake, the grant is split among the Sheriff's Office and police departments that bid for it. In order to qualify, departments must present a proposal and budget of how the money would be spent, said Brenda Quattlebaum, Lake probation coordinator. This was the first year all of Lake's police departments applied for the grant. More than half of Lake cities had to agree that the money should be divided among all police departments.

The proposals go before the Local Law Enforcement Substance Abuse Advisory Board, comprised of police chiefs and representatives from the State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, LifeStream Behavioral Center and other organizations totaling more than 20 people, Quattlebaum said. The board determines how the money will be distributed.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
September 19, 2010

Flooding problem to be addressed in Umatilla

Author: LARRY ELL

Cycle Station owner Steve Pembrook can finally look forward to a time when he won't have to clean up heavy deposits of dirt left on his doorstep by stormwater runoff. The city of Umatilla learned this week that it had been awarded a \$226,238 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reconstruct an alleyway and mitigate drainage and stormwater issues that have plagued 14 businesses in the north end of the City. "I've dealt with the city for several years on this issue, so it would be wonderful if we could get that thing cleaned up," Pembrook said. "It's affected my sales because I can't even set my motorcycles outside anymore."

According to Umatilla city manager **Glenn Irby**, the alley runs parallel to State Road 19 and is bracketed by Palmetto St. to the north and Seminole St. to the south. He says many businesses along the alley, as well as in proximity to it, have experienced flooding problems for years. "Like you wouldn't believe," **Irby** said. "The older buildings were built below the grade of the alley, so when it rains, the water runs off the road and into the buildings."

Irby said he was shocked to learn Umatilla had been awarded the funds since the city applied to FEMA in 2008, after Tropical Storm Fay deluged much of Florida. The grant, which also requires a 25 percent local match of \$56,559, will be used to dig up the alleyway and replace underground conveyance systems along with gutters and curbing. **Irby** says Umatilla's commitment will be paid from either stormwater fees or Community Redevelopment Agency funds. Construction could begin by the latter part of this year or early next year, so the long-suffering business owners won't have to wait too much longer to finally get some relief. "I think they're going to be ecstatic," **Irby** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel – Orlando, FL
Sep 20, 2010

Grant will fix flood in Umatilla

Author: Christine Snow

Every time it rains heavily, Michael Hill braces himself for the expected flooding from a nearby alleyway that often flows into his restaurant's property and destroys his catering equipment. But now the owner of Michael's Restaurant and Catering is breathing a sigh of a relief as the city received a \$226,238 federal grant to reconstruct the troubling alleyway and improve its drainage. The grant, awarded to the city by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is designed to alleviate the ongoing stormwater issues faced by businesses in the area. "My reaction to this is: finally," Hill said. "I'm very happy for it to be happening."

About 14 businesses have dealt with similar problems as Michael's for years because of the poor grading of the surface of the alleyway, which is located near State Road 19 between Palmetto Street on the north and Collins Street on the south end, City Manager **Glenn Irby** said. This creates a situation ideal for flooding, **Irby** said. "It's basically the same way with all those businesses," he said. "Most of them are below grade." The flooding issues are a consistent headache for area businesses such as Michael's. In the four years since Hill established the restaurant at its North Central Avenue location, an overflow of rain has filled the parking lot and collected in a garage that holds boxes of catering equipment.

So Hill must constantly replace the boxes rather than physically relocate the necessary garage, which would be a more expensive process. "Within a few minutes [of rain], the water is several inches deep. And, if a car drives by, it sends a huge, big wave," said Hill, who said his equipment sits inside wooden boxes. "Those boxes continued to get ruined. It's been a very costly problem." The city still needs to provide a 25-percent match of the grant, or \$56,559, before reconstruction can begin, **Irby** said. As the alleyway is located in Umatilla's Community Redevelopment Agency area, the city will pay for its match either through redevelopment area funds or stormwater fees. "It's a very important step forward to fixing a very serious problem," **Irby** said.

The grant is also a welcome assistance for the city as it's been a constant struggle to come up with the means to overcome the alleyway's problems, **Irby** said. "For a city the size of Umatilla to get almost a quarter of a million dollars grant, it is a huge blessing," he said. "It would've taken us years to get this kind of money. This is a very good thing."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
August 12, 2010

Grayson's grant, stimulus claims questioned

Author: BRAD BUCK

Umatilla City Manager **Glenn Irby** said Wednesday that campaign literature from U.S. Rep. Alan Grayson about his successes in bringing gobs of grant money to his city are misleading. Grayson represents Florida's Eighth Congressional District, which includes portions of Lake County. Glossy literature was recently distributed in the Umatilla area, touting grants that Grayson says he's helped secure. "Congressman Alan Grayson delivers for Umatilla," the material says. "How much money did the city of Umatilla receive in federal grant money in the year before I came to Congress? ZERO. But, in my first year in office, the amount of our money coming back to work in Umatilla increased to nearly \$130,000."

The literature also says that in 2009 Umatilla received grants for the airport and police department. "In an indirect way, he is taking full credit for those grants," **Irby** said. Although Grayson is taking credit for the grants Umatilla received in fiscal year 2009-10, he didn't have anything to do with getting them, **Irby** said. "We asked him for \$7.9 million in stimulus money," **Irby** said. One of the biggest-ticket items Umatilla asked for was a city hall and emergency shelter. The latter would be critical after so many people in Paisley had no place to go when the 2007 tornadoes hit, **Irby** said.

Umatilla received no stimulus money. "None of those things came anywhere near being accepted," **Irby** said. Furthermore, no grant money went through Grayson's office, he said. That money was already on the table before Grayson took office in 2009, **Irby** said. "It makes it look as if he's the shining knight on the white horse," **Irby** said.

No one from Grayson's campaign or his office commented on **Irby's** statements Wednesday. Grayson's website claims many victories in bringing stimulus and federal grant money home to the Eighth Congressional District. But it does not specify what cities, counties or school districts the money went to. "The hard work of Congressman Alan Grayson paid off in a big way for the people of our district," the website says.

A new analysis of grant information showed that federal grant dollars for Florida's 8th Congressional District increased by 98 percent during the congressman's first year in office. "I brought in more than \$100 million in additional federal dollars when we need it most," Grayson said on his website. "The new money created or saved thousands of jobs. It kept police officers on the streets, hospitals and schools open, and improved the lives of people in Central Florida." Grants to municipal and county governments are up 101 percent, Grayson's website says.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel – Orlando, FL
Jun 23, 2010

Bad for business?

Author: Amy C. Riddel

UMATILLA

In the coming months, road crews will begin installing turn lanes and an extended median along the city's main drag, but already some business owners are concerned about the changes. New turn lanes will be installed along Central Avenue near the road's intersection with Cassady Street to the west and Guerrant Street to the east. The median won't allow cars to cut across Central Avenue, which is a cause for concern for some business owners.

City Manager **Glenn Irby** said he's asked the state Department of Transportation to reconsider some of the work and change the medians to allow for easier access to some of the businesses. But, ultimately, he said it's the state's decision. "We have gone to bat for the businesses and written a letter to reconsider one of the closures," he said. "Hopefully, they will. At the end of the day, they don't have to."

Already, workers have started surveying the area for the new medians and turn lanes. Currently, there are several short medians that allow drivers to cross Central, which is also known as State Road 19, from side streets. Recently, the city asked local residents to fill out an online survey to gauge public opinion about the roadwork. There's only been one response and it wasn't positive. The respondent said the Transportation Department work is not acceptable because it will mean "closing too many median openings that will make it difficult for south-bound traffic to access businesses on the east side of S.R. 19."

Some business owners along the stretch of road that would be most affected wouldn't give their names but said changes to the medians could be the death knell for their establishments. In a letter to transportation officials, **Irby** asked them to reconsider the median placement. "I am hopeful that you will consider the position of the City of Umatilla with regard to the complaint by one of our long-term business owners," he wrote. "The City has very few businesses and during these economic times, it would be a disadvantage to them to lose existing clientele." **Irby** said the city hopes the intersection at Central and Cassady/Guerrant ultimately will warrant stoplights but, in the meantime, new turn lanes should help alleviate some of the congestion in the area.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel – Orlando, FL
Nov 14, 2009

Meek visits Wildwood: Airport may add fuel

Author: Christine Snow

To drive more business to Umatilla Municipal Airport, city leaders hope to entice a private company to install fuel tanks. Last year, the city built 13 airplane hangars at the airport, and about half are empty, said City Manager **Glenn Irby**. He said many pilots shun the airport because fuel is not readily available. The city does have a grant that will partially pay the cost of installing fuel pumps and recently heard from Aerofuel, a new Umatilla-based company interested in installing the pumps.

In the coming weeks, the city will begin a formal bid process. If a low bidder is determined, **Irby** said the cost to supply fuel to the airport wouldn't come from taxpayer dollars. Instead, the grant will cover about \$100,000 toward installing the fuel tanks, and the private business will pay the remaining cost, about \$50,000.

WILDWOOD -- U.S. Rep. Kendrick Meek, D-Miami, will attend a local church service Sunday to receive petitions for his 2010 U.S. Senate campaign. Meek, who plans to gather more than 112,000 petitions to qualify for the ballot, will attend New Life Center Ministries at 10 a.m. to gather petitions collected by The Villages residents for his campaign. Meek is seeking the seat recently vacated by Mel Martinez, R-Orlando. He and former Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre will square off in a Democratic primary to meet the winner of the Republican primary between Gov. Charlie Crist and former state House Speaker Marco Rubio. U.S. Sen. George LeMieux was named by Crist to fill the remainder of Martinez's term. Meek's appearance will be until 11 a.m. at the church, at 9707 County Road 229. Umatilla gets festive

UMATILLA -- Get ready for a dose of holiday cheer, Umatilla style.

Beginning Friday or Saturday, city workers will start installing new holiday banners on utility poles along Central Avenue. City Manager **Glenn Irby** said the banners replace the decade-old electric decorations that needed significant repair work. He said it would have cost the city more than \$1,000 to fix them. The new holiday banners feature different holiday and winter themes, including snowflakes. Installing metal brackets that hold the decorations in place on about 50 utility poles should take about a day, he said. Once those brackets are in place, they can be used for other decorations and signage, including for the Florida Black Bear Festival, slated for March 27.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
December 8, 2008

Umatilla considering water/wastewater impact fee hike

Author: BENJAMIN ROODE

City leaders are proposing to raise city water and sewer impact fees on new construction in anticipation of needed future upgrades to those systems. Council members gave first reading this week to an ordinance increasing the fees, and making a 6-month window for owners of undeveloped property to pre-pay their fees at the old rate. The ordinance, which needs two readings before it can be adopted, would increase water impact fees from \$1,157 per household unit or equivalent space in a commercial business to \$2,174 per household. Wastewater fees would increase from \$2,436 per home to \$3,204 per home.

The city phased in its current adopted fees between 1989 and 1993, said City Manager **Glenn Irby**. Umatilla has about 1,100 water customers and about 600 wastewater customers. Impact fees are applied only to new building, not existing customers. If the fees increase, owners of existing buildings would not have to pay the balance.

While residential building is currently stagnant in the city, there are three developments with capacity for about 1,000 homes that have been approved on the city's south end, **Irby** said. When the housing markets relax and those homes start to be built, the city's water and wastewater systems will need upgrades. "We're planning for the future, for both systems," **Irby** said.

If the measure is adopted, it would make Umatilla's water and wastewater impacts some of the highest in the county. Minneola holds both the highest water and wastewater impact fees. The ordinance's final reading is slated for 7 p.m. Dec. 16 at Umatilla City Council Chambers, 1 South Central Ave, Umatilla.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orland Sentinel
March 23, 2008

Umatilla gives annexation early OK

Author: Marin E. Comas

On morning walks, Terry Stickney has seen foxes, hawks, bobcats and even wild pigs near her home off Keene Road in north Lake County. It's not surprising for a black bear to show up once in a while. "What's out here, it's a wildlife corridor," said Stickney, who has lived with her husband, Warren, in the area near the Marion County line for almost a dozen years. "We have a unique place in the state of Florida." But Stickney and her neighbors are concerned about losing the area's quiet, rural character.

Last week, the Umatilla City Council granted preliminary approval to annex almost 253 acres south and east of Keene Road. Council members also agreed to change the land use and zoning, which could allow up to 196 new homes on the property. A second and final vote is scheduled for April 1. That may not seem like a big development request when compared with other areas of Lake County -- which has been one of Central Florida's fastest-growing counties.

Mount Dora, for example, has approved hundreds of new homes east of U.S. Highway 441 in recent years. Farther south, Clermont and Minneola also have approved mega-developments amounting to thousands of homes. But for Umatilla, a quiet town with a population of about 2,600 residents and considered the gateway to the Ocala National Forest, a large development request is rare. "In my opinion, developers have done everything they can in other parts of the county and now this [Umatilla] is the only place left," said City Council member Ralph Cadwell Sr., who has lived in Umatilla for more than 60 years. "We know growth is coming, but we don't want to be smothered. We want to still be a good place to live."

City Manager **Glenn Irby** said Umatilla has avoided much of the surrounding growth because it's nestled in an isolated pocket of Central Florida. "The road network here is not conducive to commuters," he said. Dozens of people turned out for Tuesday's City Council meeting. Almost all who spoke against the project were county residents. The land is made up of mostly pine trees, uplands and portions of North and South Twin lakes. If approved, the land-use and zoning request would allow single-family residential homes at a density of one per acre. Pine trees would surround the development and provide a buffer. The applicant is John Howell, an Orlando attorney representing Lake Butler Groves Inc.

David Kirkpatrick, who has lived on 18 acres off Keene Road since 2000, said most of the homes in the surrounding area sit on tracts of at least 5 acres each. "This is a rural area and this [development] would ruin the character," he said. "When we moved out here, we knew it would be developed someday. But we sure didn't think it was going to be something with this many homes." That number of homes, Kirkpatrick added, would affect the surrounding roads and schools. City officials, however, said at this point it is only a request to annex into the city and change the land use and zoning. No development plans have been presented to the city. Also, any

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

land-use changes approved by the City Council also would have to be approved by state planners with the Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee later this year.

City Council member Holly Curley said she voted for the request after it was amended to reduce the density from almost three homes per acre to one home per acre. "Otherwise, I think that would've been in excess for our community," she said. "But I think it will become a community that Umatilla will come to embrace." Cadwell said reducing the density "was a good compromise." Curley added that no city residents spoke against the project during last week's meeting. That's too bad, said Kirkpatrick, a county resident. "The residents of Umatilla are not going to care about it until it's built and it impacts them with all the traffic," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
January 8, 2008

Fire chief asked to resign
Richard Shirk e-mailed photos of partially nude crash victim
Author: Marilyn Aciego

After fall-out from e-mailing inappropriate pictures, Umatilla's fire chief was asked to hand in his resignation on Monday. Chief Richard Shirk - named chief only a few months ago - responded to a crash scene on County Road 450 N.E. on Nov. 8. In that crash, 26-year-old Jamie Mikell of DeLand was killed. Shirk took photos of Mikell as emergency personnel rendered aid and then e-mailed the photos to fire departments in Mount Dora, Eustis and Leesburg, said Umatilla City Manager **Glenn Irby**. "We know for a fact they went to Mount Dora, Eustis and Leesburg Fire Departments as well as (Lake-Sumter) EMS," **Irby** said.

Twenty-seven photos were e-mailed, including two in which Mikell was dressed only in panties as emergency personnel provided aid. In one photo, Mikell's breast is exposed. The matter was brought to **Irby's** attention after Lake-Sumter EMS Executive Director Jim Judge called **Irby** on Nov. 27 and filed a formal complaint on Nov. 29. According to the complaint, paramedic Gwen Burgess told Judge the photos had been e-mailed to multiple agencies and she felt they were inappropriate because they included photos of a patient that was partially naked. The complaint goes on to state that Judge contacted Shirk and discussed with him "the potential problems that both the pictures and the dissemination of the pictures could cause." Those problems include potential lawsuits and the pain the photos could cause the family if they were leaked.

Mikell is the granddaughter of Umatilla City Councilwoman Jeannie Olson. Attempts to reach Mikell's family were unsuccessful. Shirk told Judge he took the photos for training purposes and e-mailed them to other agencies for their training value, according to the complaint. Shirk was suspended with pay on Nov. 28, pending the outcome of an investigation. Less than 24 hours after being suspended and told not to represent the city of Umatilla in any way, Shirk ordered Fire Lt. Ernie Hall to retrieve the Fire Department checkbook from Shirk's and give it to ex-Fire Chief Paul Getchell. Getchell is no longer employed with Umatilla. Hall refused the order, but Lt. Baron Jones did take the checkbook to Getchell, according to Umatilla Police Chief Doug Foster's report.

Foster went to Getchell's place of business to retrieve the checkbook and found Shirk there. As Foster left, Shirk followed him out and asked him how the investigation was going. According to Foster's report, Shirk told him he had no knowledge of why the checkbook was removed from the department and given to Getchell.

In an interview with Foster, Shirk said he didn't remember being asked by **Irby** to turn in the checkbook and said he did not order anyone to take it to Getchell. Hall disputes that account. After the conclusion of the investigation, **Irby** decided to fire Shirk. "He was both deceptive and insubordinate during this investigation," **Irby** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Irby said Monday the sides have come to an agreement on a severance package. If Shirk resigns, he will walk away with three months of benefits and three months of his \$55,000 salary. He was expected to turn in his resignation Monday afternoon. "I'll take his resignation anyway I can lawfully get it," **Irby** said. **Irby** said accepting the resignation and offering the severance package is nothing more than a business decision. "It gives him (Shirk) a chance to save face. It will also end up saving both sides money," **Irby** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel - Orlando Florida
September 17, 2007

Umatilla still hoping for annexation boom; But so far, property owners in unincorporated areas have shown little interest in joining up with the city.;

Author: Adrian G. Uribarri

An effort to attract new residents and generate revenue in this former citrus town has done little to quench officials' thirst for growth. In June, City Council members approved a resolution to temporarily waive application fees for annexations. Their goal was to expand Umatilla's tax base by enticing owners to move their properties from the unincorporated county into the city. But since the program began July 1, two applications have been filed, and neither has been approved to receive taxable city services. The dearth of interest has left Umatilla's tax base stagnant as its leaders become friendlier to development.

City officials said that while part of the cause may be limited public awareness, a major factor is a downturn in the housing market that discourages people from paying the city's additional taxes. "Developers are holding off right now," City Council President Scott Purvis said. "They're not going to invest in something they can't get an instant return on."

Until Dec. 31, the end of the no-fee window, developers and other applicants can save the \$1,635 it usually costs to apply for annexation into the city. But they still must pay for rezoning and future-land-use applications, which together can total \$2,825 to \$3,580 -- plus annual city taxes.

City Manager **Glenn Irby** said paying for city services helps property owners because many of them have a sewer rather than septic system, and emergency-response times are shorter in some areas. But paying for those amenities becomes difficult to justify for developers who are trying to cut costs as they wait for an industry upturn, he said. "There's a slump in the building market," **Irby** said. "I don't think anybody thought that it was going to reach the levels it has reached. If residential building were like it was a year and a half to two years ago, I think we would have more applications."

Irby said he plans to mail letters about the program to Lake County residents with property contiguous to Umatilla city limits. Up to now, publicity has been limited to newspaper advertisements and word-of-mouth. "This is just an invitation," he said. "You would hope that it does something, but what it actually will produce -- time will tell."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
February 1, 2007

Umatilla discusses City Hall options

Author: David Donald

City Council agreed Wednesday night to bring in a consultant to assess the city government's space needs before deciding on the fate of a cramped City Hall. The council was asked at a workshop Wednesday to consider four options and give direction to the city manager. The options included renovating the existing city hall, purchasing the Old Harryanna Building, building on a new site or leasing a new building. "What we need to do is educate ourselves on our needs," said Councilman H. Scott Purvis. "I don't think we need to jump in with both feet."

After hearing the options, the council agreed to bring someone in to study the needs of the city, such as parking spaces, the size of City Hall and staff projections, before considering any option. However, City Manager Glen **Irby** urged the council to do something quickly. "Our staff has reached a point where it's becoming inoperable. We're stepping on each other. We need to do something now," **Irby** said. "I don't think we can wait until the next budget year."

Purvis suggested that partitions be used to section off office space for a growing staff and a new roof be installed on the existing City Hall while the council discusses further options. The Old Harryanna Building was eliminated as an option because it would cost more than \$6 million to purchase the property. Leon Strickland, a property appraiser and land owner in Umatilla, proposed an option for the city to lease new buildings developed on his land. Strickland said the city would have a chance to participate in the design and layout of what would be called the Umatilla Municipal Center. Because Umatilla would lease the buildings, the city wouldn't be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep. He also said he wouldn't require a rent deposit. If the city were to lease, it would pay no taxes on the property as it would if it owned the land. Strickland would pay taxes to the city, which he likened to a tax refund. "You've got a landlord you know, and I think I've got a tenant I know," said Strickland during his presentation. Strickland asked the city to authorize staff to work with him on the concept of the commerce park. However, Mayor Benita Martin urged council members to weigh their options and take measures to make sure that thoughtful planning is considered. "I want to caution the city," said Martin. "We need to identify what we want our downtown to look like." The other option included building a new City Hall on property owned by the city.

Irby couldn't give the council a definite cost yet, but said he would look into it as soon as possible. The council praised **Irby** for his dedication and ideas in making the city of Umatilla a better place. Purvis said he appreciated the new atmosphere of professionalism and feels that the city of Umatilla is about to take off. "I don't like to move without being fully educated," said Purvis. "But being a businessman, I like to own my stuff. I don't want to create problems for others down the road."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
November 20, 2004

Glenn Irby, Mascotte city manager, takes Sheriff's Office job

Author: PETE SKIBA

With almost two years under his belt as Mascotte City Manager, **Glenn Irby** resigned effective Jan. 3 and accepted the position of the Lake County Sheriff's Office Director of Staff Services. This would put **Irby** in charge of the sheriff's \$43 million budget, among other duties, starting Jan. 4, Sheriff-elect Chris Daniels said. "Doctors have found that it is better to have professional administrators run hospitals while they practice medicine,"

Daniels said. "**Irby** will be in charge of functions that are not classified as law enforcement -- budgeting, finance, human resources, acquisitions and department property. Officers will be in charge of law enforcement." Daniels further outlined a hierarchy change in the Sheriff's Office structure from four senior commanders to two chiefs and a civilian. Maj. Gary Borders should become chief of criminal investigation operations with the jail, court services and training center under his supervision.

Capt. Wayne Longo should take on the duties of chief of law enforcement operations, supervising uniform patrol, investigations and special operations. Further assignments for the chiefs and restructuring the Sheriff's Office hierarchy should get under way as supervisor's work from the bottom up reorganizing. Details are still being worked out. "**Glenn Irby** brings unique experience to the position. He has both extensive management and budget experience -- and he was a police officer," Daniels said. "And he lives in Minneola, that keeps a presence from the south county in the office. It also keeps our office in the south."

Irby began his career as a Eustis police officer from 1976 to 1985, he said. He attended college and earned a bachelors of science in business administration at the University of Central Florida. He went on to earn his masters in public administration from Troy State University. **Irby** moved from Tavares, where he was finance director and assistant city manager, to become Mascotte's city manager at a salary of about \$65,000. The position with the Sheriff's Office pays about \$88,000, Daniels said.

Mascotte Mayor Stanley Sloan said he believed that the City Council would begin a search for a replacement after its regular meeting Monday night. City Councilwoman-elect Barbara Tillman said she would like to see Deputy City Clerk Marge Strausbaugh in the job. "She has the resume and should be considered first in line for possible succession," Tillman said. "She could easily step in as city manager and clerk temporarily, and we could see how it goes from there."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
October 12, 2004

Rate hikes move forward

Author: PETE SKIBA

Rates for trash pickup, water and pay for Mascotte's elected officials got a boost from City Council last night at its regularly scheduled 6:30 p.m. meeting. With no residents at the meeting except for Barbara Tillman, a city council candidate, the two ordinances received a favorable first reading. They were then scheduled for a vote at the Oct. 25 meeting in the Civic Center Council Chambers.

The trash rate increased from \$20 a residence to \$21. Considering that Mascotte retains a twice a week pickup schedule, that is reasonable, City Manager **Glenn Irby** said. The increase should be used to help finance a better trash retrieval system.

Instead of various sized and shaped cans, uniform 90-gallon cans would be picked up by a new truck with a retrieval arm. The elderly could obtain smaller cans for easier handling. The system would reduce the workload for city staff, and financing for the next seven years would run about \$41,000 a year. "We can keep up service and it works out less than hiring three workers," **Irby** said.

The recent hurricanes might have helped nudge the City Council to continue storm water projects and add \$2 a month to water bills to help cover them. Citing a doubled workload for elected officials, City Council also agreed on an ordinance to raise their pay. The mayor's salary would rise from \$340 to \$400 a month. Mayor pro tem would see the salary increase from \$240 to \$300 a month. Council members' pay would rise from \$180 to \$250 a month.

Minneola City Council members receive \$400 a month and Montverde Town Council members receive \$110. "Considering we haven't had an increase since the 1990s, I don't think it is unfair," City Councilman Jeff Krull said. "It is in line with other cities."

Mayor Sloan seconded the thought and said the complexity of governing the city has increased along with its now about 4,000 residents. Not only have the number of city meetings doubled, but also the workshops leading to the meetings have increased, he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel –Orlando, FL
Oct 11, 2004

Strapped Mascotte Weighs Pay Raise; Council Members Meet Tonight to Discuss Upping Their Salaries Amid A Drop in City Financial Reserves

Author: Robert Sargent

Last year, council members wanted to give themselves a raise even though the city budget fell short by \$200,000. They dropped the idea. Now Mascotte has more money problems, dipping into its financial reserves by up to \$400,000 to make ends meet. But the City Council still wants the pay raise.

The council will meet at 6:30 p.m. today to consider increasing pay for mayor pro tem from \$240 to \$300 a month and for the mayor from \$340 to \$400 a month. Council members' pay could go from \$180 to \$250 monthly. "There's no question that this is justified," said Mayor Stanley Sloan, who said that the City Council has not had a pay increase in years.

Sloan said the number of city meetings has doubled, requiring more time from council members. Mascotte also has grown to nearly 4,000 residents, he said. Mascotte looked at similar-sized cities to compare council paychecks. Sloan said the proposed increase would help bring his city in line with those other governments.

City Manager **Glenn Irby** said Mascotte aims to work more efficiently to turn around its financial losses. One example is garbage. Mascotte now uses six workers and two trucks to handle garbage collection. The city had considered using three more workers to handle growing amounts of garbage. However, a new type of truck built by Heil Environmental Industries can do the same work with one worker. Similar collection trucks, which use a mechanical arm to pick up specially designed cans, are used in Tavares, Kissimmee and many other areas.

Irby said the truck and 1,500 collection cans for all of Mascotte's homes and some businesses will cost about \$250,000. Financing will run about \$41,000 for each of the next seven years, which he said is less than the annual cost of three employees. The city plans to increase garbage fees about 5 percent to \$21 a month for an average home beginning Nov. 1. An extra \$2 will be added to city water bills to help pay for storm-water projects. Mascotte also is looking to save money by installing new electronic water meters on homes, **Irby** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
September 25, 2004

Annexation dispute

Author: PETE SKIBA

With a Lake County School Board lawsuit putting a 115-acre annexation and possibly thousands of houses in jeopardy, a landowner and the City of Mascotte want to deal. The city also plans to annex 560 acres in the Villa City and Pablo Island roads area, which abut the contentious 115 acres, with a first reading Oct. 11, City Manager **Glenn Irby** said. Even though the original 115-acre annexation is contested, the second larger annexation, which the smaller one makes legally contiguous, could be done before a court ruling.

A reading of the 2004 Florida Statutes on annexation, Chapter 171, also said that the second annexation would stand, even if the first one were declared void as a consequence of the suit. Anyone objecting to the second annexation has 30 days to register a complaint in court after the annexation was adopted.

The 560 acres is the moneymaker if it is annexed allowing four dwellings per acre. It is where possibly thousands of homes could sprout with hundreds more children to attend an already burdened school system. That fact, and neighbors who wish to preserve their one-house-per-five-acres rural lifestyle, prompted the suit. The School Board concluded that the area does not fit annexation requirements and should not be allowed. It filed suit in January.

The Board contends that the annexation creates an illegal enclave. An enclave results when county land becomes surrounded by city land with no exit but through the city. A dilapidated and unsafe-looking bridge on the property does not qualify as an exit through the county, the School Board contends. A deal was offered. The landowner, A.E. Langley of Langley Fruit Co., sent a letter to Stephen Johnson, school board attorney, offering to trade 40 acres to the Board for a school site in return for dropping the suit and getting a pass on school impact fees, **Irby** said.

That doesn't make sense, said Villa City Road resident Tom Ferguson, one of many area residents against the annexation. "If you give the land and have the school impact fees dropped, you haven't given anything. If I give you \$500,000 in land and you don't charge me \$500,000, what have I given you?" Ferguson said. "Nothing." The School Board could discuss the deal as soon as it can schedule a meeting. "I don't discuss pending litigation," Johnson said. "I am trying to schedule a meeting to discuss the lawsuit." The meeting would be what is commonly called a shade meeting, which allows public officials to discuss litigation without public attendance. It is not considered public under the Sunshine Law.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
July 28, 2004

Property tax rate should hold in Mascotte this year

Author: PETE SKIBA

The bite of the real estate tax rate in Mascotte should stay the same -- but there might be a sting to water bills. This year's total budget if adopted will be more than \$3.8 million. It is 23.1 percent more than last year's \$2.9 million. If the Mascotte City Council does not radically alter the budget its members discussed Monday, the real estate tax rate will remain at \$5.99 for each \$1,000 of appraised property value. At that rate, the owner of a \$125,000 home claiming the \$25,000 homestead exemption would pay \$599 in property taxes.

The roll back rate in Mascotte is 4.96. The roll back rate is the tax rate that would provide the city with the same revenue it received from the property tax during this past fiscal year. Water rates could go up by less than 50 cents for 1,000 gallons a month. "We need the increased rate to cover the cost of delivering services," City Manager **Glenn Irby** said. "Your system is not paying for itself." City Councilwoman Dorothy Lee and Mayor Stanley Sloan said they would like to keep rates down. **Irby** pegged the increase at about a dollar on an average bill of \$12 a month. Keeping rates down did not seem feasible, considering the rate increase last year was the first in 10 years, **Irby** said. Costs have gone way up. There's the rub.

Mascotte might remain a small city in its heart, but it, along with the region, is growing. And growth costs. Mascotte could receive more than \$181,000 more in fiscal year 2005 than it received in real estate taxes last year, a budget memo stated. Costs increased by more than \$683,000 in this year. The city makes up the difference by drawing on reserves of the general, water and sanitation funds. In modernizing city finances, the City Council and **Irby** have built up reserves. The City Council seemed inclined to further modernize by tentatively approving the \$170,000 to revise Mascotte's Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Now, if someone wants to change the land use, the zoning, of their property, they must go through a Comprehensive Plan Amendment filed with the state. Once the plan is revised, it would take a vote of the City Council. The budget, as discussed, would add three firefighters and an assistant public works director. The current director, Henry Sharp, plans to retire in a couple years. His assistant could replace him. The cost of the three firefighters would be \$110,000 for wages and benefits, the memo stated.

Lake County City Manager Bill Neron should ask the Lake County Commission to increase Mascotte's funding to \$175,000, **Irby** said. It is less expensive for the county to pay Mascotte than put its own stations in the area the city can cover, he said. The assistant public works director is budgeted at \$45,000 and benefits, the budget states. The position should be filled by Jan 1, 2005. Mascotte officials scheduled public hearings for the budget on Sept. 14 and 27.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
May 11, 2004

Mascotte votes unanimously to accept clerk's resignation

Author: PETE SKIBA

An overlap between responsibilities and duties written into the Mascotte City Charter in 1925 and the city manager position created in 2002 might have resulted in a conflict between city officials and the resignation of the city clerk/administrator April 28. The Mascotte City Council voted unanimously with John Fulington absent Monday night at the regular City Council meeting to accept City Clerk/Administrator Dana Waters' resignation. It then appointed City Manager **Glenn Irby** city clerk.

Council also set up the beginnings of a referendum to possibly change the City Charter and smooth out the bumps in staffing if voters adopt the city manager administration form. Council promised a to appoint committee to work on the referendum under Mayor Stanley Sloan's charter duties. "I have always said we need a referendum to know what the people want," Sloan said. "I want to see it on November's ballot." The Council heard Waters out and decided to set up a conference with her, her attorney, **Irby** and William Stone, city attorney, to discuss her demands and any possible litigation she might be planning.

It was City Council's opinion that through this informal mediation a suitable settlement might be reached and litigation avoided. Waters agreed and the meeting date should be set by staff. Waters believes she was unfairly docked \$10,000 in pay, had responsibilities reduced and improperly reprimanded and suspended without pay by **Irby**. The Charter, Waters said, supports that the City Council could take those actions and not **Irby**. Stone, said that the ordinance creating the city manager position held that **Irby** was within his rights as her immediate supervisor.

Waters would like the City Council to remove any disciplinary actions from her file and be paid for the time she was suspended without pay. She would also like to regain the salary she was docked when **Irby** was hired, she said.

When the city changed governmental structure from a city clerk/administrator form to a combination clerk and city manager form in 2002 there was an overlap of duties and responsibilities. **Irby** assumed many of the financial planning duties formerly done by Waters. Both Waters and **Irby** said after the meeting that they saw the overlap between the positions as possibly the root of the conflict.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
January 12, 2004

Mascotte annexation plan riles neighbors

Author: PETE SKIBA

Annexation plans for almost 1,000 acres with a possible 2,000 houses have Mascotte's neighbors riled and the city could face legal action by opponents. If the City Council annexes 115 acres north of Mascotte in the Villa City Road area as scheduled tonight, it should schedule the annexation of another 850 acres for its next meeting Jan. 26, **Glenn Irby**, city manager said. Both properties are owned by Langley Fruit. The 115 acres under consideration for annexation sits north of Underpass Road and west of Villa City Road. In order for the 850-acre parcel, off County Road 565 south of Simon Brown Road, to be contiguous with city boundaries, the 115 acres must be annexed first, **Irby** said. Mascotte City Council meets 6 p.m. tonight as the city Land Planning Agency and at 6:30 p.m. as City Council to consider the annexations in the Civic Center on Sunset Street. "The city could vote to allow a possible two to three houses per acre after the annexation vote," **Irby** said.

That's what has neighbors riled. They live in a Lake-County-zoned area, which allows one house per five acres. "Let's face it, developers want to annex so they can get more houses on their property under the city rules," said Paula Schad, a neighbor to the proposed annexation property. "They are ruining our quality of life and the reasons we live in our rural area. We want to preserve our rural lifestyle." If City Council votes to allow two or three houses per acre, 330 houses or more could be built on the 115 acres. Depending on wetlands and other considerations more than 1,610 houses could be built on the second property.

That would be a lot of homes added to the water metered 1,270 in the about 2.3 square-mile city. Pipes sit on the ground waiting and water-line construction to the soon-to-be-annexed area should start in a couple weeks, **Irby** said. Developers discussed building wastewater-treatment plants with the city, but no development plans have been submitted, he said.

There are at least 18 residents any annexation and development would affect, Schad said. They live to the west of the property to be annexed and have an easement to drive through the property to eventually get to State Road 50, she said. Big Bluff Lake and wetlands surround the other sides of the property, Schad said. If the Langley property is annexed it will create an enclave, or an island, under county jurisdiction, she said. Mascotte stated in its paperwork that an enclave would not be created by the annexation. It might take a judge to decide.

Schad said her group has been counseled by Michael Woodward, an Interlachen attorney, about stopping the annexation. Woodward represents former Groveland City Councilman Lewis Hart in his efforts to stop Groveland annexing 500 acres in the Villa City Road area. "There will be a court reporter at the (Mascotte City Council) meeting Monday," Schad said. "We might bring legal action. It is all about preserving our quality of life."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)
October 23, 2003

Lee, Carr face off for city of Mascotte seat

Author: PETE SKIBA

The Mascotte City election for City Council Seat 1 pits an incumbent, Dorothy Lee, against Jim B. Carr. Lee has lived in Mascotte for 11 years and has spent two years on City Council. In her time on council the retired bank-trust officer has formed a vision of where she thinks the people of the city want their town to head and is proud of her part in moving the city in that direction. "The land is there and will ultimately be developed," Lees said. "In my role I have planted the seed of long-range planning. Growth should be more than a trickle down effect." Lee sees commercial development along State Road 50 as a way to enhance the town's amenities. A grocery store and other shops such as dry cleaners and restaurants were approved by City Council for a lot almost directly across from the city hall on S.R. 50.

Commercial development should also increase the tax base, which has been at a stable rate of \$5.90 per taxable \$1,000 of property value for a few years, she said. With annexation Lee said she would like to see more upscale homes built because the city has affordable housing and could be balanced with more upscale houses. Upscale housing would also generate more tax revenue, she said. With the development sewers must come and be put in operation in phases, Lee said. City Council is already looking for land to build a sewer plant, she said. Any annexations should be compact around the city and enhance the growth around the city's borders, Lee said. The establishment of a permanent cultural center in the Lake County School Board's Mascotte Elementary School building is one of her goals. The building is no longer used as a school and was the site of another project Lee took part in the Cinco De Mayo celebration last spring. In a city where the population is 45 percent Hispanic the festival drew about 3,000 people of many heritages. "Everyone likes the food and the music," Lee said. "The cultures have crossed the lines and people work and play together." Hiring a city manager helped the city move into the 21st century Lee said. With all the details of a modern city's operation and a growing future, a professional's expertise was needed.

Lee is very pleased with the job **Glenn Irby** is doing in the position, she said. The budget is prepared in a more professional manner and budget planning now goes beyond a year-to-year chore, she said. Lee said she is interested in continuing her work with city parks and pursuing grants and any other funding sources for more recreation programs for youth. Schools in Groveland are not overcrowded and Lee said she would work with the School Board as well as she could to get schools for any additional students that the city acquires through development. "My family has always been community oriented," Lee said. "I was raised to give back to the community." Reached by phone on at least two occasions, Lee's opponent, Jim B. Carr was unable to meet for an interview.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
August 7, 2000

Minneola Takes Time Out To Brainstorm About Goals

Author: April Hunt

A summer full of brainstorming sessions with the public has revealed six key projects city officials must focus on to move Minneola forward. The city began a visioning process in June to counteract what many say has been a high-growth, low-planning mind-set that has created problems in recent years.

The goal was to come up with things that could and should be done to reverse that process. The jury is still out on whether the half-dozen items officials agreed upon match the community's wants. Only 12 people showed up for the city's final meeting on the topic Saturday, unlike the first such meeting, which drew 110 people.

At the earlier meeting, residents pushed for the city to slow growth and get a handle on services before getting bigger. "We need an identity, and the only way to do that is for them to work with the community more," said Susan Bermudez, who lives in an unincorporated area just outside the city. "We don't seem to have access to the people making the decisions."

Officials bandied about the need for a stronger link between them and residents, but in the end, the topic didn't make the list. What did:

- Increase staffing in planning, public works and administration offices.
- Revisit the City Charter for amendments.
- Plan one major annual event and smaller quarterly community events.
- Adopt an area vision plan.
- Plan for city's role in the redevelopment of U.S. Highway 27, which now cuts the city in two. Build a wastewater and reclamation plant.

Those projects -- and 18 others listed -- should be part of a formal work program the city adopts, said Marilyn Crotty, director of the Local Government Institute, which coordinated the visioning process. That makes staffers accountable to the elected officials, who must answer to voters. "The tough part of this is, you can't just let this sit on a shelf," Crotty said. "You have to make these things happen." The council plans to adopt resolutions formally on the goals to keep the city focused on making improvements. The city is planning its budget for the next fiscal year and will try to include some funding for all of those six projects, Mayor **Glenn Irby** said. "Most of those things cost money," he said. "The challenge is to get them in the budget."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
May 24, 2000

Word of Minneola Annexation Moves Slowly

Author: April Hunt

The dream of a new city in what is now open fields is moving along fast, even if some of the people needed to make it work are in the dark. "They're talking about annexing? This is news to me," said Rufus Suggs of Clermont, who with his son owns 90 acres of groveland between Grassy Lake and Florida's Turnpike. City maps include Suggs as one of seven "major" landowners in line for annexation to develop a planned community of a downtown, new city hall and neighborhoods. Smaller property owners have plenty to say, though. "It seems to me they want to turn us into a city, whether we want it or not," said Doris Foss, who moved into a house at Grassy Lake and Turkey Farm roads with her husband two years ago. "And we don't want it."

The city has vowed to listen. Officials are planning a meeting next month, for three hours on a Saturday, to get the opinions of people like Foss. Mayor **Glenn Irby** said the session will be the first of several designed to make sure city officials pursue what residents want. City officials, however, are sure of what they want. They want to turn the fields into a Lake County version of Winter Park. The key component in that equation is the big landowners, at least two of whom have already approached the city about being annexed. Anita Gonzalez, the city planner, has been firing off letters to those folks for about a month, with limited response.

Suggs said he didn't get a letter. His property, along the western hills of Sugarloaf Mountain, is not yet contiguous to Minneola's boundary. The city will try to annex his land after it gets the parcels between the boundary and his property. The main parcels are 1,700 acres owned by Consolidated Minerals of Leesburg and 1,100 acres owned in trusteeship by attorney John Lowndes of Orlando. The vice president of Lennar Homes -- which is negotiating with Consolidated to buy the entire swath of land -- said it was too soon for him to make any commitments to the city, because his company does not yet own the land. "I like what they're doing in general, with pre-planning," Rob Ahrens said. "Whether I like the specifics or not, it's too soon to say." A vice president at Consolidated said via a secretary that the company would have no comment, and Lowndes was out of town early this week and unavailable for comment. That silence has helped fuel speculation that they are the unidentified folks who approached the city about being annexed. "In the near future, I hope aggressive annexation takes place to get that land," is all **Irby** will say about the prospect.

Foss and her husband, Charlie, plan to attend meetings so that their voices are heard while the bigger players keep quiet. They don't think they'll be the only residents who don't want a city plopped down in the middle of groves, wetlands and oak-dotted fields. "The large landowners are in it just to make money," Foss said. "This is our home. I hope they remember that."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
March 18, 2000

Minneolans Vent Fears, Edge Toward Sewage Plant Residents Told of Worries About Rising Odor and Falling Property Values, But The City Council Voted to Move Ahead With a New Plant

Author: April Hunt

If you even talk about building it, they will come. That is, if "it" is a sewage treatment plant. "You wouldn't want it a half mile from your house," resident Matthew Johnson told the City Council, expressing worries about property value and odor. Johnson's Turkey Farm Road home is near the preferred site of five options for a new plant that could process 500,000 gallons of waste daily. Despite a full house of residents with similar concerns, the council voted Thursday night to negotiate with the owner of the 30- acre parcel, as a first step of a plant that would cost \$2 million to \$8 million. "It is still in the idea stage," Mayor **Glenn Irby** said. "But we committed a year ago to have a plant built in the next three to five years."

The need for such a facility comes from the 138 percent growth spurt the city saw during the past eight years. The growth came at a cost to infrastructure.

The state first demanded the city halt new development until a new well water system could be built. That happened in August, when a \$2 million water plant, 300,000- gallon water storage tank and two new wells were added in the southeastern part of the city. In addition, two more wells are slated to be built in the northern part of the city, to accommodate growth there. Still, the state also ordered Minneola not to continue building houses and other structures with septic tanks, for fear of contamination to lakes and ground water. "The [state) has all but threatened to sue us if we don't do something with the effluent," **Irby** said. Whether the Turkey Farm Road site will pan out as the home of the yet-undecided plant remains to be seen.

Council member Dave Sherrick dissented on authorizing negotiations, just as he was the sole voice against making that site the priority. "The city is moving in that direction, so in the next 15 years, that sewer plant will be surrounded by houses," Sherrick said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
November 4, 1999

New Officials Set To Tackle Growth, Charters

A day after Election Day, the winners in south Lake County's races said their promises will be kept and the concerns of residents will be addressed. Clermont will have a couple of new members sitting on the council this term with managed-growth supporters filling two seats.

Marilyn MacLauchlin captured 52 percent of the vote over environmental activist Matthew Modica. MacLauchlin said a more common-sense approach to growth is what she hopes to bring to the council. She added she does not consider herself pro-growth, but would like to manage future development. She said the regulations to control growth are in place, but they need to be followed more rigorously. MacLauchlin said timing the growth so it doesn't all occur at the same time would be helpful, and the city should consider a formal agreement with the county concerning south Lake's growth. "We have to be realistic," she said. "We can't build a fence at the border of Georgia. People will come. In my lifetime, the population has doubled and the people are going to live somewhere."

Keith Mullins carried 58 percent of the vote ousting Clermont City Councilman Jim Brown.

Mullins said planning is the key to making growth work. "Everyone knows growth is coming, but throwing up our hands is not going to work," Mullins said. "At least we can decide where and how we grow." He said in the past, people wanted to make plans for future growth, but the council would not let them. Traffic is a problem in Clermont and the city has to maintain its side roads and keep pressure on the state Department of Transportation to get main roads up to standards, he said. Mullins added new communities need to live up to the standards of the neighborhoods that are already in place.

Voters in Minneola elected newcomer Mike Cage over incumbent Gary Nelson. Cage would like to slow down the city's growth, and raise the impact and builder's fees. He said it is important to get more citizen input at the meetings. "Basically, I want to slow down the construction so the infrastructure is in place, so the citizens don't have to foot the bill," Cage said. Cage was also campaigning against the charter revision proposal - rejected by voters 256 to 157 - that would have changed Minneola to a city manager form of government. "It does need to be amended and changed, but not as a bundle," Cage said. "I hope it is brought back up and we'll go from there on an issue- by-issue basis."

Mayor **Glenn Irby** said he was disappointed the charter referendum did not pass. He said the current charter stifles the running of the city and is contradictory. "The constituents spoke and we have to do what they want," **Irby** said. "I want to find out what they're objecting to and work out a compromise. The current charter is flawed and needs a major overhaul."

Campaigning is not over in Minneola, however, as a special election for Seat 4 is scheduled for Dec. 30. Candidates have until noon Nov. 12 to qualify for the election for the seat's term, which

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

will expire in November of next year. In Mascotte, Dorothy Lee won over incumbent Sally Brasher with 57 percent of the vote. She said she will pursue her agenda of sound financial planning, long-range planning, strict code enforcement, cleanup and beautification, evaluations of streets and roads, and enhanced communication with citizens. Some projects she would like to see initiated are a job fair at the Civic Center for residents looking for employment. She would also like to have a public discussion on Mascotte's vision for the future. Discussions and target dates also need to be set for updating the city's comprehensive plan.

Mayor Stanley Sloan retained his seat on the Mascotte City Council, with 60 percent of the vote, over challenger James Fultz. Sloan had run on his record and the fact that City Hall was running more efficiently than in the past. Sloan said he was also anxious to get started on construction of a new city hall.

Incumbent Mariam Proctor fended off challengers John Fullington and Alan Sherrod for Seat 5 by garnering 59 percent of the vote. Proctor will start her fourth term on council, and said she will plan for the city's future and the possibility of a sewer system. She wants to pursue grants for the city's residents to help defray the cost of connection.

Mascotte voters also approved a charter-change referendum that will accommodate the appointment of department heads for indefinite terms while retaining the right to discharge them any time with cause. At present, the charter calls for department heads to be appointed on an annual basis. The voters had their say about growth in Montverde by passing a proposal that calls for larger lots in subdivisions. They turned down a referendum by a single vote that would have called for mandatory participation in franchised solid waste collection.

Helen Pearce won the mayor's race, defeating incumbent Ed Miles with 55 percent of the vote. Groveland voters chose to have newcomer Connie Fleetwood to help lead them into the new millennium. In a three-way race for Seat 4, Fleetwood beat out Roy Pike and Kenneth Averitt. Fleetwood said she would like to open up more communication with citizens and their needs. She said she is working on a grant at Cecil Gray Middle School to have the school open for longer hours and help keep children off the streets. She said many of the community members she talked to were concerned about code enforcement issues and she would like to see the city have communitywide clean-up days. As far as growth, she said many people would like to see a grocery store come to Groveland.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
August 31, 1999

Terms for Mayor, Council Are Hot Topic in Minneola

Mayors and City Council members in Minneola's future could serve four years between elections instead of two. But, if they miss more than four meetings in a year, they could lose their seats. In addition, the deputy to the mayor could have broad new powers, including the ability to fire city employees - something only the mayor and council now have the authority to do.

These and other proposed changes to the City Charter will be discussed in a workshop session of the council at 6 p.m. today at City Hall on Pearl Street. The Charter Review Committee recently presented its ideas to the council.

Mayor **Glenn Irby** said the committee's proposal for longer terms might be a good idea. "The way it was explained to me is that, in a two-year term, the first year is spent getting your feet wet and the second campaigning," he said. "This would give more time for working on the city's business."

The idea of giving the deputy to the mayor more authority is designed to streamline the day-to-day operations of the city. It ultimately wouldn't give anyone more power because the mayor and council could review such personnel decisions, **Irby** said. **Irby** said proposed changes to the charter would have to be approved by residents in a November referendum.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
May 20, 1999

Minneola May Build Its Own Sewer Plant

Author: Rick McKay

When Mayor **Glenn Irby** got a letter from Clermont about a possible sewer connection between the neighboring cities - he read it, and he read it again. "I didn't like it any better the second time," **Irby** said at a City Council workshop Tuesday.

One idea in the letter would be for Minneola taxpayers to pay for pipes and an upgrade to a sewer plant in Clermont, the west sewer system - then abandon that connection in 24 months and put down miles of new pipe to another Clermont plant, the east plant, currently under construction. The connection-switching plan is actually the only way Clermont could quickly handle new growth on Minneola's north side, said Clermont City Manager Wayne Saunders. And the idea comes from Minneola's former mayor, not Clermont.

A better idea is to let the new development on the north side hook up temporarily to package treatment plants - they work like mini sewer systems - and then connect to a sewer system later, say the new mayor and council. But other costs involved in hooking up to Clermont's system have prompted the council to take another serious look at building its own sewer plant. Upfront costs could be between \$1.5 million and \$2 million, but monthly charges and impact fees could add up to much more. **Irby** wants the council to consider buying 30 acres somewhere north of the city, near Florida's Turnpike, just in case it eventually decides to build its own sewer plant. City engineer estimates were that the plant could eventually cost \$8 million to serve a population of 3,200 residents.

While the council is still pursuing a possible hookup with Clermont - effectively creating a regional sewer plant - the consensus of Minneola's leaders is to see if the city can afford to go it alone. Some of the costs might be offset by grant money and low-interest loans from the state, **Irby** said. This is a turnabout from **Irby's** stance a few months ago.

Irby said that earlier he thought it would definitely be cheaper just to hook up to Clermont. Now he isn't so sure. "I'm definitely in the middle of the fence," he said. "Let's get the costs nailed down on both sides and see."

Saunders said that nothing in the letter to **Irby** is "set in stone" and Clermont is willing to work with Minneola. "It wasn't even a proposal, just ideas and issues talked about," he said. Saunders said it would be to the advantage of both cities to have an agreement - to help protect the lakes and ground water and to save both cities money.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
April 6, 1999

Minneola Mayor Slates Regular Citizens Forum

If you missed the "Meet the Mayor" night Monday, don't fret. Mayor **Glenn Irby** said that he plans to hold an open forum for all residents to come and talk with him at 6 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month. He said he welcomes concerns, complaints and constructive criticism. He said it is the people's chance to express thoughts one-on-one. His office is in the community building downtown. He said that no appointments are needed, but it is first come, first served.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
February 25, 1999

Minneola Picks Irby for New Mayor

Author: Rick McKay

The voters picked **Glenn Irby** to be the new mayor of Minneola by more than 40 percent. He beat the interim mayor, Albert "Gene" Strickland and car auctioneer Dave Yeager in a three-way race to lead the city. **Irby**, 41, is the finance director and assistant city manager of Tavares. He and Joseph Dykes, who won Council Seat 4, will be sworn in today at a special meeting of the Minneola City Council at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall. The council also will accept the results of the election at the meeting.

In complete but unofficial results, **Irby** had 218 votes; Yeager had 187 votes; and Strickland had 123 votes. For Council Seat 4, Dykes won 363 votes, or 70 percent, over Chad Sartain, who got 153 votes. **Irby** and Dykes, 52, will serve short terms of just about nine months until the next election in November. The special election was necessary because of the resignation of former Mayor Jim Spalding in mid-December. Strickland, 42, a builder, has served as interim mayor. When Strickland decided to run for the mayor's seat, he put his council seat up for grabs. Losing the election means that Strickland has to give up the council seat he has had for four years.

Irby said that people will see a difference right away in City Hall and at council meetings. "People will have the right to talk. There'll be no more infighting and no more gavels. People can talk at council meetings," he said. He was referring to recent meetings when Strickland ordered audience members to be quiet, and threatened to have people removed by police.

Irby, who has 18 years of experience in government, said the biggest problem in Minneola has been a lack of leadership. He said the city needs to tackle its water-supply and wastewater issues and provide for residents already in Minneola. Dykes is a hospital worker who has 25 years of experience in the banking and insurance businesses as well as experience with a volunteer fire department. He said he wants to see that existing committees in town, such as health and sanitation, actually meet and get put to work by the council for the good of the city.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, FL
October 6, 1998

Cost-Cutting Efforts Leave Chamber Without Director

Author: Don Fernandez

Tight times have forced the Tavares Chamber of Commerce to hand its director of two years his walking papers. Tim Cisch departed two weeks ago after it was decided his services could no longer be expensed, chamber officials said. "Basically, what happened is the chamber is trying to find a financial way to get ... on track, and we couldn't afford an executive director," said Wayne Reynolds, chamber president. "Our largest expense is payroll. But Cisch said he was the one who decided to leave to relieve some of the chamber's financial pressure. "The chamber has gone through a lot of financial problems," he said. "The Fourth of July celebration - the biggest fundraiser of the year - wasn't very successful. Board members haven't been very involved, and it hasn't been very helpful in solving the everyday monetary problems."

So who's running the ship? Reynolds and a host of volunteers are assuming duties until they can figure out a way to efficiently restructure the chamber. A likely solution will be the hiring of a part-time director somewhere down the line. "We know we're going to need one," Reynolds said. These are tough times for the chamber, which has faced a struggle to stay afloat. One major dilemma: Chamber membership has taken a nose-dive in recent months, which may have exacerbated existing financial woes.

Glenn Irby, finance director for the City of Tavares and former chamber vice president, said membership has fallen from about 300 to around 190 - and not all of those are paying their dues. "The chamber is driven on membership and if dues aren't coming in, you're going to have problems," **Irby** said. The troubles plaguing the organization have not gone unnoticed in the community.

"It seems like they've given up a lot of their fund raising and have a lack of interest in a lot of the activities they were doing," said Tavares City Council member Robert Moore. Reynolds said Cisch's performance was not the reason for his dismissal. Cisch said, "It was an amicable deal that we made." Cisch, an Ohio native, said he would remain in the area and is looking for other employment. But he had some advice on how to rejuvenate the organization. "Get people on the board who are dedicated, increase membership or consolidate with another chamber in the area that could cover the area with less costs," Cisch said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Orlando Sentinel - Orlando, Fla.
September 13, 1998

Big Budgets Shouldn't Mean Tax Increase Growth Has Brought in |More Property-Tax Dollars, Swelling Cities Cooffers. Only Astatula is Seeking A Higher Tax.

Author: Monica Scott

Taxpayers will see their tax dollars at work during the next year as cities sink cash into parks, fire stations, libraries and sewer plants. Only one city plans a property tax increase, so few residents have had anything to say at public meetings.

Final public hearings are scheduled for the next two weeks, and the new fiscal year kicks off Oct. 1. City budgets reinforce Lake County's conservative persona: None of the municipalities are planning drastic changes and those that increased spending did so only modestly. "As long as you're growing, you're getting more dollars every year," said Carol Rogers, finance director for Mount Dora. "It's when you're built out that you have to increase taxes to raise revenue. "We're growing." Rogers said the city is proposing a \$25.3 million budget, up \$1.7 million from last year.

Construction on downtown Mount Dora's centerpiece, Donnelly Park, begins next spring. The city will be doling out more than a half- million dollars for the project, which includes a new building. Other community groups are expected to toss in about \$260,000. At \$6.18 for each \$1,000 of assessed value, Mount Dora still has the highest property tax rate in the county. Eustis, for the fifth year in a row, dropped its rate, this time from \$5.40 to \$5.35. That means the homeowner in Eustis with a house worth \$75,000 and a \$25,000 homestead exemption will pay \$267.50 instead of \$270.

Despite the reduction, the city still plans projects. For example, about \$210,000 from the \$29.1 million budget is slated to renovate the library. A new, expanded sewer plant will cost a whopping \$6.5 million, which is expected to get rid of foul odors. "We try to be as efficient with the money as we can," said Mayor Homer Royals. "There are a lot of similarities in every budget. Again, it's conservative, and we've provided a rollback."

Bob McKee, county tax collector, said the county has been prosperous, and cities can afford to maintain tax rates or offer taxpayers slight rollbacks. "The lion's share of the prosperity is coming from growth," said Robert McKee, county tax collector. "We have enough development, residential and commercial, within municipalities and annexations, to allow a broadening of the tax base."

Clermont already has one of the lowest tax rates. For the sixth year residents will see the \$2.98 tax rate the city has had the last five years. Commissioners are contemplating a \$10.3 million budget, up from \$8.5 million last year.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Glenn Anderson Irby
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The expanding city is getting a new fire department for \$500,000 and a new firetruck for another \$128,000. It also will get its first paid firefighter, a chief, one of 11 new full-time employees who will cost taxpayers about \$230,000. Tavares residents won't have to shell out more cash this time around. For now, Finance Director **Glenn Irby** said no increases are planned, and the \$4.42 tax rate will hold. "Bare-bones" is how **Irby** described the proposed \$9.3 million budget, which is down from \$11.5 million. He said the city's new \$800,000 library was a key reason for the difference in the budgets. Like Tavares, Lady Lake also had a huge expenditure last year. Its new \$2 million town hall is expected to be constructed by the end of the year. The city is proposing a \$7.3 million budget, down from \$7.8 million. It is recommending that its \$2.72 tax rate stay the same.

Leesburg has the largest budget at \$97.4 million, up from \$93.7 million last year. Approximately \$12 million is going toward a new waste-water treatment plant being built in Okahumpka to handle growth. The city will spend \$50,000 on architecture work for a new library. Another \$2.8 million, including grants, will be spent on airport improvements. For the ninth year, the tax rate will be \$4.50, or about \$225 for the average homeowner. Property taxes in all other cities are proposed to be set at the same rate, except for Astatula and Minneola, according to the Property Appraiser's Office.

Astatula is the only city pursuing a tax increase, from \$1.75 to \$2. For the average \$75,000 homeowner, that means paying \$100 instead of \$87.50 for the year. Minneola is seeking to lower its rate from \$3.50 to \$3.39. The average homeowner would pay \$169.50 instead of \$175.

Completed by: Winona Saunders
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 9

E. Lynne Ladner

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

LYNNE LADNER, MPA, ICMA-CM

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January 22, 2025

Honorable Mayor Peggy Wheeler and Council Members
City of Juno Beach, FL
340 Ocean Ave
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Members of the Juno Beach Town Council,

I am excited to submit my application for the Town Manager position in Juno Beach, a role that fits perfectly with my extensive experience in municipal management and my commitment to fostering vibrant, well-managed communities. With a Master of Public Administration, ICMA-CM credential, and over 15 years of executive leadership in local government, I bring a unique combination of strategic vision, coastal and environmental management, and a dedication to community engagement.

As the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Ocean Ridge, FL, I led transformative initiatives that enhanced administrative operations and strengthened community connections. By securing over \$1.25 million in grant funding, I advanced resilience initiatives and infrastructure improvements that will benefit residents for years to come. My focus on innovation and efficiency resulted in a reduction in building permit cycle times and increased customer satisfaction through online process implementation.

Juno Beach's focus on preserving its natural beauty and fostering a close-knit community resonates with my values and professional achievements. During my tenure as City Manager in Hart, MI, I played a critical role in resolving federal consent decrees related to environmental compliance while advancing major economic initiatives. My experience managing coastal Florida communities builds upon my practices of preservation and sustainability at work and home during calm and emergent conditions. My leadership consistently balances the needs of residents with long-term planning to ensure sustainable growth and financial stability.

Key attributes I offer include:

- **Strategic Planning Expertise:** Successfully developed and executed comprehensive plans addressing infrastructure, land use, and organizational efficiency.
- **Community-Centric Leadership:** Cultivated open-door policies, hosted public forums, and actively participated in community events to build trust and transparency.
- **Fiscal Stewardship:** Managed multimillion-dollar budgets, ensuring resource optimization and financial accountability in lean organizational structures.

- **Technology and Process Improvement:** Led organizational technology implementations reducing processing times, providing greater access to public information, and leveraging technology for organizational efficiency and data-driven decision-making.

I am inspired by Juno Beach's commitment to maintaining its small-town charm while preparing for strategic growth. I would be honored to bring my experience, leadership, and passion for community development to serve as your next Town Manager.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my skills and experiences align with your vision for Juno Beach's future.

Warm regards,



Lynne Ladner, MPA, SHRM-SCP, ICMA-CM

elizabethladner@gmail.com

(785) 760-1714

LYNNE LADNER, MPA, ICMA-CMGreenacres, FL 33413 • [LinkedIn Profile](#)
elizabethladner@gmail.com • (785) 760-1714**CITY MANAGER**

- SHRM-SCP certified human capital strategist, executive business partner, and culture agent. Built and led high-performing human resources organizations in the public/not-for-profit space that elevated engagement and reduced risk.
- Played an integral role in guiding communities in critical redevelopment via public-private partnerships, infrastructure improvements, strategic policy implementations, and collaborative funding.
- Broadly recognized for an ability to anticipate and respond to the needs of diverse constituents and workforces. History of establishing positive relationships and building credibility toward managing effective change.

COMPETENCIES: Finance and Budgeting • Strategic Planning • Vision Definition • Organization Development • Leadership Development • Succession Planning • Shared Services • Business Transformation • Governance • Change Management • Labor Relations • Collective Bargaining • Policy • Human Resources Management • Talent Management

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE & SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

TOWN OF OCEAN RIDGE: Ocean Ridge, FL 2022–Present
Chief Administrative Officer • Director – Human Resources (Consultant 2022–2023; Full-Time 2023–Present)

Recruited to transform and lead administrative operations of 1,800-resident municipality after departure of town manager. Provide direction in organizational goals and operations, collaborating with and executing vision of town commission on short-term and long-term strategy, \$12.4M budget, service delivery, people policy, regulatory compliance, and capital and operational investments. Oversee workforce of 5 direct reports and 31 total employees in administration, fiscal operations, human resources, employee relations, police, public works, building department, IT, and police union relations.

- **Obtained state grant funding** totaling \$1.25 million for conservation and resilience initiatives.
- **Strengthened administrative operations.** Sharpened focus on service delivery, influenced infrastructure investments, upgraded key building department staff, digitized municipal records, and used AI to streamline budget process.
- **Directed BS&A HRIS/ERP implementation, shortening payroll cycle by 90% and driving operating efficiencies.** Selected vendor; oversaw platform development, customization, and deployment; and led user training and change management.
- **Led major CAPEX projects, including \$2.5M water main improvements and \$1.1M conservation property acquisition.**
- **Developed 8-year CIP plan** for potable water main replacement and improvements to ensure the system's long-term health while preparing recommendations for financing the improvements.

LADNER CONSULTING: Greenacres, FL 2021–2022
Executive Consultant – Human Resources & Nonprofit Administration

Directed enterprise strategic vision and consulting operations as strategic advisor and as outsourced Chief Human Resources and Chief Administrative Officer to nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and other enterprise clients both directly and via 3rd-party consulting firms. Conceptualized and managed broad spectrum of integrated strategies including policy development, business transformation, organization dynamics, employee relations, talent management, culture, systems implementation, and other matters. Notable client engagements:

City of Pahokee (FL):

- **Contracted to transform people and administrative operations for 5,400-resident municipality as interim executive,** rebuilding core HR and operating processes to return to compliance following multiple years of missed financial audits.
- **Accelerated 360° change efforts via cultivation of HR best practices.** Socialized vision, best practices, KPIs, and workstreams to rebuild handbook, create engagement, upgrade staff onboarding, recommend benefits, and retain talent.
- **Safeguarded community economic interests via delivery of documentation enabling retention of state-leased marina.**

Town of Kenneth City (FL):

- **Directed community transition following separation of prior town manager and staff.** Ensured continuity in HR and financial services, recruited replacement, opened police union collective bargaining, and improved public transparency.

CITY OF HART: Hart, MI
Chief Administrative Officer

2018–2021

Appointed by 2,400-resident, full-service community to manage administration and people operations, partnering with mayor and city council on strategy, \$9.8M budget, financial operations, human resources, and municipal services including police, fire, water, wastewater, and power generation. Sat on Hart Energy Authority board and state board to negotiate power purchasing and distribution agreements. Supervised direct and matrixed organization of 38 employees.

- **Led successful negotiation of collective bargaining agreements with 2 labor unions.** Delivered critical financial insights and managed process, partnering with council on approach attaining mutual agreement and zero work stoppages.
- **Rebuilt human resources function, improving regulatory compliance, risk posture, and staff satisfaction.** Saved \$80K YoY on health benefits with expanded coverage, implemented remote work, and instituted zero-tolerance drug policy.
- **Played integral role in major economic initiatives,** including resolution of state/federal consent decrees on power generation dam, corporate expansion and development agreements, and launch of e-commerce municipal billing.

CITY OF SOUTH LYON: South Lyon, MI
Chief Administrative Officer

2014–2018

Directed strategy, operations, and human resources for fast-growing municipality of 11,000+ residents as turnaround expert.

- **Improved HR service delivery,** through outsourcing of payroll and building department, updating of job descriptions, benefits enhancements, policy upgrades, and ERP/HRIS system migrations.
- **Orchestrated successful collective bargaining negotiations with police, public works, and clerical unions to closure.** Paid down \$3M in overhead liability, boosting retirement system funding from 54% to 59%.
- **Project managed \$7.3M in public improvements to water treatment, water distribution, and public roads.**

CITY OF HIAWATHA: Hiawatha, KS
Chief Administrative Officer

2006–2013

Stood up best-in-class human resources, administrative, and financial enhancements translating to improved public services.

- **Successfully obtained state and federal grants in FY 10, 11, and 12** in excess of \$2.5 million for redevelopment, public safety, and infrastructure projects.
- **Execute strategies for service delivery** while managing an annual budget over \$5.6 million controlling costs, decreasing tax mill levies, and reducing staffing levels by 10% while scheduling multiple capital improvement projects for FY 2012
- **Coordinated public-private partnership** and managed the completion of the relocation of City administrative offices to the newly renovated Francis Sewell Plamann History Center.
- **Managed community and economic development** including the development of a comprehensive incentive program for new lodging development, facilitated the development of new commercial development between local property owners and two new national franchise businesses

EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY: Allendale, MI
Master of Public Administration (MPA)
Bachelor of Science in Political Science

CERTIFICATIONS

University of Virginia – Graduate, Senior Executive Institute
SHRM-SCP – Senior Certified Professional
International City/County Management Association – Credentialed ICMA Manager

ACTIVITIES

Florida City County Managers Association – 2022 – Current, Conference Planning Comm – 2024, Membership Comm - 2025
Palm Beach County City Managers Association – Vice-President 2024-2025
Florida League of Cities – Finance & Taxation – 2023-2024, Municipal Operations - 2025

Candidate Introduction

Section 9LYNNE LADNER

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI
 Bachelor of Science, Political Science, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI
 Senior Executive Institute Graduate, University of Virginia, Weldon Cooper Center
 Leadership ICMA Graduate, 2014

EXPERIENCE

Town Manager, Town of Ocean Ridge, FL	2023 – Present
Interim Town Manager, Town of Ocean, Ridge, FL	2022 – 2023
Contract Human Resources and Finance Director, Pahokee, FL	2022 – 2022
Interim Town Manager, Town of Kenneth City, FL	2021 – 2021
City Manager, City of Hart, MI	2018 – 2021
City Manager, City of South Lyon, MI	2014 – 2018
City Administrator, City of Hiawatha, KS	2006 – 2013

BACKGROUND

Ocean Ridge is a serene, residential barrier island community located in Palm Beach County, Florida. This peaceful area is free from retail and commercial activity and is home to 1,800 year-round residents, with the population swelling to 2,800 during the winter months. Famous for its pristine beaches and tight-knit community, Ocean Ridge is divided by the A1A highway, with access provided via drawbridges on Ocean Avenue and Woolbright Avenue. These bridges connect to Boynton Beach, offering convenient access to local amenities and I-95, which leads to the Palm Beach International Airport, West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami.

Ocean Ridge is currently addressing several key challenges:

- **Water Infrastructure Replacement:** The town owns and maintains the potable water distribution system, covering repairs, maintenance, and upgrades. In FY 24, the town invested \$2.9 million in system replacements, with \$1.75 million planned for FY 25. Additionally, a comprehensive eight-year capital replacement plan has been adopted to further upgrade the water mains.
- **Employee Retention:** The police department plays a vital role in the community, offering proactive policing and ensuring a sense of safety. However, Ocean Ridge faces challenges in retaining experienced officers, as competition for qualified law enforcement personnel is high across Palm Beach County and Florida. To reduce turnover, the town must remain competitive with officer compensation and benefits.

Section 9

LYNNE LADNER

- **Development in Boynton Beach:** Ocean Ridge is closely monitoring the planned high-rise residential developments along Federal Highway in Boynton Beach. The construction of multiple large buildings is expected to increase traffic congestion for residents, making daily commutes more difficult. There is also concern that the growth may contribute to a rise in misdemeanor offenses within the community.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Juno Beach's emphasis on preservation and thoughtful growth strongly aligns with my career philosophy. Throughout my roles in municipal leadership, I've championed initiatives that balance community development with environmental stewardship. For example, I successfully worked with state officials to preserve mangrove properties and create public access areas to educate future generations about conservation. I am confident that my leadership style and strategic vision would support the Town's priorities while fostering long-term stability and growth.

My management philosophy is rooted in servant leadership. I adapt to the unique needs of each team member, providing close mentorship when required and empowering others to excel independently. This approach has fostered a culture of accountability and growth in every organization I've served. Colleagues and elected officials describe me as a supportive leader who values transparency, mediates conflicts effectively, and ensures all voices are heard.

In my career, I've encountered and resolved diverse personnel challenges, from mediating employee grievances to guiding individuals through professional improvement plans. While such situations can be difficult, I strive to handle them with empathy and fairness. When separations occur, I ensure the process is respectful and thorough, providing necessary resources and reflecting on what the organization can learn to improve future outcomes.

My staff and my elected officials will tell you that I am a strong advocate for all employees. I will always have their back and if there is a concern or complaint by an elected or community resident, I will do everything that I can to resolve it in a way that allows all parties to feel heard, understood and though they may not feel as though they won, they don't feel as though they lost in the outcome. As the manager all issues and concerns flow up to my desk or down to my desk and I take responsibility for anything that does not end in a positive manner, while giving recognition and praise where it is due to elected officials or staff.

One of my proudest achievements is mentoring employees who have advanced to leadership roles. For instance, I hired a water system operator in Hiawatha, KS, who, under my guidance, rose to become the City Administrator. While general accounting is a less enjoyable aspect of my role, I've strengthened my skills through collaboration with financial experts, ensuring accuracy and effective budget management.

Section 9**LYNNE LADNER**

One of my greatest strengths is my commitment to continuous learning. As an ICMA Credentialed Manager and SHRM-SCP, I consistently seek opportunities to expand my expertise, particularly in areas like emergency management. While general accounting is not my strongest skill, I have taken proactive steps to enhance my knowledge and ensure fiscal accuracy by collaborating with financial teams and leveraging technology.

When I look back at my career, my biggest regret was not completing all of the necessary projects during my tenure in Hart, MI that would bring the city's electric generation utility into full compliance of the consent order that was placed by the United States Department of Environment. The order required us to complete several tasks aimed and reducing the water temperature in the late summer months that collected and the Hydroelectric dam to improve the conditions for native fish species to breed. We submitted several plan options during my tenure but by the time I left the City and DEP had not reached an agreement for the plans to remediate the issue.

In my first six months, I would prioritize building relationships with staff, residents, and elected officials by attending community events, engaging stakeholders, and reviewing ongoing projects to ensure alignment with the Town's goals. My long-term focus would be fostering stability and advancing initiatives that preserve Juno Beach's unique character while embracing opportunities for strategic growth.

I strive to always have a positive relationship with members of the traditional media platforms. Being responsive to their inquiries can improve communication but also build a bridge of trust that allows me to become a trusted source that members of the media can turn to for information on public issues. I strive to maintain a reputation as someone that can be a positive influence and role model, I take my position in your community seriously and manage my life so that I can live one that when I look back I don't have any regrets or embarrassment. While I don't spend a significant amount of my time on personal social media, I have worked in other communities to ensure that the community has a presence on different platforms that allow for greater outreach to residents. It is important to acknowledge that different audiences are reached by using different platforms and that the message often needs to be tailored to that audience. When possible, I work with others in the organization that can assist with our messaging to the various audiences. I believe that it is important to use social media to communicate with the residents and will do so by working to provide regular project updates, answering questions that have been posed through other outlets and being generally available.

I ensured transparency with my current commission by discussing my application individually with each member to address any questions or concerns."

In my free time I like to spend time in and around my pool, planning and meal preparation for the upcoming week and reading. I've recently taken up jogging as a way to manage health and stress, appreciating its positive impact on my well-being.

Section 9**LYNNE LADNER**

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF

- Compassionate
- Approachable
- Knowledgeable
- Innovative Thinker
- Principled
- Diplomatic

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB SECTION

After implementing various technology projects to improve operational efficiency and outsourcing positions in the building department and community standards, I realize I miss contributing to communities where my expertise in economic development and parks and recreation is useful. My grant application skills for community development and parks projects are underutilized in Ocean Ridge, with only one town park and a ban on commercial/retail projects.

CURRENT SALARY

My current salary is \$154,113 and \$3,600 in car allowance.

Section 9

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
ELIZABETH "LYNNE" LYNNE LADNER**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found
Washtenaw County, MI	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Records Found
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
Oceana County, MI	No Records Found
Oakland County, MI	No Records Found
Brown County, KS	Not Available*
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	No Records Found
Kansas	Not Available*

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found
Washtenaw County, MI	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Records Found
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
Oceana County, MI	No Records Found
Oakland County, MI	No Records Found
Brown County, KS	Not Available*
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	No Records Found
Kansas	Not Available*

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	June 2018 – Speeding Violation 85/70 August 2018 – Suspension, failure to comply with judgement Disposition: August 27, 2018, Suspension Ended August 28, 2018

* Records are only available in this state for the past seven years and the candidate worked there prior to that period.

**Background Check Summary for
ELIZABETH "LYNNE" LYNNE LADNER**

Credit	Very Good
Personal Bankruptcy	July 2014 – Bankruptcy, Chapter 13 Disposition: February 2017, Discharged May 2017 , Terminated <i>*See Personal Disclosure and Below for Candidate Explanation of Records Found</i>
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: Lynne Ladner <elizabethlladner@gmail.com>
To: lynelle@cb-asso.com
Subject: Re: Background Check Records That Require an Explanation

Lynelle,

Despite my best efforts, I experienced financial hardship due to medical debt and unemployment that left me no other option but to seek bankruptcy protection. This decision was incredibly difficult, greatly impacting my credit score and financial health. Despite this setback, I took the necessary steps to rebuild my credit and financial stability.

Thank you,
Lynne

**Background Check Summary for
ELIZABETH "LYNNE" LYNNE LADNER
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Lynne Ladner

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 2014 - fully discharged
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No A part-time employee filed a discrimination complaint against me in early 2023 when she was not offered a full-time position, it was investigated and I was fully cleared.
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.com/lynne.ladner, instagram.com/lynne_ladner, twitter.com/lynne_ladner, www.linkedin.com/in/lynne-ladner-mpa-shrm-scp-1203436/
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.
Wittman v City of Hart

Attested to: _____

Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Lynne Ladner

Geoff Pugh - Mayor, Ocean Ridge, FL 561-346-6887

Mr. Pugh has known Ms. Ladner since she started at Ocean Ridge in 2022. She has done a satisfactory job with her current expectations. She has a vast understanding of municipal proceedings which lends itself to a smoothly run government. Mr. Pugh enjoyed interacting with her. She has been responsive to feedback in an ongoing effort to expand her professional abilities.

When contracts needed to be negotiated, Ms. Ladner excelled. She was instrumental in the acquisition of property using grants. The land was obtained for conservation. She effectively negotiated with a new building official company for town inspections. She makes good decisions overall. In her current capacity, she is asked to maintain the current level of function. She does this effectively, while also introducing ways to improve the status quo.

Ms. Ladner is comfortable when interacting with the public. She maintains a friendly demeanor and makes herself available for their questions. She can manage day-to-day financial needs, but has struggled with the intense demands of their finances. Mr. Pugh wishes they could hire a financial director so she could focus her attention on improving the town. Because she values residents and business owners, she wants their experience in Ocean Ridge to be positive. As a result, she is responsive and values the opinions and visions of others.

Mr. Pugh recommends Ms. Ladner to any organization looking for a smart and responsive leader. She has not been part of any controversy and has a clean background. Nothing in her conduct is cause for concern.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Hardworking,
- Loyal, and
- Intelligent.

Strengths: Expansive knowledge about grants. Government experience. Strong work ethic.

Weaknesses: Accounting, mainly budgetary. Also, taking comments from commissioners personally and responding in the heat of the moment.

Steve Coz – Vice-Mayor, Ocean Ridge, FL, 561-329-3533

Mr. Coz has known Ms. Ladner since 2022. Mr. Coz interacts with her frequently and has observed her sound decision making skills. He appreciates her knowledge of municipal policies. She is also familiar with the unique needs of a coastal area.

Reference Notes Lynne Ladner

Ms. Ladner has been a conduit for updates to the Ocean Ridge government. She introduced new software that expedited the process for building permits. Before this new technology, building permits had to be done by hand and took months to process. The community responded with overwhelming approval when this software became accessible. Additionally, she made it possible for residents to communicate with their government via website. This helped in creating a culture of trust in the community. Additionally, she set up a booth on a popular ocean-side trail. She welcomed questions from the residents of Ocean Ridge, furthering her understanding of the community's needs.

As a leader, Ms. Ladner uses a collegiate approach. She values the input of others. She works well in a team and has good relationships with her employees. She has an even temper and does not react outwardly to stress.

Mr. Coz recommends Ms. Ladner to any organization. She is capable and eager to learn new things. Her behavior or background do not have any areas of concern. She is a wonderful addition to any organization.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Knowledgeable,
- Runs a team well, and
- Likable.

Strengths: Pleasant. Polite. Deescalation. Relationships with the residents.

Weaknesses: Not an accountant.

Ron LaPorte – Former Mayor, City of Hart, MI, 231-730-0731

Mr. LaPorte hired Ms. Ladner as City Manager in 2018, near the end of his term as mayor. She worked with them for about three years, and if Mr. LaPorte was still there as mayor, Ms. Ladner would still be in that same position. However, the incoming mayor had a conflict with Ms. Ladner, and subsequently did not extend her contract. It was not a legitimate parting, as far as Mr. LaPorte was concerned. Mr. LaPorte loved having her as city manager and all the employees enjoyed working with her as well.

Mr. LaPorte worked for 33 years in local government. He worked with numerous city managers during that time, two while acting as Mayor. Ms. Ladner brought in prior experience and a wealth of knowledge that served her well. She learns quickly and adapts to new situations. The City of Hart has a hydro-electric dam, which was unfamiliar to Ms. Ladner, but she quickly familiarized herself with the system and took on the challenge with gusto.

Reference Notes Lynne Ladner

Ms. Ladner has excellent financial skills. There is nothing that she did not understand or could not handle. She is customer service oriented. She answered questions professionally and patiently. She helped people move through their concerns. She was frequently out in the community and very hands-on with the public. She talked with business owners in town and never shied away from challenges.

Ms. Ladner was an excellent city manager for the City of Hart. As a former mayor, and someone who worked closely with Ms. Ladner, Mr. LaPorte fully supported her and did not see any negatives. He recommends her to any municipality for the City Manager position.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Smart,
- Experienced,
- Hands on,
- Confident,
- Customer service oriented,
- Guarded, and
- Knowledgeable.

Strengths: Ms. Ladner came in not knowing the community at all. She did not have any problems jumping right in and learning what was important to the citizens. Mr. LaPorte very rarely had to step in and help her. She cleaned up several items that had been neglected over the years.

Weaknesses: Can be perhaps a little brisk, or a little guarded at first, but when you get to know her, it is not an issue.

Mark Van Allsburg – Former City Attorney, Mike Myers PLC, MI, 616-632-8039

Mr. Van Allsburg and his firm served the City of Hart as city attorneys while Ms. Ladner was City Manager. He is mostly retired now but was the lead attorney while Ms. Ladner was city manager from 2018 to 2021.

Quite often, city managers come to Mr. Van Allsburg with very basic questions, but he did not have this experience with Ms. Ladner. She always came to him after doing her research and was well prepared. She was already very knowledgeable about municipal management, and really studied prior to going to Mr. Van Allsburg for additional support. She approached him in a collaborative, partnership style, rather than simply going to him whenever she had any questions or problems at all.

Reference Notes

Lynne Ladner

The City of Hart is a small community, and was in a transition period in moving more towards tourism and renovation. Ms. Ladner was frequently out in the community. She helped plan and participate in summer activities, festivals, and other community functions. She is not afraid to be out front and leading the way. She is creative and has a strong leadership style. Before Ms. Ladner became city manager, the city invested a large amount of time and money in a development opportunity that had gone south. They thought they had essentially lost all their investments. Ms. Ladner came up with a creative idea to recuperate some of their losses, and after pitching it to the council, convinced them to move forward with the plan, which culminated in success for the city.

Ms. Ladner had to work with a very difficult set of individuals during her last year as city manager, which was not her fault at all. This situation was frustrating for Ms. Ladner because she wanted to move forward with the city, but was blocked by prominent people in the community and certain city officials. It was frustrating for Mr. Van Allsburg to watch and to have his hands tied on what he could do to help. She had many good ideas and projects for the city, but she was not able to carry her vision through because the mayor actively fought against her every step of the way. This was ultimately the reason her employment was not continued.

If a community is looking for a go-getter, creative thinker, and needs someone who is exceptionally knowledgeable about city management, they will be pleased to hire Ms. Ladner as a manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Thoughtful,
- Intelligent,
- Pleasant,
- Partner,
- Friendly, and
- Knowledgeable.

Strengths: Very knowledgeable. Because of her background she was very familiar with all the different programs and statutes that would be beneficial to the city.

Weaknesses: Ms. Ladner has a direct, clear communication style. Some might think she is too direct and prefer a sugar-coated approach. She lays things out well and honestly.

Steve Bruck – Community Activist, City of Hart, MI, 616-890-9281

Mr. Bruck is a financial advisor in Hart and is active on several city boards and committees. He worked with Ms. Ladner between 2019 to 2021. Although he did not work closely with her all the time, sometimes going over a month without seeing her, at other times he interacted with her

Reference Notes Lynne Ladner

three times a week. It was varied based on what projects the city had going on. Ms. Ladner did an excellent job as City Manager. She knew the ins and outs of municipal life and was always there to help anyone in need.

Because the City of Hart is a small town, one of the challenges is overcoming the mentality of always having done things one certain way and not wanting to change. Ms. Ladner was refreshing in that regard because she always tried to think outside the box and bring in new ideas and perspectives, especially on the economic development side of the city.

Ms. Ladner was an engaged leader. Although there were some difficult business owners in the community, she did not let them intimidate or bully her. She had lunch in their establishments and sought opportunities to talk to them to try to work together. She was active in the community and very involved in the daily affairs of the city.

The City of Hart lost an excellent city manager when Ms. Ladner left. Mr. Bruck fully recommends her to any municipality.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Capable,
- Sincere,
- Well educated,
- Honest,
- Fair, and
- Innovative.

Strengths: High level of competence.

Weaknesses: Because Ms. Ladner cared so much, she tried to get too much done. She tried to help everybody and that stretched her a little too thin at times.

Cheri Eisenlohr – Deputy City Clerk & Human Resources, City of Hart, MI, 231-873-2488

Ms. Eisenlohr worked with Ms. Ladner for three years from 2018 to 2021. They were also next-door neighbors during that time. Because of their positions at work, and proximity to each other at home, they interacted daily with each other. Ms. Eisenlohr has a very high opinion of Ms. Ladner. She was an excellent city manager as well as a kind neighbor and friend.

Ms. Ladner is customer service oriented. She knows how to stand her ground, which sometimes bothered people, but she knew how to create personal and professional boundaries and hold her own against people who were belligerent. She handles stress well. She was put into some very

Reference Notes Lynne Ladner

difficult situations with certain individuals within the city, but Ms. Ladner kept her composure and was always professional. She rose above any insults.

Ms. Ladner makes good decisions for the city. She researches all the options before presenting the information. She listens to others' feedback before making her final decision. Ms. Ladner is innovative. She brought the city up to speed with their computer programs. She is willing to try new ideas. When COVID hit, she met it head on and quickly implemented policies to keep them on the right track. She communicates easily with the public and elected officials. She speaks to everyone as an equal.

Ms. Ladner was not involved in anything controversial or embarrassing at the City of Hart. She did not always have friends on the city council, but she had a council who did not appreciate how smart she was. Ms. Eisenlohr does not understand why they did not renew her contract. The decision was not a reflection of Ms. Ladner's conduct or ability to perform as city manager.

Ms. Ladner cares about her employees and the people in the community which she serves. She has excellent financial skills and an incredible amount of knowledge regarding municipal administration. She will be a welcome addition for any city as its manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Efficient,
- Smart,
- People person,
- Kind,
- Innovative, and
- Easy to work for.

Strengths: Strong memory and well versed in all municipal aspects.

Weaknesses: Tends to not delegate as much as she should. Because she likes to make sure everything is done correctly, she ends up doing much of it herself.

Scot Beal – Executive Director, Silverlake-Sand Dunes Area Chamber of Commerce, MI 231-742-3883

Mr. Beal has known Ms. Ladner since she was hired as City Manager in 2018. He is still the Executive Director of the Silverlake-Sand Dunes Area Chamber of Commerce. From what he was able to observe, Ms. Ladner was very advanced as far as technology, knowledge about city government grants, and managing the finances of the city.

Reference Notes

Lynne Ladner

Mr. Beal coordinated closely with Ms. Ladner on the Main Street Program, a national program to help develop and promote the downtown area of small cities. They worked together not only on the day-to-day operations, but also in applying for grants. Ms. Ladner was not only proficient at discovering grant opportunities, but also in applying for and winning those grants. In 2019 when they realized that Hart was ready to graduate from the Main Street Program, Ms. Ladner was instrumental in transitioning them away from the Main Street Program and established an Economic Development position. She wrote the by-laws and job description for this new position, which has been very successful, because this new position focuses on the economic development of the entire city and not just the main street. Graduating from the program and developing this new position was a crucial transition period for the city, and Ms. Ladner made the process very smooth and seamless.

Under Ms. Ladner's leadership, the city continued to be very successful with their revenues and budget planning. She is comfortable being in front of others and is thorough in her communication with the elected officials, both in person and in written communication. There is nothing embarrassing or controversial in either her personal or public life. The City Council wanted to move in a different direction and voted not to renew her contract, but this is not a reflection of how she performed as City Manager. With her base of knowledge and can-do attitude, she will be an asset to any community who hires her as Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Detailed,
- Fast,
- Quiet,
- Smart,
- Proficient, and
- Intuitive.

Strengths: Quick to respond and address any issues. Strong communication style.

Weaknesses: Sometimes a little too shy and could speak up with more confidence. Has great ideas but does not always let others know what her ideas are until after the meeting is over or after all other options have been discussed.

Diane LaPorte – Community Activist, City of Hart, MI, 231-730-0545

Ms. LaPorte has known Ms. Ladner since the latter was hired as City Manager in 2018. Ms. LaPorte was a volunteer for the Hart Main Street Program and was also on the planning commission. Her husband was the former mayor and they both had a great relationship with Ms. Ladner. Ms. LaPorte has a high opinion of Ms. Ladner.

Reference Notes Lynne Ladner

Ms. Ladner communicates with the public well. She is organized and gets everything done in a timely manner. She is an independent worker and would rather do the work herself rather than involve others. She is a go-getter and a problem solver.

Ms. Ladner typically gets along with others, although she can be a bit short with others if they persistently ask her the same questions without listening to her response. She is quick to apologize if she answers with a negative tone in her voice. It is hard to deal with people who come in determined to be belligerent and ornery. She generally does a great job in keeping her cool and responding with professionalism and patience.

When Ms. LaPorte's husband, the mayor, was termed out and a new mayor was elected, the new mayor had a personality conflict with Ms. Ladner and turned the city council against her, ultimately deciding not to renew her contract. This was a great loss to the city, and something that Ms. Ladner did not deserve after the good work she did for the city. If chosen as manager for another location, she will continue to be a great manager. She is knowledgeable about municipal administration, cares for her employees and the community, and has a kind and caring personality. Ms. LaPorte fully recommends her for a municipal administration position.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Cheerful,
- Enthusiastic,
- Intelligent,
- Private,
- Funny, and
- Organized.

Strengths: People like being around her. Everyone in the office loved working with her.

Weaknesses: Could be kind of authoritative, but she was in charge, so she was supposed to be.

Sharon Hallock – Former Writer, Oceana Herald Journal, MI, 231-923-9613

Ms. Hallock was a part-time writer for the Oceana Herald Journal in Hart, Michigan. She primarily covered municipal reporting, which included attending city council meetings. Ms. Hallock now works for the Oceana Echo. She began covering municipal reporting in 2019, which is how she met Ms. Ladner. Because Ms. Hallock was new to that position, she was very grateful to Ms. Ladner for helping her with the background information on every topic she covered. Ms. Ladner was very gracious in answering all Ms. Hallock's questions.

Ms. Ladner brought many new ideas and projects to the city. She was willing to look outside the box, which might have been some of her undoing. She was an outsider to the community, and the

Reference Notes Lynne Ladner

people in power wanted to keep things status quo. Ms. Ladner tried to do her best despite the opposition. When the city needed to hire a new attorney, she did all the background work, interviewing several different firms and creating a large spreadsheet for the council so they could better evaluate all the pros and cons of the various firms.

During the election of 2020, there was a legal issue when one of the poll workers wore a politicized shirt at the polling stations. Ms. Ladner asked the poll worker to either change into more appropriate attire or to leave. This poll worker was looking for trouble and caused a scene as a response to her request. She handled this experience very well and made a rule moving forward that all poll workers were to be given uniforms to wear so they would not face this issue again. She is a problem solver and acts quickly.

There is nothing embarrassing in Ms. Ladner's conduct. She is well suited to the position of city manager. She has good ideas and is willing to look at issues from new viewpoints. She will be an asset for any community as its manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynne Ladner:

- Personable,
- Respectful,
- Present,
- Thorough,
- Timely, and
- Fair.

Strengths: She overstated the details and was very thorough in her presentations to the city council.

Weaknesses: This was not offensive to Ms. Hallock, but some of the city council members commented during the selection process for a new city manager that they were opposed to Ms. Ladner staying because they felt like she was condescending or talked down to them. Ms. Hallock did not have this experience and felt like Ms. Ladner used an appropriate voice for a leadership role.

Prepared by: Trieste Sessions and Amanda Jenkins
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
January 30, 2025

Chipper incident kills tree trimmer

Author: Julius Whigham II

A man working for a tree trimming vendor at Ocean Ridge Town Hall died Tuesday morning in an incident involving a wood-chipping machine, town officials said. Officials did not immediately identify the man. Town manager **Lynne Ladner** said the man worked for Carlton's Tree Service. A woman who answered a call to a number listed for the tree service said the company did not have any statements regarding the matter.

According to a town statement, the incident happened at about 9:30 a.m. at the complex along State Road A1A north of East Ocean Avenue. **Ladner** said the employee was operating a wood chipping machine when he got caught in the machine. Ocean Ridge police officers responded and found that the employee had suffered fatal injuries. Authorities notified the federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration, or OSHA. Investigators were en route to the scene Tuesday. No other injuries were reported. Boynton Beach Fire Rescue is providing grief counseling for town employees and vendor staff.

Town manager **Lynne Ladner** said the employee was operating a wood chipping machine when he got caught in the machine.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Coastal Star
July 31, 2024

Ocean Ridge: Commission plans to add lobbyist and code enforcement officer

By John Pacenti

Ocean Ridge’s proposed \$10.4 million budget includes money for a lobbyist and a part-time code enforcement officer. Town Manager **Lynne Ladner** told commissioners at their July 25 meeting that a \$30,000 appropriation for a lobbyist would be money well spent. “That is not something we’ve done the last couple of years,” **Ladner** said. “But we’re continuing to ask for grants from the state and for potential legislative appropriations.”

Commissioner Carolyn Cassidy said the state Legislature this year granted Ocean Ridge a \$250,000 appropriation to find, fix or replace buried water valves. Gov. Ron DeSantis, however, vetoed it. “It was made very clear to us that without a lobbyist you are not going to get through the governor’s office,” Cassidy said.

A code enforcement officer would be added by expanding the town’s professional services agreement with Hy-Byrd Inc. Inspections, which currently provides services for the building department, **Ladner** said. The code enforcement officers would work between 12 and 20 hours per week, relieving police from having to write up residents for dirty roofs or unmowed lawns.

Commissioners worried that the hourly rate agreement could lead to abuse and told **Ladner** they wanted to cap the contract at \$40,000. The commission will meet on Aug. 5 to hammer out further details of the budget.

Ladner proposes that the tax rate stay the same as last fiscal year at \$5.40 per \$1,000 of taxable value. Residents can still expect higher bills next year, though, because property values rose 9.6%, excluding new construction, she said.

Homesteaded properties, however, are capped at a 3% increase under Florida law, while business, rental property and second homes are capped at 10%. That means the owner of a second home or rental property with a \$1 million taxable value last year, which also matched the town’s 9.6% growth in value, can expect to pay about \$518 more in taxes to Ocean Ridge. However, for most residents, the homesteaded rate for the same \$1 million home would be \$162 more.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Coastal star
January 31, 2024

Ocean Ridge: New commission appointees to serve until March election

By Anne Geggis

The Ocean Ridge Town Commission has five seats, but January’s meeting brought to 10 the number of commissioners who have sat on the dais in the past year. Ainar Aijala Jr. and David Hutchins were sworn into office to replace Commissioners Philip Besler and Ken Kaleel, who turned in their resignations effective Dec. 30. Kaleel said he was resigning rather than comply with a new state law that requires those serving on local elected commissions and councils to file a detailed disclosure of personal assets, effective Jan. 1. Besler was hanging it up for personal reasons, he said.

Aijala and Hutchins swore to faithfully execute all the duties of town commissioner to applause from the crowd at the Jan. 8 meeting. Their appointments are good only until the March 19 election, when voters will decide who fills three commission openings — including their seats — that are on the ballot. Both Aijala and Hutchins have qualified to run in that election. Hutchins, a town resident since 1990, said he hopes to put his eight years of experience serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission to work in this new role. He is optimistic about the town’s direction but sees some areas that could use improvement. “Repairing and replacing existing, worn infrastructure is a priority always, but living within our means has to be part of the equation,” he texted about why he stepped forward to serve.

Aijala, who hails from Michigan, said serving on an elected board fulfills a longtime interest in public service that he couldn’t pursue beyond nonprofit roles because of his position at Deloitte, the largest professional services firm in the world. There, he was CEO of its global consulting practice. The town is on the right track, and he intends to use his professional experience in strategic planning to help it operate even more efficiently, he said after he was sworn in. “Ocean Ridge is a very special place,” he said.

The past year has been rife with the town’s leaders coming and going, however. The two exiting commissioners, Besler and Kaleel, were appointed to replace two other commissioners who resigned in 2023, Martin Wiescholak and Kristine de Haseth. In addition to that, Commissioner Carolyn Cassidy became a new face on the dais last April, after finishing ahead of then-Mayor Susan Hurlburt, who came in last in a three-way race for two commission seats. Wiescholak, the other winner in the March 2023 election, resigned at the same April meeting at which he was sworn in for a second, three-year term. His resignation came minutes after the commissioners agreed in a split vote to hire Town Manager **Lynne Ladner** on a full-time basis. Two hours later, at the same meeting, de Haseth resigned, saying she wanted to spend more time with her family.

So, Mayor Geoff Pugh and Vice Mayor Steve Coz are the only holdovers from before the last election. Aijala and Hutchins were selected for commission appointments out of eight applicants. The town’s charter calls for vacancies to be filled at the next election instead of having an

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

appointee fill out the remainder of an unexpired term — something that’s done in other communities such as Manalapan and Gulf Stream. The seat originally held by de Haseth was up for election this year anyway, but the seat once held by Wiescholek wasn’t supposed to be up for election for another two years.

Aijala, Hutchins, Pugh and political newcomer Nick Arsali will compete for a pair of three-year terms on the commission and another two-year term. Pugh acknowledged at the Jan. 8 meeting that he might lose as the commission agreed on a workshop date for training on the new system for town business on April 8 — after the next election.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
 Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
 (Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Coastal Star
 January 2024

Ocean Ridge

State makes town reapprove budget and tax rate over advertising error

By Larry Rarszewski

A mistake that Florida revenue officials determined "to be in violation of the law" forced Ocean Ridge town commissioners into a special meeting Dec. 21 for a "do-over" of the resolutions they approved in September setting the town's tax rate and budget.

Town officials used the wrong figures in a published advertisement notifying residents of the September public hearings where commissioners set the tax rate and budget for fiscal year 2024, which started Oct. 1.

Fortunately, with millions of dollars in town taxes already paid by property owners over the past two months, the commission didn't have to change the tax rate or budget from the ones approved in September. The correction means the town is now expecting to receive \$58,738 more in property taxes than previously thought, which will reduce the amount of money taken from its reserve funds to support the budget by the same amount.

"We have an additional \$58,000 in the budget, so it is a good mistake, not a bad mistake," Vice Mayor Steve Coz

said.

Commissioner Carolyn Cassidy, who in September had supported approving a tax rate lower than the \$5.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value that was eventually adopted, wasn't as forgiving. Cassidy said if commissioners had been aware of the extra dollars, that may have convinced them to drop the rate to \$5.35 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

For the owner of a home valued at \$1 million, that change would have produced an extra \$50 in savings on their taxes.

Terry Brown, the only resident to speak at the special meeting, wanted to know who was responsible for the mistake. Town Manager Lynne Ladner took responsibility.

"The law was that we were to use the gross taxable value of the town, not the net, and I mistakenly put the net taxable value in the advertisement. It was my mistake," Ladner said. She added later, "It was not a mathematical error."

Brown, however, wasn't satisfied.

"I think it was noted when you were hired by this group, not the previous group, that you publicly stated that that was one of your weaknesses, budget work," Brown said. "They know

your weaknesses. And there are some other weaknesses, too, which we won't talk about today. But that's something that you-all are responsible for."

While Coz said the mistake shouldn't have been made, he noted that outside financial consultants hired by the town to review Ladner's work didn't catch the mistake, either.

"That's their entire business — it's a little [portion] of your business — and they missed it as well," Coz said. "I'm really amazed at the state. I have new faith in the state. A tiny town like us and they catch that? That's great." ★

LETTERS: *The Coastal Star* welcomes letters to the editor about issues of interest in the community. These are subject to editing and must include your name, address and phone number. Preferred length is 200-500 words. Send email to editor@thecoastalstar.com.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Issue
October 2023

Town seeking grant to fix water valves

By Larry Barszewski

Ocean Ridge commissioners on Oct. 2 approved applying to the Florida Legislature for a \$250,000 grant to find, fix or replace the buried water valves in town. The grant would cover half the estimated \$500,000 cost of the work.

“If you have matching funds ... if you have some money put aside to help that project, whatever that may be, it always helps. It looks good on the application. You have some skin in the game,” said state Rep. Joe Casello, D-Boynton Beach, who attended the meeting and has assisted the town with information on the grant process. “As far as appropriations go, they’re big

on water projects.”

According to an application included in the commission agenda packet, “The project will verify the accuracy of GIS maps for shutoff valves, place valve can extensions & concrete collars at buried valve locations.”

“We are talking about potentially raising the valves in the water distribution system by putting a valve can extender and then a concrete collar” around each valve, Town Manager Lynne Ladner said. “It doesn’t raise the actual valve off the water line. What it does is it puts an extension onto the can that surrounds the valves ... to make them more easily accessible. And then the concrete collar keeps

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
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them from being overgrown by people's grass and different things like that as they mow."

In addition, the application says the town "will strategically place new valves on existing pipes to enable public works staff to check existing old pipes, reducing emergency repairs & emergency shutdowns. Installation of insertion valves would reduce disruption to residents."

In other news:

- The owner of a home under construction for more than eight years at 6273 N. Ocean Blvd. has until Feb. 15 to complete the work or face a \$5,000 daily fine up to a maximum fine of \$150,000. In addition, if the work isn't finished even earlier — by the

end of the year — including receiving a certificate of occupancy, owner Andrew Rivkin has agreed to pay the town \$50,000 to make up for missed property taxes the town would be entitled to if the home were finished in 2023.

- New regulations are still on the way concerning where and how big oceanfront property owners in town can build. Final approvals have been delayed as commissioners continued to tinker with the wording of the proposed ordinances in recent months. Final approvals are now expected at the commission's Nov. 6 meeting.

- The commission voted to end its contract with Blue Iguana for iguana removal services "without cause." The

company had removed more than 1,800 iguanas from town property over the past year, officials said, but at a recent meeting commissioners questioned if those numbers could be verified.

- Ladner has been appointed to serve on the Florida League of Cities 2023-2024 finance, taxation and personnel committee, one of the league's five legislative policy committees. Commissioner Carolyn Cassidy was appointed to the league's utilities, natural resources and public works committee.

- The town has decided to continue posting notices about lost pets on its Civic Ready site.★

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Issuu
October 2023

Commisioners set lower tax rate after some initial dissent

By Steve Plunkett

In the end, the discussion of Ocean Ridge's budget for 2023-24 was a matter of nickels and dimes, with an emphasis on the nickels.

For the Town Commission's fifth meeting on the budget this year, Town Manager Lynne Ladner prepared scenarios with a tax of \$5.50 per \$1,000 of taxable property value — the same rate as the 2022-23 budget year — as well as at \$4.89 per

\$1,000 and five stops in between.

"I've also provided you with additional breakdowns at every 5 or .05 amounts so that you can see what any change between \$5.25 and \$5.50 does and what it does to your anticipated unaudited fund balances," she explained at the start of the Sept. 5 session.

The town tax bill for a \$500,000 property would have ranged from \$2,445 to \$2,750 in the different scenarios, a difference of \$305. For the

five intermediate 5-cent steps, \$5.25 to \$5.50, the difference narrowed to \$125.

"We're really talking about peanuts," Vice Mayor Steve Coz said.

"That's what I'm trying to tell you. It really comes down to, like, nickels and dimes," Mayor Geoff Pugh said.

After almost endorsing \$5.45, commissioners settled on the \$5.40 rate per \$1,000 for a bill of \$2,700 on a \$500,000 home.

"I was hoping for 5.35 and,

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
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you know, given what we understand about the budget, that would work. But you know, 5.4 I'd be OK," said Commissioner Carolyn Cassidy, who participated via telephone and could not vote.

Coz had argued for the highest rate.

"I think I said this last year when we had the 5.5. I said we're going to have to go through two to three years of this in order to have the money to deal with our infrastructure problems," he said.

"Right now we're at the tentative budget hearing," Ladner said. "If we were going to have cut expenditures, it would have been appropriate for the commission to have given some input on where they wanted those cuts to be."

At a later point Coz

Commissioner Philip Besler agreed.

"We're going to start putting money away for the septic-to-sewer. It's going to happen. It might not happen till 10 years but it's sort of like retirement plans. Do you want to start putting your money away when you're 50 years old or is it better to put it away when you're 30 years old?" he said.

This was Ladner's first year of preparing Ocean Ridge's budget, and friction was apparent as she and commissioners continued to get used to each other.

When Cassidy suggested trimming costs to reach a lower tax rate, Ladner said she should have proposed that at the earlier budget meetings.

At the final budget hearing on Sept. 18, Coz directed his disappointment toward former manager Tracey Stevens, saying she left no budget information behind. Commissioner Ken Kaleel, who did not attend the Sept. 5 session, thanked the staff for putting the budget together under "tenuous circumstances." Commissioners then approved the \$5.40 tax rate per \$1,000 of taxable value.

The tax revenue will fund the bulk of an \$11 million operating budget, up 7.4% from the year that ended Sept. 30. Ocean Ridge's tax base rose 12.9% to \$1.36 billion.

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complained that Ladner was earmarking money for items such as the Harbour Drive drainage project when the work was not close to beginning. Ocean Ridge customarily kept such money in reserves until it was needed, he said.

"I'm, I'm lost and I cannot believe these numbers," the vice mayor said.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Coastal Star
April 4, 2023

OCEAN RIDGE: Two town commissioners resign after hiring of full-time town manager
By Joe Capozzi

In a span of less than two hours Monday night, Ocean Ridge gained a full-time town manager and lost two town commissioners.

Commissioner Martin Wiescholek announced his resignation an hour after being sworn in to his second three-year term April 3, then stood up and walked out of Town Hall with the commission's April meeting still in progress. Commissioner Kristine de Haseth announced her resignation nearly two hours later, at the very end of the meeting, citing a need to spend more time on family obligations.

Wiescholek resigned just minutes after the commission voted 3-2 to hire interim Town Manager **Lynne Ladner** as the full-time town manager, a move that reversed the commission's 3-2 vote Feb. 27 to not give her a contract for the full-time job.

Ladner's hire Monday night is a direct result of a change in Town Hall power dynamics that arose from the March 14 municipal election when newcomer Carolyn Cassidy and Wiescholek won a three-way race for two commission seats. Incumbent Mayor Susan Hurlburt finished third, losing her commission seat. Hurlburt, Wiescholek and de Haseth often voted in concert, as they did Feb. 27 when they voted against **Ladner's** hiring because of concerns that she had aligned herself with a faction of two other commissioners and their community supporters.

Cassidy was endorsed during her campaign by incumbent commissioners Geoff Pugh and Steve Coz, and on her first night as a commissioner Monday she voted with Pugh and Coz to hire **Ladner** full-time. "I think **Lynne** has been doing an outstanding job in reaching out to the community," Cassidy said. "We've had a very unstable work environment that has suffered a bit from a lack of leadership. I think the time for healing has to start now."

Wiescholek reminded the commission why it voted in February to not hire **Ladner**, who he said had been influenced by two commissioners to fire Police Chief Richard Jones (who has since left to take the police chief job in Gulf Stream). At the Feb. 27 commission meeting, Jones corroborated Wiescholek's concerns when he described how **Ladner** came into his office two days after he'd announced his resignation and told him "that the commission wished for me to leave early. At this point I go, 'The commission?' It was clarified, 'at least two commissioners,'" Jones said. Pugh and Coz denied pressuring **Ladner** to fire Jones.

On Monday, Wiescholek said: "There's this whole thing about who-said, what-said, but somebody walked into Chief Jones' office and said the commission wants you fired. Either **Lynne** did that on her own and lied about it or she was instructed by two commissioners to walk into Chief Jones' office and say the words 'the commission wants you fired' without talking to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the other three commissioners. It's inappropriate or it's a flat-out lie. That in itself disqualifies anybody from holding a position in this town."

The commission had been scheduled to select town manager finalists on May 1 and interview them May 9. The firm the town hired for \$29,500 to find candidates, Colin Baenziger and Associates, considers the latest pool of 18 applicants "superior" to the previous candidates, said de Haseth, who said she'd been in contact with Baenziger. "We started the (search) process. We have a process to follow and we need to continue the procedure and move forward from there," de Haseth said. "You can't do an about-face in the middle of the stream."

"That's exactly what the commission did (Feb. 27)," Coz retorted, pointing out how the commission in January had selected **Ladner** on a 5-0 vote while officials drafted a contract that was supposed to be approved Feb. 27. "I think the town is in a period of healthy rebirth. I think **Lynne** is part of that," Coz said before the commission voted to hire **Ladner**, who will make \$142,000 a year. Her predecessor, Tracey Stevens, was making \$132,500 when she left Sept. 11 to become town manager in Haverhill.

A few minutes after **Ladner**'s hiring Monday, as the commission was considering a new agenda item, Wiescholek interrupted and said, "Based on the decision that was just handed down, with the renewal of the contract for **Lynne Ladner**, I feel that town is doing itself a grave disservice. I feel that the town is putting itself at great risk. The implications that pass off that are staggering at best. I will not have my name associated to that. Hereby, I resign."

Many of the 50 or so people in the audience cheered as Wiescholek stood up and walked off the dais, happy to see him go. In an interview outside Town Hall a few minutes later, Wiescholek said he had no plans to change his mind. "What they have there right now is a town manager that they can tell what to do: 'You need to hire this person and that person.' They can manage and massage anything into their own world. I am not going to be a part of it," he told The Coastal Star.

After the meeting, de Haseth said she had been considering since December to step down because of family obligations, but decided to wait until after the election. "I was sorry to see her go," Coz, who was selected as vice mayor, said after the meeting. "She was a great asset to the commission."

Pugh, who was selected Monday as mayor, said after the meeting that he expected the town to put out a notice for candidates to apply to fill the remaining terms of Wiescholek and de Haseth. The final selection for each vacant commission seat will be voted on by the Town Commission, possibly at a special meeting, he said.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://issuu.com/thecoastalstar.com/docs/edition168/s/20067461>
March 2023

Three top officials leaving in latest Town Hall turmoil

By Joe Capozzi

Less than two weeks before an election that could shift the balance of power on the Town Commission, three top Ocean Ridge officials are on their way out. Interim Town Manager **Lynne Ladner** will not get the full-time position, a job for which the commission chose her in January, because of concerns by three commissioners that she has aligned herself with a faction of two commissioners and their community supporters. Police Chief Richard Jones will leave by May 11 after agreeing to take the chief's job in Gulf Stream. And building official Durrani Guy submitted his two-week notice on Feb. 27. Two other Town Hall employees have left since the beginning of the year. Although **Ladner** agreed to stay on as interim manager for another 90 days while the town conducts what will be a third search for a top administrator, she will not be considered for the full-time job, a divided commission decided Feb. 27. The margin was 3-2, with commissioners Geoff Pugh and Steve Coz on the losing end of a vote to finalize her contract as intended.

The backdrop of the three departures is the March 14 election, when Mayor Susan Hurlburt, Commissioner Martin Wiescholek and resident Carolyn Cassidy are running for two seats. Cassidy has been endorsed by Pugh and Coz, a pair that has been on the short end of votes by a majority made up of Hurlburt, Wiescholek and Vice Mayor Kristine de Haseth. Among Cassidy's campaign pledges is to overhaul the building department, a mandate that has been echoed by Pugh and Coz and has prompted concern by employees at Town Hall. The latest turmoil came to a head at the commission's special meeting Feb. 27 to consider **Ladner's** contract, an agenda item that would've been routine if not for behind-the-scenes communications **Ladner** had with Pugh and Coz in recent weeks about whether Jones should leave before May 11. Jones submitted his resignation Feb. 10 and under terms of his contract must give 90 days' advance notice before he leaves.

Those communications came to light in an email Wiescholek said he mistakenly sent to fellow commissioners in late February about "serious second thoughts" he had about hiring **Ladner**. In the email, which was meant only for Colin Baenziger, a recruiter hired to help commissioners find a manager, Wiescholek said he was concerned that **Ladner** "had been influenced by two commissioners to immediately fire chief Jones." Wiescholek based his concerns on information shared with him by Jones about conversations the chief had with **Ladner** two days after he announced his resignation. Although Wiescholek's email never identified the two commissioners, it was made clear Feb. 27, when the email was dissected in a public meeting, that he was referring to Pugh and Coz. Pugh and Coz said they spoke individually to **Ladner** about whether it made sense to let Jones leave before May 11 and replace him with an interim chief. But they said they did not pressure her to terminate Jones. "I've never had a conversation with **Lynne** about terminating a police chief," Coz said. "I would never have that conversation. It's ludicrous. Somehow this entire collusion with myself and Geoff and **Lynne** grew out of fantasy.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

It doesn't exist." Jones, however, had a different take on his conversation with **Ladner**. Two days after he announced his resignation, "I received some text messages from the town manager indicating that a resident in town had chosen who the next police chief should be," Jones said without elaborating. A day after that, a Monday, **Ladner** came into Jones' office. "I was then informed that the commission wished for me to leave early. At this point I go, 'The commission?' It was clarified, 'at least two commissioners,'" the chief said. Jones said he was not told, nor did he ask, the names of the two commissioners. Before Jones described his conversations with **Ladner**, Vice Mayor de Haseth said she believed the interim town manager had "aligned herself" with "select commissioners" and "a small faction in this town." **Ladner** also "has exhibited questionable behavior," de Haseth said, explaining how she warned **Ladner** in her early days as interim manager to be careful about information she receives from town residents. "And she told me, 'Don't worry about it. I secretly record conversations with residents on a regular basis.' To which I said, 'I do believe that is illegal,'" de Haseth said. Although de Haseth said **Ladner** told her the recordings "helped her create notes later," she said **Ladner** was "counseled"

The Town Commission by a 3-2 vote reversed its decision to hire **Lynne Ladner** as town manager, meaning it will conduct a third search for that job. Jerry Lower/ The Coastal Star by the chief and town attorney not to record residents without their consent and knowledge. **Ladner** said, "When I found out that Florida was a two-party recording state, I had not made any recordings to record my meetings, I made sure to take only handwritten notes." Before coming to Ocean Ridge, **Ladner** held management and consulting positions in Pinellas County and Pahokee government. As for her conversations with Pugh and Coz, **Ladner** said she told them her intention was for Jones to stay as long as he could and help find his replacement. She also said she asked the town attorney about "the cost implications" if the town let Jones leave before the 90-day departure period outlined in his contract.

Ladner was set to get a \$142,500 salary in her contract; an earlier version called for her to get \$155,000. Ocean Ridge's previous town manager, Tracey Stevens, was making \$132,500 when she left Sept. 11 to become town manager in Haverhill. Not only is the town back to square one on finding a town manager, it also has to find a new police chief and a new building official. Commissioners voted 4-1 to retain **Ladner** for another 90 days while they find a new interim or full-time manager. "What I see pretty much is a vote of no confidence" in **Ladner**, said Hurlburt, who called for an end to the "micromanagement" of Town Hall from outside sources. "This latest incident is being used by a minority of residents as another political football. Ocean Ridge should be operating with good governance as the priority, not a stage for folks with personal axes to grind," the mayor said. "These power plays are doing harm to Ocean Ridge and I'm concerned our town manager might have played right into it." Pugh and Coz also took issue with language in Wiescholak's email that described "two commissioners who are dead set on burning down this town." Wiescholak apologized to both commissioners for his choice of words in the email. The meeting was interrupted multiple times, prompting the mayor to call three separate recesses, when a few of the 40 residents in the audience shouted at commissioners.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Coastal Star (FL)
November 30, 2022

Ocean Ridge: Sale of Aging Co-op to Developer is Next Wave, Some Say

Author: John Pacenti

Duncan Burke fell in love some 50 years ago with the understated individually owned apartments next to Ocean Club of Florida. His godparents owned in Ocean Maisonettes across the street and he bought into the apartments. “My wife and I loved it. It was small but wonderful,” said Burke, who travels around the globe but is based in Greenwich, Connecticut. But Burke and the other owners at 6855 N. Ocean Blvd. in Ocean Ridge decided to say goodbye. The oceanside complex sold for \$29 million on Oct. 18, according to Palm Beach County official records. The money will be split among owners according to the size of their units, 22 in all. The 60-year-old building was a co-op, meaning that to sell it, all owners of the studio and one-bedroom units had to agree. Owners had already agreed not to inhabit the property recently as repairs mounted. “It ends a long period of uncertainty as to what to do about the building, which was frustrating,” Burke said. “It was bittersweet for those of us who have been down there with family since the 1970s.”

New construction along Ocean Boulevard — be it condominiums or multimillion-dollar spec mansions — represents a confluence of spiking land values, an influx of new year-round residents and new regulations ushered in by the collapse of Champlain Towers South in Surfside in June 2021. It is “Logan’s Run” for aging complexes that once were the backbone of the area’s charm. The co-op follows the path of Wright by the Sea, the historic Delray Beach hotel that sold four years ago for \$25 million to make way for the ultramodern Ocean Delray condominiums. With more than 200 feet of direct ocean frontage, the co-op possesses the same allure of unobstructed ocean views that made Wright by the Sea desirable.

The new owner of the apartments — or more important, the 2.1 acres they sit upon — is an affiliate of Edwards Cos., a Columbus, Ohio-based family-owned holding company that advertises a host of developments: mixed-use urban, multifamily, student housing, condominium construction. It is the mixed-use part that has some Ocean Ridge residents alarmed. The Edwards Cos., under a limited liability corporation, also is behind Delray Beach’s Atlantic Crossing, a \$300 million multiuse project slated to have offices, shops, restaurants and condos. The company did not respond to an email for comment. Also, the Ocean Club — the beach and tennis club next door to the co-op — would not talk about the sale. Betty Bingham’s father — former Ocean Ridge Mayor H. Peirce Brawner — was one of the original members of the Ocean Club. She said there is plenty of concern among Ocean Ridge residents about what the Edwards Cos. will construct. “I doubt seriously they will be able to put stores and offices,” said Bingham, who is not an Ocean Club member.

Ocean Ridge interim Town Manager **Lynne Ladner** said the zoning is high-density residential multifamily. There is a height restriction of four stories. “There has been no permit pulled. They have not started any land development with our building department,” **Ladner** said. “They

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

haven't done anything but change ownership. There has been no discussion with the town. "We have quite a few people who are asking about it and I am telling them the same thing."

The Edwards Cos. isn't talking, but the affable lawyer who helped manage the sale said the plans will be to construct up to 20 luxury condominiums after the razing of the old apartments. The lawyer, Brad Capas, executive director of Cushman & Wakefield, said necessary repairs in the wake of the Surfside collapse were going to be costly for owners of the apartments. "Nobody wants a repeat so everybody is paying attention to it," he said. "In this particular case, residents were not full-time and did not want to pay to do the capital improvements to pass inspections."

New regs for old buildings

They are not alone. Coastal residential buildings are reckoning with the Surfside tragedy, forcing residents to incur hefty assessments for upgrades or repairs. The Florida Legislature ushered in reforms last session, mandating that condos and co-ops three stories or taller and within 3 miles of the coast must have a "milestone inspection" 25 years after opening and every 10 years thereafter. The first inspection for those farther from the coast would be 30 years.

Condo associations must have enough money in their reserves by 2025 to fund all necessary repairs to maintain the structural integrity of their buildings. Ocean Ridge Management, which managed the apartments, did not have any comment and efforts to reach board members on the exact nature of pending repairs were unsuccessful. "It's my understanding that the owners voluntarily moved out — out of an abundance of caution," Capas said. There were about five serious bidders for the property, but Capas said it was a complex sale because of the zoning restrictions on it, such as height and easement. "The site planning of the property, the design of the building, is a little complicated because there are some obstacles that they have to work through," Capas said. He estimated that the new condominiums will run about \$2,000 per square foot — about the same as at the recently completed Ocean Delray.

Former Ocean Ridge Mayor Ken Kaleel said Ocean Ridge is no different from barrier island communities throughout South Florida. "The market value of the land and aging buildings are prompting some developers to come in and take an interest," he said. "That has been happening for quite some time. It is completely different than it was 30 years ago. The pandemic just put it on hyperdrive." Realtor Nick Malinosky said seasonal residents have been increasingly replaced with families moving primarily from the Northeast, California and Chicago and staying year-round. He said these older buildings' time has come. "They're ugly to look at, the windows are small. Typically, the vegetation in the landscape isn't great," Malinosky said. "The development, assuming it stays within the standard zoning and regulations, will be a great improvement to the area." Duncan Burke represented the typical resident of the apartments. Burke said he and his family used it for two or three weeks in March, maybe a weekend in November and another weekend around New Year's Day. It was certainly enough time to create some great family memories. "It was about as nice as it gets in Florida around there," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Elizabeth Lynne Ladner** is listed below.]

<https://meetings.municode.com/adaHtmlDocument/index?cc=PAHOKEEFL&me=8808c542effb4ad289d3defb49ec0cfe&ip=True>

September 12, 2022

City of Pahokee

City Commission Regular Meeting

**E. PUBLIC COMMENTS / PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS /
PRESENTATIONS / PROCLAMATIONS**

2. Certificate of Appreciation - **Lynne Ladner**

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Coastal Star (FL)
August 31, 2022

Ocean Ridge: Interim Manager Gets Started, Expresses Interest in Full-Time Job

Author: Joe Capozzi

Lynne Ladner, a former interim town manager in Pinellas County, will take over as interim town manager in Ocean Ridge. Town commissioners voted 4-0 on Aug. 8 to hire **Ladner** after interviewing one other candidate, former Lake County Manager Alan Rosen. Commissioner Geoff Pugh was absent. **Ladner** formally accepted the job on Aug. 10. **Ladner** planned to start Sept. 1, working alongside departing manager Tracey Stevens, whose last day is Sept. 11. Stevens has accepted the town manager job in Haverhill.

Commissioners hope to interview candidates for a full-time town manager in October and hire one by Thanksgiving. **Ladner** told commissioners she is interested in the full-time position. “I am thrilled at this opportunity and I am excited to come next week and get started,” **Ladner** told commissioners after they approved her contract at a special meeting Aug. 25. “I look forward to working with all of you and everyone in the town.”

Commissioners were impressed with Rosen, but felt **Ladner** was the better fit. Rosen had told commissioners he probably would not be interested in the full-time position because of family commitments. “I think **Lynne** would be a good fit for keeping the boat afloat for the three months while we are looking for somebody else,” Mayor Susan Hurlburt said.

Ladner has more than 15 years of experience working in local governments in Florida, Michigan and Kansas. More recently she served as interim town manager in Kenneth City, a suburb of St. Petersburg. She also has been working as a consultant for the city of Pahokee, a job she planned to leave before starting in Ocean Ridge. **Ladner** will draw a paycheck based on a \$100,000 annual salary for the first two weeks. On Sept. 12 her pay will increase to \$132,500 a year, which Stevens was making. The commission also gave **Ladner** permission to serve on a Florida League of Cities committee that will require her to attend a meeting once a month in Kissimmee.

At the Aug. 25 meeting, Ocean Ridge resident Terry Brown, a former commissioner, asked commissioners to give **Ladner** an overview about the town’s neighborhoods and political factions. “I’m not trying to be cute or anything, but I want to be sure as soon as possible” that officials “give an orientation to the town in terms of demographics and neighborhoods where various tensions exist,” Brown said. It’s important that **Ladner** is “aware of what happens in the town with various groups so there are no surprises. You dig what I’m saying?” Brown said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Press Release Distribution (FL)
February 10, 2022

Imagine That Performance Welcomes Senior Consultant Lynne Ladner

Author: Imagine That Performance, LLC

TAMPA, Fla. - Imagine That Performance welcomes **Lynne Ladner** as a Senior Consultant to the growing company focused on local government leadership. **Lynne Ladner** brings more than 15 years of experience in local government, including her most recent appointments as Interim Town Manager of Kenneth City, FL, and City Manager for Hart, MI. She holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science. Her role as Human Resources Director and City Manager in the communities she has served has allowed her to build strong and impactful leadership teams that successfully serve their communities.

Lynne is excited to be joining the team, offered this statement: "I collaborated with Imagine that Performance in Kenneth City, FL and recognized that we have a shared belief in the benefits of cultivating highly committed leaders into high performance teams in the public sector. "**Lynne** brings a well rounded with direct experiences in leading many local government functions" said Rob Duncan, Managing Director of Imagine That Performance. "She's not afraid to get her hands directy to get a task done – no matter the task – a great quality for our growing team."

Lynne Ladner will directly serve Imagine That Performance customers, bringing new ideas that drive culture, performance, and accountability in local governments.

Imagine That Performance, LLC envisions a world where local government leaders are always striving to learn and implement evolving leadership principles, so that they can nurture trusting teams, advance employee development, expand citizen participation and further community trust. The consulting firm that has established nationwide Virtual Think Tanks for City Managers and County Administrators. These professionally-facilitated groups offer Chief Administrative Officers the real-time platform to leverage other leaders' experience to ask the right questions and offer insight prior to developing solutions. With Local Government Consulting and Professional Facilitation Services, Imagine That Performance is providing hands-on resources to get work done that generates the desired outcomes for municipalities.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Press Release Distribution (FL)
June 10, 2021

Kenneth City Expands Consulting Agreement and Selects New Interim Town Manager
Author: Imagine That Performance, LLC

The Town of Kenneth City voted last night to expand the agreement last night with Imagine That Performance to appoint Steven Spina, Ph.D. as the Interim Town Manager at the conclusion of current Interim Manager **Lynne Ladner's** term ending on June 11. The Council voted unanimously to enhance what has been in place since May 12th providing professional services to the Town in the role of Assistant to the Town Manager. Dr. Spina, a senior consultant with Imagine That Performance, brings more than 20 years of City Manager experience from managing the City of Zephyrhills, Florida, where he oversaw a \$56 million budget, including three enterprise funds, and 170 employees. Dr. Spina also currently serves as an instructor at the University of South Florida, in the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program.

In addition to the appointment of Dr. Spina, Jocilyn Martinez, Ph.D. has been appointed as Interim Town Clerk. Dr. Martinez, also a senior consultant with Imagine That Performance, worked in local government for over 10 years, most recently for the City of Port Richey, Florida as Assistant City Manager. Dr. Martinez has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in Public Administration at Florida Atlantic University, Barry University, and the University of South Florida, where she currently teaches. "The appointments are a short-term solution until the Town Council is able to select a new Town Manager," said Rob Duncan, Managing Director of Imagine That Performance. "We are honored to provide assistance during this time of transition in Kenneth City." In addition to the appointments, Mr. Duncan will continue to serve as the Assistant to the Town Manager. The town is currently executing a plan to fill the Town Manager position by August, with FCCMA Senior Advisors assisting with the search. Applications for the position are being accepted until June 25th.

Outgoing Interim Town Manager **Lynne Ladner** left a mark in a short term as Interim Town Manager. "The time that you have been here, you have taught me more how this town operates how it should operate and why it operates the way that it does," said Mayor Robert Howell, "in the short period of time you've been here, you taught me the why and how, thank you." As Interim Town Manager, **Ms. Ladner** inherited an organization depleted of staff, but found creative solutions to ensure no disruption of services to residents.

Imagine That Performance, LLC is a consulting firm that has established nationwide Virtual Think Tanks for City Managers and County Administrators. These professionally facilitated groups offer Chief Administrative Officers the real-time platform to leverage other leaders' experience to ask the right questions and offer insight prior to developing solutions. With direct assistance local government consulting, Imagine That Performance is providing hands-on resources to get work done that generates the desired outcomes for municipalities.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.oceanacountypress.com/2021/04/21/city-manager-says-departure-was-prompted-by-council-not-renewing-her-contract/>
April 21, 2021

City manager says departure was prompted by council not renewing her contract.

Author: Allison Scarbrough

Hart City Manager **Lynne Ladner** said her departure from employment with the city was prompted by the city council not renewing her contract. The city council voted in March to not renew her contract, which expires in July. “I was left with no other option but to seek other employment.” Her last day as city manager is May 7, and she has accepted another position in Florida.

According to the minutes of the March 23, 2021 meeting, the council voted 6-1 to not renew **Ladner**’s contract and voted unanimously to have the city attorney “prepare the appropriate documentation to support the motion.” “I felt it was best to make a clean break with the city,” she said.

Ladner said she submitted a letter of “notice of leaving” April 15 to Mayor Vicki Platt, which states the following: “I would like to inform you that I am resigning from my position as city manager for the City of Hart effective May 7, 2021. I will be utilizing several vacation days during this transition period but will be available via phone and email on days that I am not in the office. “Thank you very much for the opportunities that I have experienced during my time with the community, I have enjoyed my time here and the friends that I have made during my tenure. In acknowledging the Council’s decision at the March 23, 2021 meeting, it is best for myself and the community that I move forward with transitioning at this time. I will work with city staff and consultants to assist during this period to the best of my ability.”

Platt said the council voted to not renew the contract because it wasn’t written professionally, and a new contract has been drafted. “It is significantly more professional this time around.” The mayor said it was not her job performance that was the reason for the contract not being renewed, but the decision was made due to the contract’s wording.

Ladner was hired in 2018 when long-time Hart City Manager Stan Rickard retired from the position. She previously held city manager positions in South Lyon, Michigan and Hiawatha, Kansas. The position, which is in the salary range of \$85,000-\$105,000, has been posted on various web sites, such as LinkedIn, said Mayor Platt.

“It’s fair to say we were going to work well together for a little longer,” said Mayor Vicki Platt. “**Lynne** brought a lot of good things to the city.” The city council is planning to appoint an interim city manager at its next regular meeting Tuesday, April 27, said Mayor Platt.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

https://www.shorelinemedia.net/oc-eanas_herald_journal/news/general_news/amercian-rescue-act-funds-could-help-fund-street-projects/article_d04787de-d5b9-57e5-a382-20051722c996.html
Oceana's Herald-Journal
March 29, 2021

Amercian Rescue Act funds could help fund street projects

Author: Sharon Hallack

After two years of unsuccessful applications to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for the completion of a Hansen Street road project, the City of Hart March 23 authorized and awarded the bid for the final design, bidding and construction engineering as part of FY 2021, to Prein & Newhof Engineering (P & N).

The estimated total for the Hansen Street project is \$194,000, which includes \$167,500 for construction and contingency and \$26,500 for engineering costs. In conjunction with the Hansen Street project, the city authorized the final design, bidding and construction engineering to P&N for an adjoining section of Dryden Street, which would include a water service line replacement and sewer main extension. The estimated total for the Dryden Street project is \$501,300 with \$450,800 for construction and contingency and \$50,500 for engineering.

Council had considered approval for the Hansen Street project at its March 9 meeting, however, wanted to know how much it would cost to add the paving of Dryden Street. "The Dryden Street project is a bit more complex as the properties along that section of Dryden are currently served by septic systems not sanitary sewer. Completion of this project without the extension of a sewer main at this time would necessitate the removal and reconstruction of the road surface. This project may or may not also necessitate the replacement of water service lines, per the state mandate for service lines that are connected to lead service lines or connections," stated a memo to council from City Manager **Lynne Ladner**.

Barbara Marczak of P&N told the council they estimate a savings of about \$10,000 in engineering if both projects are designed and constructed together. "While Dryden is not currently a high-use road, it does frequently incur large truck traffic exiting the Dollar General property, bus traffic to access the Oceana Council on Aging garage and large city trucks utilized by the DPW," said **Ladner**. In addition to the two major road projects, the city also previously secured bids on the paving of the DPW gravel parking lot. The total for that project is estimated at \$117,000.

Prior to approval, the council discussed the financing of both projects. **Ladner** told the council that the MDOT has commented in the past the city needs to spend down money in its local streets fund. Also with the passage of the federal American Rescue Act, the city is estimated to receive funds just over \$204,000. "Once these projects are bid out, the city will have the option of awarding all three contracts, any combination of the three or none of the projects. But it's not a bad idea to have some designed projects 'on the shelf.' MDOT often presents grant funding with a 90-day turnaround, and it can be hard to meet those parameters if you don't have

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

something in the wings. Dryden would be one of the next likely streets to be paved within the city,” **Ladner** said.

The city’s parks and recreation master plan expired in 2020. To be eligible for recreational project funding, the city must have a current plan on file with the state. For the update, the city sought proposals and received three different quotes from Prein & Newhof for \$9,600, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Corporation (WMSRDC) for \$7,500 and Fleis & VandenBrink for \$4,900. The council awarded the contract to Fleis & VandenBrink (F&V) in the amount of \$4,900. The proposal letter submitted by F&V stated that, “Work will include updating demographic and economic data, updating an inventory of recreational facilities, conducting public workshops to identify current community needs and developing a recreation plan to meet the needs of the community. The plan will be used to identify recreation programming needs and existing recreation opportunities. This plan will also be used to qualify the city for Michigan Department of Natural Resources recreation grants for the next five years.”

Three public meetings, involving the community specifically, will be held; the first start-up meeting will be to hear input from stakeholders at an informal workshop; the second meeting will define and prepare community goals and objectives by involving key representatives from area groups, such as rec league organizers, senior groups and young people; lastly a public hearing will be held to review and comment on the recreation plan draft. The entire process is expected to take 90 days. F&V plans to begin on the update this summer or early fall, to meet the Feb. 1, 2022 deadline.

Infrastructure and equipment items were also on the agenda, including accepting a bid from Nutrigo Environmental in the amount of \$459/dry ton for the hauling and land application disposal of biosolids from the wastewater treatment plant through calendar year 2025. The bidding requirement was waived, as Nutrigo was the only contractor to submit a bid. Because landfill disposal is so costly, biosolids are trucked to area farms and applied to approved cropland.

The council accepted a proposal from Power Line Supply for the replacement of the switch gear at the industrial park, for the Federal Pacific Switch, in the amount of \$19,104. The approval also waived the low bidder requirement, as this switch is similar to present equipment, allowing for the use of the existing base and terminals. It will also allow the Energy Department to recondition removed equipment for back-up. Energy Superintendent Mike Schiller projects that by not having to replace the base and terminals, as well as the switch, \$10,000 could be saved, making the Federal Pacific bid and project cost the lowest.

The city approved a FY 2022 pre-purchase for a new aerial bucket truck as part of the Energy Department capital improvement plan. This purchase would replace the city’s aging 1997 aerial bucket truck. “Due to a shortage of computer chips to operate the electrical systems in large trucks, manufacturing is being temporarily discontinued. I learned very late today that D&K Truck, selected through the State of Michigan MiDeal competitive bidding process, has a limited number of truck chassis available and because of the demand, the company is requesting a

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

commitment as soon as possible. If the city is willing to commit to the purchase of the truck, we could accept delivery on a new truck in FY 2022. The Freightliner truck chassis would be sent to Versabuilt (also selected through the MiDeal selective bidding process) for a total cost of \$230,254 and be ready for purchase in the FY2022 budget,” **Ladner** said.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

WZZM 13 ABC
December 24, 2020

Banned Jesus T-shirt sparks federal lawsuit against western Michigan city

Author: John Hogan

An election worker in Oceana County is suing the city of Hart, claiming she was wrongly prohibited from wearing a religious-themed shirt during the Nov. 3 general election. The shirt stated: My Heart will TRUST in you JESUS. Margaret Wittman says the shirt did not support any candidate or issue. And being told to remove it was seen as “an offense to God.” “Jesus holds no political office and was not on the ballot,” Wittman contends in the 11-page lawsuit filed this week in Grand Rapids federal court.

The lawsuit says Wittman “does not cease being a Christian when she is performing her duties as an election worker for the city.” City officials would permit a Muslim election worker to wear a hijab and a Jewish election worker to wear a Yamaka while working at the polls. Yet Wittman was prohibited from wearing her Jesus shirt because Hart officials view Wittman’s religious beliefs as political, she contends.

Wittman is being represented by the American Freedom Law Center in Ann Arbor. She is seeking damages as well as a declaration that the city’s policy violates her constitutional rights.

Defendants named in the lawsuit are the city of Hart, City Manager **Lynne Ladner** and Clerk Cheryl Rabe. City officials were unavailable for comment on Thursday.

Wittman says she signed up to be a Nov. 3 election worker for \$10.50 an hour. At a training session the day before, election workers were told they could not engage in political speech while working the polls on election day. “In other words, the election workers were told that they could not advocate for or against any candidate or ballot issue,” the lawsuit states. A letter from city officials also directed election workers to “please make sure that there is no visible campaign material in/on your car if you choose to park at City Hall. Also, you should not wear any item that may appear to support a candidate or issue.”

When Wittman arrived at the polls on election day, Rabe approached her and directed her to turn her “trust in Jesus” shirt around and wear it backwards because it was considered to be “political speech,” according to the lawsuit. She refused. Wittman was then told to wear a sweater to cover the shirt; she again refused. Wittman “sincerely believes that Defendant Rabe’s order was an offense to God,” according to the lawsuit. Wittman says she lost her job as an election worker because she refused to remove or conceal the shirt.

City policy restricting political speech provides no definition of political “nor guidelines as to how this amorphous ban on ‘political’ speech can be objectively applied,” according to the lawsuit. The city policy violates Wittman's First Amendment right to freedom of speech and her right to free exercise of religion. Her 14th Amendment right to equal protection under the law

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

was also violated, according to the lawsuit. The case has been assigned to U.S. District Court Judge Paul L. Maloney.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: To view the entire case, please follow the link below.]
<https://www.americanfreedomlawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Complaint-Filed.pdf>

December 22, 2020

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN;

MARGARET WITTMAN, Plaintiff

CITY OF HART, Michigan; **LYNNE LADNER**, individually and in her official capacity as City Manager, City of Hart, Michigan; and **CHERYL RABE**, individually and in her official capacity as City Clerk, City of Hart, Michigan, Defendants.

PARTIES

12. Defendant **Lynne Ladner** is the City Manager for the City of Hart. As the City Manager, Defendant **Ladner** is responsible for creating, adopting, approving, ratifying, and enforcing the policies, practices, customs, and/or procedures of the City, including the challenged policy as set forth in this Complaint.

26. Plaintiff was then directed to speak with Defendant **Ladner**. During Plaintiff's conversation with Defendant **Ladner**, Defendant **Ladner** confirmed that Plaintiff's TRUST in JESUS shirt was "political speech" and that Plaintiff could not wear it while working at the polls.

27. Accordingly, Plaintiff was "relieved of her duties" as an election worker because she refused to violate her deeply held religious beliefs and convictions and because of the viewpoint expressed by her TRUST in JESUS shirt.

28. Plaintiff remained in the voting precinct, observing from the public viewing area for the remainder of the day until the building closed at midnight. If Plaintiff's TRUST in JESUS shirt was "political speech"—i.e., advocating for or against a candidate or a ballot issue—then she should not have been allowed within 100 feet of the polls pursuant to Michigan election law.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Targeted News Service (USA)
June 9, 2020

**Michigan Economic Development Corp.: City of Hart Receives Certification as
Redevelopment Ready Community**

The Michigan Economic Development Corp. issued the following news release:

For their efforts in establishing a solid foundation to attract private investment and further build on municipality assets, the City of Hart has been awarded the Redevelopment Ready Communities(RRC) certification, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) announced. The MEDC formally recognizes the City of Hart as a Certified Redevelopment Ready Community. Hart joins 44 other Michigan communities in all corners of the state that have qualified as "thoroughly prepared" when it comes to planning and zoning to remove traditional barriers and promote opportunities for prospective investors.

"The RRC process gave the City of Hart the opportunity to engage the community in a comprehensive assessment of our community and economic development practices," said Hart City Manager **Lynne Ladner**. "The help that we received in creating a cohesive community marketing strategy was immensely valuable and has helped the city with focusing our long-term efforts and in identifying ways to assist our businesses throughout the COVID pandemic crisis. As an RRC community, the resources that we have been able to access and continue to have access to will strengthen our community going forward."

As an RRC participant, the City of Hart received a comprehensive assessment that measured current community and economic development practices compared to RRC Best Practice standards. The program evaluates and certifies communities that integrate transparency, predictability and efficiency into their economic development practices. Certification status is a compelling indicator that a community has removed development barriers and streamlined processes to be more competitive and attractive to investors. To reach certification, the City of Hart worked to improve upon numerous policies and processes. The city's efforts are highlighted by developing an overarching economic development and marketing plan in 2019, creating a comprehensive development review guidebook and the development of flowcharts that clarify the steps in each of the city's development review processes. The city's efforts have produced high-quality documents and processes that will continue to generate value.

"Our mission at MEDC is to support Michigan's strong economic momentum and empower communities to establish a strong planning, zoning and economic development foundation," said MEDC Senior Vice President Michele Wildman. "Hart is well-positioned to implement their vision for the future and further improve the quality of life for residents. We look forward to continue building upon our relationship with the city and supporting local economic development efforts."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

PR Newswire (USA)
June 13, 2019

The City of Hart joins the MITN Purchasing Group in Michigan - City of Hart has officially joined the MITN Purchasing Group, one of BidNet's regional e-procurement solutions, providing vendors throughout Michigan easy online access its upcoming solicitations.

Author: Not Listed

The City of Hart has officially joined the MITN Purchasing Group, one of BidNet's regional e-procurement solutions, providing vendors throughout Michigan easy online access its upcoming solicitations. City of Hart invites all vendors to register online at <http://www.bidnetdirect.com/mitn>.

The regional purchasing group connects local governments with vendors looking to do business with public agencies. On the MITN Purchasing Group, vendors seeking business with over 200 participating agencies can register online to gain access to a single point of entry for opportunities throughout Michigan. By posting upcoming bids and RFPs on the MITN Purchasing Group, the City of Hart ensures an entire community of vendors can view their solicitation, download documents, and receive notification of addenda. The vendors self-register and ensure their contact information is up to date.

"Because we aren't the only agency posting and distributing bids, the MITN Purchasing Group provides City of Hart more vendor competition, which we hope will help cut costs." said **Lynne Ladner**, City Manager of City of Hart when asked why their department decided to join the MITN Purchasing Group. "We also like that it can help our current vendors expand their business opportunities."

City of Hart invites all local vendors to visit <http://www.bidnetdirect.com/mitn> and register to receive access to its upcoming solicitations as well as the upcoming bids and RFPs from 212 other public agencies participating on the MITN Purchasing Group. Registered vendors have the option to upgrade their service to receive customized bid alerts, notification of term contract expiration, and notification of a real-time addendum.

About The City of Hart:

The City of Hart is a thriving economic center located in Oceana County, MI. With a diverse population of over 2,200 we are a full service community providing Police, Water, Wastewater, Electric and Public Works services to our residents under the Council-Manager form of government. Hart is home to several large food production and packaging companies, many retail and commercial businesses and is home to the Starting Block food business incubator.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Ocean County Press
June 8, 2018

Former South Lyon city manager accepts Hart job.

Former South Lyon City Manager **Elizabeth Lynne Ladner** accepted the position of city manager for Hart, said Hart City Manager Stan Rickard who is retiring from the position in August. Hart City Council offered the job to **Ladner** earlier this week, and she accepted the job Thursday, June 7, Rickard said. Negotiations on an employment agreement have not yet been finalized, Rickard said.

Ladner has held city manager positions in South Lyon, Michigan and Hiawatha, Kansas over the last 12 years.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Elizabeth [Lynne] Ladner** is listed below. Omitted is the information on the approved company to lead the replacement search.]

<https://www.theoaklandpress.com/2018/04/25/lynne-ladner-out-as-south-lyon-city-manager/>
April 25, 2018

Lynne Ladner out as South Lyon city manager

Author: Mark Cavitt

South Lyon needs a full-time city manager. **Lynne Ladner** has been on medical leave since early January, her third since taking office in June 2014. She told The Oakland Press in late December that she anticipated being out for four to six weeks beginning Jan. 3. Well, that time has since past as her leave expired March 28. Police Chief Lloyd Collins, who has been serving as city manager in the interim, said an active search for **Ladner**'s replacement has begun.

Collins said that **Ladner**, city council and the city attorney negotiated a separation agreement that took effect March 29. It was signed by **Ladner** on Monday, which officially ended her tenure.

Since **Ladner** left office Jan. 3, Collins said he has not had any direct contact with her and said he wasn't sure of **Ladner**'s intentions, whether she would return or not, prior to her taking medical leave. "I can only speak to what she did and didn't say to me and I have no knowledge as to the reason for why she's leaving," said Collins.

Before serving as city manager, **Ladner** worked as city administrator for Hiawatha, Kan. where for seven years where she oversaw day-to-day operations, researched and administered grant applications, managed human resources, and managed budget operations.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Whmi
March 8, 2018

Collection Of Review Fees Under Scrutiny In City Of South Lyon
JM

There appears to be some discrepancies when it comes to collecting review fees in the City of South Lyon.

Police Chief Lloyd Collins is serving as interim city manager while **Lynne Ladner** is on her third, unspecified medical leave. Collins recently reported to council that at the end of the last fiscal year, **Ladner** allegedly directed city auditors to write off \$50,000 that wasn't billed or collected for different review fees. The fees are associated with building construction or other work that requires a review by consultants. Since the fees were not collected, the city was stuck with the bill. Fees are typically collected to cover the expenses and put into an escrow account, but that has apparently not been happening in the City. The South Lyon Herald quoted Collins as saying there is \$38,406 in fees that haven't been billed or collected during the current fiscal year. Collins questioned why the fees were not being collected or billed accordingly, and immediately brought the issue before council. He had only been serving in the interim role for about two months before making the discovery. In speaking with former employees and others, Collins said it appeared no one was ever directed to take over those duties.

The City has been dealing with some pressing budget issues and unfunded pension liabilities, which **Ladner** was supposed to handle. That's in addition to negotiations with employee labor unions and shifting to a defined contribution pension plan for new hires. It's unclear how long **Ladner** will remain on leave, as she was expected to return in February but that has now reportedly been extended to June.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Elizabeth Lynne Ladner** is listed below.]

Oakland County Michigan Board of Commissioners
Press Release
May 30, 2017

Commissioner Phil Weipert Secures Funding for Area Road Projects
Oakland County Matching Funds Program Results in More Than \$204K in Local Road Projects (Pontiac, Michigan)

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners have unanimously passed resolutions sponsored by Commissioner Phil Weipert securing a total of \$53,673 in matching funds for local road projects located in the Village of Milford, cities of Wixom and South Lyon and Lyon Township. These funds will be matched by local governments to complete an estimated total of \$204,905 in road repair projects. The projects are being funded by the Oakland County Pilot Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) and the Tri-Party Road Improvement Program. “I am glad to have had the opportunity to work with the other Commissioners and local municipalities to bring much-needed road funding to the communities in my district,” said Commissioner Phil Weipert (R-South Lyon).

The City of South Lyon received \$12,578 to put towards an estimated \$37,733 project to install a traffic signal at Pontiac Trail and Marjorie Ann Street. This project was funded by the Tri-Party Road Improvement Program and was funded equally by Oakland County, the City and the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC). Commissioner Weipert has also secured the passage of a resolution reserving \$9,859 in county funding for the future repaving of North Hagadorn Street within the County’s LRIP.

“The City of South Lyon is excited for the opportunity to partner with Oakland County on a significant local road project,” said **Lynne Ladner**, City Manager. “As all residents and taxpayers understand there is considerable pressure placed on our elected officials and local government employees to stretch each dollar we have to return the greatest investment to our taxpayers and residents. The Local Road Improvement Program is providing South Lyon with just such an opportunity to make major improvements to an area of our local road system that would otherwise be reliant solely on a pot of money that is not eligible for other revenue sharing or grant funding opportunities.”

The Oakland County Pilot Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) provides limited financial assistance to Oakland County cities and villages for repairs and improvements on roadways under their jurisdiction. Local municipalities must match funding from Oakland County and projects should supplement, not replace, existing local road repair efforts. The Oakland County Board of Commissioners has allocated up to \$1 million annually since the program was launched in 2016. Communities are allocated a share of these funds based upon a formula consisting of road miles and population. The program supplements the long-standing Tri-Party Road Improvement Program, which provides a 1/3 share in matching funds for

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repairs on local roadways under the control of the RCOC.

“The long-term lack of investment from the state and federal governments in local road infrastructure has taken a heavy toll on our roadways,” stated Board Chairman Michael J. Gingell. “Poor conditions on our roads create an impediment to the economic development of our region and diminish the excellent quality of life our residents expect. Oakland County is demonstrating leadership and innovation by making a \$1 million investment in immediate road repairs equal to approximately \$11 million in total road projects. These are the kind of results Oakland County residents have come to expect from Oakland County’s leadership team, from our County Executive, L. Brooks Patterson, and from the ongoing bi-partisan efforts of the members of the Board of Commissioners.”

The Board of Commissioners LRIP recently received national recognition with a 2017 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award in the category of Community and Economic Development.

Commissioner Weipert is a Republican who represents the 8th District, which includes the Cities of South Lyon and Wixom, Lyon and Milford Townships, and the Village of Milford. He was first elected to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners in 2010. For more information, please contact Commissioner Weipert via email to weipertpj@oakgov.com. You can reach the Board of Commissioners at 248-858-0100 or visit their website at www.oakgov.com/boc.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Detroit Free Press
May 26, 2017

Small downtowns like South Lyon are bouncing back

Bill Laytner

Across Michigan and the nation, small towns are on the chopping block. Small downtowns with mom-and-pop shops must do or die, say retail experts, or they'll be swamped by a rising tide of Internet sales, along with competition from flashy malls, big box stores and superstores like Walmart. Except that one burg is defying the death knell: South Lyon, a town of about 12,000 people in southwest Oakland County. Since the Great Recession of 2008-12, South Lyon has made a comeback and then some.

Last Tuesday, Mayor John Galeas Jr. and City Manager **Lynne Ladner** didn't just cut a ribbon for one or two new stores. They scissored through a blue ribbon stretched right across their downtown's main artery, Lake Street, blocking traffic just long enough to mark what they called a grand opening for, well, the whole quaint little downtown. "We've had 17 businesses either open or expand significantly in the last year," **Ladner** said.

And South Lyon isn't alone. Selected older downtowns in many locations are bouncing back, reinventing themselves while some of the nation's most familiar retail names like Kmart, Sports Authority and Borders have either gone bankrupt or seem headed that way. "It's very nice to see the pendulum swinging our way," said Jerry Dettloff, executive director of the Michigan Downtown Association, a statewide group that promotes traditional shopping districts from Allen Park to Zeeland. "If you look at age groups, the millennials are looking for places to hang out, and the slightly older people with families want the experience of being together," Dettloff said. Since the Great Recession waned, new businesses as well as apartments and condos have popped up in numerous small downtowns — from some of Detroit's close-in suburbs to ex-urban spots reaching north and west as far as Michigan's summer colonies, he said. "But it doesn't just happen. You need somebody — a person, a group, an organization — that supports your existing businesses and recruits the right kind of new ones, the kind that will do well," Dettloff said.

Vibrant downtowns are perfect fits for technology firms

In Macomb County, "we're seeing this happening in quite a few locations," said Jon Paul Rea, Macomb County director of Planning and Economic Development. Private investment in Utica, boosted by state-issued brownfield tax credits, turned an old landfill into a \$15-million minor league ball field, unleashing a small storm of new bars, restaurants and ice cream spots. St. Clair Shores continues to leverage its nautical theme with plans to increase public access to its waterfront while incentivizing new restaurants and condominium construction tied to the business district's lakefront location, Rea said.

In Wayne County, a big success story is Grosse Pointe Park's linear downtown on Kercheval, where empty storefronts, a vacant gas station and nearly defunct church have become a bakery, chic restaurant and microbrewery, respectively. For South Lyon, it was no easy task to take on

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the swarm of big box stores beckoning a quick freeway spin west in Brighton, and Novi's glittering 12 Oaks Mall 15 miles to the east, not to mention the siren call of Internet marketers from every computer screen and smartphone, South Lyon City Councilwoman Maggie Kurtzweil said. "I'll tell you, three years ago this downtown was a dust bowl. Our vacancy rate was high," Kurtzweil said. Reviving the shopping district fell to Bob Donohue, the city's economic development director, who also heads the merchant-driven Downtown Development Authority.

Donohue — on the job for just a year and in a new position for the city, after two decades overseeing downtown redevelopment for Oakland County — said South Lyon's downtown has grabbed onto "the three key ingredients for success — place, products and personal service." Those elements can work in any commercial district, but they especially allow an aging one to leverage its assets. That means restoring vintage buildings and creating a pedestrian-friendly setting for a special feeling of small-town "place"; encouraging a mix of unique retailers and services, with few or no chain outlets, to offer unusual products and brands that can't be found at, say, a mall or big box store; and providing training for entrepreneurs about giving "absolutely unmatched, over-the-top customer service," Donohue said.

Oh, and by the way, it doesn't hurt to have convenient parking — which in South Lyon, is free, right on the street. A big part of the evolution of downtowns is acknowledging that Americans do have many options for shopping but they can't eat out or try new cocktails on the Internet. That's led numerous downtowns of all sizes to welcome bars, restaurants and nightclubs — to excess, Donohue said. "I think some communities are beginning to see it's a mistake to overload on bars and restaurants" because doing that drives up lease rates and can make a downtown nothing but a pricey dining destination, vulnerable to economic downturns, he said. "A well-managed downtown should have a mix" of dining, bars, retailers and services, "but that said, we need one or two upscale restaurants here in South Lyon — and I'm looking," Donohue said. A boutique-sized eatery could tuck nicely into any one of South Lyon's beautifully restored, circa-1900 storefronts.

After this week's ribbon cutting, Oakland County Treasurer Andy Meisner craned his neck at the downtown's movie-set aura and couldn't help but cheerlead. "You certainly can't experience this feeling on Amazon," Meisner said.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Tribune, The (Royal Oak, MI)
December 20, 2016

South Lyon City Council approves new five-year Master Plan

Author: Mark Cavitt

Things are looking up for South Lyon heading into 2017 and beyond. The South Lyon City Council has approved a new five-year Master Plan that outlines both the vision and goals for the city in terms of development, both commercial and residential, land-use, transportation and access.

City Manager **Lynne Ladner** said she's excited about the progress the city is making and expects a lot of growth in 2017. 'I am very happy with the Master Plan,' said **Ladner**. 'We have several new businesses that are currently in the process of renovating or bidding on renovations for space in the downtown area. Our economic development director is also working closely with potential investors/owners regarding new restaurants in the downtown area. This has been a very positive move forward for the City.'

Leading up to the council's adoption of the plan has been a multi-year process of updating and reviewing. 'Most notably in the updates to the new Master Plan are the creation of several new tools to use for the development/redevelopment of the downtown and commercial areas,' said **Ladner**. The Master Plan was created by the city's Planning Commission to guide the further growth and development of the city.

Highlights of Master Plan

Land Use and Policy

- maintain and improve existing community assets

- preserve and enhance open space and natural features

Transportation and Access

- promote safe travel through the city

Neighborhoods

- provide housing to match the varied need and income levels of the present and future populations

Commercial Areas

- improve the existing commercial development

- streetscape improvements that encourage private reinvestment

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

- promote renovation and redevelopment through design guidelines, ordinance requirements and facade improvements

Downtown

- endorse proper mix of uses to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment

- encourage increased activity

- identify alternative routes for truck traffic

Downtown development and redevelopment plans, included in the Master Plan, features the redevelopment of three parcels north of Lake Street that 'could complete the rhythm of the existing downtown historic buildings.'

A town square, outdoor restaurant seating, and storefronts that match the rest of the downtown core are proposed if the post office vacates its current location at 111 S. Lafayette Street.

The five-year plan also lays out a yearly action plan checklist that extends into the year 2030.

by 2018, acquire and redevelop property at the corner of Lafayette and 10 Mile, work with developers and property owners to redevelop downtown buildings into multi-story, mixed use developments, identify key parcels in downtown to redevelop

by 2023, relocate post office from prime street frontage in downtown, create new entryway into MacHattie Park, complete downtown streetscape improvements along Lafayette Street

by 2030, create smaller park areas in downtown, redevelop sites in downtown so parking lots are no longer fronting Lafayette Street

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown Life
June 14, 2016

Ladner withdraws from Kansas admin job search
Sue Buck

A few days after attending a meet and greet in Valley Center, Kan., where she was one of three finalists for city administrator, South Lyon City Manager **Lynne Ladner** said that she is no longer interested in the position. **Ladner**, who plans to take the next two weeks off to tend to a medical condition after she was hospitalized in Kansas. She arrived back home in Michigan at about 6 p.m. Monday. Prior to her decision to withdraw, **Ladner** was in the running for the position with Mark Kutney, former town manager from Loxahatchee Groves, Fla., and Scott Hildebrand, a professional standards manager in Rochester, Minn.. “I am withdrawing from the process,” **Ladner** said Tuesday morning. “It was a community that I thought that I was interested in.” **Ladner** said that she accepted the finalist position because she was already going to be in Kansas taking care of her father following major surgery. “I agreed to go ahead and interview,” she said. “I have since decided that I am not interested in the position and I am not leaving South Lyon.”

Valley Center Mayor Laurie Dove said in an email Tuesday that she received word **Ladner** declined to be considered further. She ran into personal medical issues while she was in Kansas which extended her trip. **Ladner** said that she was released from the hospital in Wichita late Sunday evening and caught a plane home Monday. She said she planned to notify the recruiter and the South Lyon mayor Tuesday afternoon that she wasn’t interested in the Kansas position. **Ladner** explained why she decided to apply: “I find in my position, it is always good to keep up with your interviewing skills and learn what other communities are doing, beyond what you learn in training,” **Ladner** said. “It’s a great way to find out what other communities are doing. It’s a great way to improve my skills in working with the governing body.” **Ladner** said she is happy with South Lyon and her son is thrilled with South Lyon. “We don’t have any intentions of leaving here,” she said.

A friend of hers suggested that she apply for the Valley Center job because of its similarities with South Lyon. “I thought it would be an interesting community to look into.” Her intention to go to Kansas was mainly to be there for her father’s surgery, she continued, but when they offered her an interview, she decided to accept. She thought that while he was under sedation she could be there for her dad and also go through the interview. She let the South Lyon City council know that she would be gone for her father’s surgery about 10 days in advance. “I was notified that I was a finalist less than a week before the interview process,” **Ladner** said. **Ladner** said she is excited to stay in south Lyon and looks forward to working with newly hired Economic Development Director/DDA Director Bob Donohue. “The council has a great strategic vision,” **Ladner** said. “We have a great council with great ideas. I’m looking to move council’s ideas forward. I’m not looking to go anywhere at this point.” **Ladner** has worked as South Lyon city manager for about two years.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Lyon
June 7, 2016

City manager seeks new ideas at national conference

Author: Sue Buck

South Lyon City Council gave City Manager **Lynne Ladner** its blessing to attend the International City/County Manager's Conference Sept. 25-28 in Kansas City, Mo. Costs for the national conference fall within approved budget numbers earmarked for the administrator's professional development. "The cost of the conference is in the 2016-2017 training budget," **Ladner** said. The council is looking to broaden its focus in tackling a variety of local issues, like economic development, a strategic plan and developing a strong downtown.

Ladner was asked what is the advantage of attending a national conference over a Michigan-based conference. She responded that she is interested in technology, community engagement, strategic planning and other things which aren't offered at the Michigan level. "This is a much broader training," **Ladner** said.

Councilwoman Maggie Kurtzweil voiced her support for **Ladner**'s attendance. "I think that we are moving the city forward," Kurtzweil said. "We are looking at issues which are a little more regional." She added that it was a way to look at the models for problem solving used throughout the country. "My personal opinion is as long as it is under \$5,000, I really don't care if you go once a year," Kurtzweil said. She pointed out a session on strategic planning, "We are changing our culture in some aspects." Kurtzweil said. "You are only going to get those innovative ideas from people in Oregon, Washington, etc. This provides you with greater depth." Other council members area looking for different ways to "do more with less." Councilman Joe Rzyzi was also interested in learning about more ways to prevent "blight." In South Lyon, it can mean having a less than attractive or cared for storefront appearance downtown, he said.

Once **Ladner** returns, the council wants feedback on what she learned. "If you are going to go, you definitely have my vote," Councilwoman Mary Dedakis said. She, like others, is looking for a short report from **Ladner** about what takes place. Kurtzweil said it is important to keep South Lyon's issues "on the radar" as it looks for solutions. "My expectation level is extremely high," she said.

The conference falls within the \$5,000 limit the city allows **Ladner** for professional development. And just as the city tries to conserve its resources, **Ladner** said that she will try to find a roommate to share the cost of lodging, another way to keep costs down. The final cost for attendance is yet to be determined, which is why **Ladner** made the request to council months in advance.

Registration for the conference began June 2. This includes the discounted early bird conference rate, the ability to purchase flights far enough in advance to significantly decrease the cost as well as to register for conference hotels as soon as they become available with the ability to seek

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out a cost share in the hotel by sharing the room, **Ladner** said. “The estimated flight costs for me to book round trip when I have looked recently are approximately \$275, including fees.” **Ladner** said. “The hotel is approximately \$650 with all taxes and fees if not split with another attendee, and the conference registration will be approximately \$655, a savings of \$125 from the regular registration rate.” There may be some incidental expenses such as transportation from the airport to the conference and back to the airport and a few meals although most are included with the conference so **Ladner** estimates the entire business trip will run a little less than \$1,600.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
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<https://www.hometownlife.com/story/news/local/south-lyon/2016/03/29/south-lyon-city-manager-city-attorney-cleared-wrongdoing/82371354/>
March 29, 2016

Ladner, Wilhelm cleared on alleged offenses

Author: Diane Gale Andreassi

Oakland County Sheriff's Office investigators found no fraud during an investigation requested by South Lyon City Councilwoman Maggie Kurtzweil regarding possible perjury by the city manager and city attorney. Kurtzweil filed the complaint earlier this year alleging that city officials failed to report a possible perjury of City Manager **Lynne Ladner** and City Attorney Tim Wilhelm during a tax exempt case before the Board of Review.

"The case is closed," Oakland County Undersheriff Mike McCabe said last week. "Two detective sergeants interviewed numerous people. The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office reviewed it and they determined no crime was committed and no criminal warrants would be issued. It was a criminal investigation, but it turns out no crime was committed."

Kurtzweil said she was prompted to file the complaint after the city council received a confidential letter from Wilhelm that pointed to possible perjury of an applicant appearing before the city's Board of Review, a body that hears appeals of tax assessments on properties in the city, including poverty exemptions. Kurtzweil said her responsibilities as an attorney and an elected official required her to report any alleged criminal activity and she was compelled to divulge the possibility of suspected perjury. "Although no criminal activity was uncovered beyond a reasonable doubt, the investigation yielded reform of the Board of Review," Kurtzweil said on the investigation results.

The city recently adopted a new form for tax-exempt applicants "that eliminates all the prior problems such as incompleteness and ambiguity," board of review members are now getting training and city council has committed to begin appointing board of review members on a three year term staggered basis. "I am extremely proud to be part of the process that resulted in long due reform of board of review," Kurtzweil said. "The taxpayers are the winner."

Councilman Mike Kramer recently asked **Ladner** and Wilhelm at a council meeting to submit attorney costs regarding the investigation. "I want to know how much it cost these individuals when the Oakland County Sheriff found nothing wrong with their actions," Kramer said.

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<https://www.oakgov.com/boc/PublishingImages/Pages/2013-BOC-News/022316%20South%20Lyon%20Takes%20More%20Steps%20to%20Help%20Improve%20February%2023,%202016>

South Lyon takes more steps to help improve downtown

Author: Diane Gale Andreassi

South Lyon City Council took a couple more steps in its effort to improve downtown Monday by embracing a Main Street Oakland County program and creating an economic development director position. Council members embraced a presentation by Bret Rasegan who outlined Main Street Oakland County, a program that uses county resources to help bring businesses and people to communities. Oakland County Commissioner Phil Weipert invited the Oakland County planning supervisor of economic development and community affairs to the council meeting to explain how the Main Street program works.

It allows communities to tap into county resources by joining one of three levels: affiliate, executive and select levels. The higher the level of commitment, the more services the county provides. The support includes offering information about a national Main Street program, special project help, promotional opportunities and networking services.

The free program lets communities get involved in increments, and tracks and supports progress, Rasegan said. “The approach is management based on organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring.” Now is a good time to make the commitment to Main Street Oakland County, because “the economy is coming back and property values are coming back,” Weipert said. “We have lots of growth after seven years of down time. There’s a whole bunch of dynamics coming together.” For instance, council recently passed a dangerous building ordinance targeting buildings that pose a public threat, like having dangerous electrical wiring or past structure modifications that don’t meet city codes.

Human resource

In another move toward revitalizing the city, council members unanimously approved creating a full-time economic development director during Monday meeting. The pay scale hasn’t been determined and will depend on the chosen candidate’s qualifications, however the pay range suggested by City Manager **Lynne Ladner** runs \$50,000-\$69,564. Advertisements for the job are expected to begin this week. “The city is making significant strides for redevelopment of downtown, as well as the industrial and commercial districts throughout the community,” **Ladner** said. “I think we’re moving forward.”

Hiring an economic development director dove tails with the select level of the Main Street program, which requires a full-time person working in that capacity. **Ladner** said the city could begin the Main Street program at the affiliate level and once the new person is hired, the city might consider going to a higher commitment. “There’s a whole bunch of dynamics coming together,” Weipert said. “People will invest if they see there’s a vision and a sense of, ‘Hey, I want to be part of this.’” Councilwoman Maggie Kurtzweil said that South Lyon residents and

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businesses are paying county taxes and “you would be crazy not to take advantage of the” Main Street Oakland County program. “It would be nice to get back some of those tax dollars to Oakland County.” “The council is excited about downtown, and they’re moving forward,” Weipert said. “You can’t just say ‘I want the best downtown ever.’ You have to do things in little steps.” The Main Street program is “one of many good ideas, and is another tool in the tool box,” he added.

The city is in the process of applying to join the Main Street Oakland County program.

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<https://www.hometownlife.com/story/news/local/south-lyon/2016/01/26/councilwoman-files-police-complaint-city-attorney-city-manager/79368968/>
January 26, 2016

County investigates alleged Board of Review perjury

Author: Diane Gale Andreassi

South Lyon city council erupted in arguments Monday evening after councilwoman Maggie Kurtzweil announced she filed a complaint with the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, alleging city officials failed to report a possible perjury during a tax exempt case before the Board of Review. The complaint included allegations of obstruction of justice and a cover-up involving City Manager **Lynne Ladner** and City Attorney Tim Wilhelm.

With the complaint involving the city manager and city attorney, South Lyon Police Chief Lloyd Collins said he decided it was "most appropriate for an independent law enforcement agency to investigate the complaint. "In order to avoid any appearance of bias or favoritism on the part of the South Lyon Police Department, it was agreed that the investigation would be conducted by the Special Investigations Unit of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office," Collins said.

'Hands tied'

Kurtzweil said she was prompted to file the complaint after the city council received a letter from Wilhelm earlier this year about an attorney-client privileged letter that pointed to possible perjury of an applicant appearing before the city's Board of Review, a body that hears appeals of tax assessments on properties in the city, including poverty exemptions.

Wilhelm, **Ladner** and City Clerk Lisa Deaton will give statements to the sheriff's investigators about their knowledge of the case, Wilhem said after the meeting. He declined further comment.

Kurtzweil said her responsibilities as an attorney and an elected official forced her to report any alleged criminal activity and she was compelled to divulge the possibility of suspected perjury.

"This created problems because the city attorney was divulging the possibility of suspected criminal activity," Kurtzweil said.

The identity of the person alleged to have given false income statements during a board of review hearing for the tax exemption is not being released, because the investigation is underway. Kurtzweil raised ire among council members when she said every attorney on council had the same responsibility to report the activity.

Council divided

Councilman Mike Kramer, an attorney, said he was embarrassed and ashamed to be on council this point, because Kurtzweil filed the criminal complaint without consulting the other city council members first. "She's all about transparency then there should have been discussion with council first rather than taking unilateral action and filing a criminal complaint as an individual," Kramer said. "She's not an attorney representing the city. "These are serious allegations," said Kramer. "This takes us back to the Stone Age. So much for (council) moving forward."

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Councilman Joe Rzyzi supported Kurtzweil’s action, adding that “today is the day I’m most proud of” council. “We now have a transparent council who is willing to stand up and speak up about what’s right,” Rzyzi said. “I call on my fellow council members to be transparent going forward for the sake of doing what’s right.”

Councilman Glenn Kivell addressed the divisiveness among council members. “It would be nice if everyone finds some common ground,” Kivell said. “The environment is so toxic right now it is hard to imagine us being particularly productive. We’re right at the brink of accomplishing things long in coming, and people are focusing on their positives of what they bring to the party and they blame others.”

Mayor John Galeas said he was surprised Kurtzweil raised the issue up in a council meeting, adding that he didn’t believe the issue was handled properly. “It’s all about the facts and not about opinions and I think the process will work itself out now,” he said. “Unfortunately, it is being handled like this, because I don’t agree with the process.”

Kurtzweil said that given her “grave concerns” regarding the possible perjury that she contacted a criminal defense attorney, Carl Christoph of Farmington Hills, to determine if she had a responsibility to report the possibility of a known perjury. She said she was advised against attending closed sessions about the case. Wilhelm asked to go into closed session, citing attorney-client privileges to talk about the case, during council’s Jan. 11 meeting. Kurtzweil argued at the time that the discussion had to be conducted in open session. The closed session request was denied. “If the city attorney had divulged additional details, including the documents themselves, in the closed meeting I could have been charged with as an accessory after the fact,” Kurtzweil said.

Chain of action

Kurtzweil said at the meeting that she didn’t “have a stake in the outcome. I don’t care how this matter gets resolved. What I care about is that suspected criminal activity should have immediately gone to the chief of police and it did not. “The investigation will go to where the facts and evidence lead it,” she continued. “Oakland County will assess who may or may not have culpability in this matter, but you can’t paper over suspected criminal activity with attorney-client privilege in closed meetings. You have to let law enforcement in on the issues. I needed to get out of the daisy chain of knowledge and move this into the appropriate forum for investigation.” Kurtzweil said the case points to a possible need for more training for future Board of Review candidates.

Christoph said it isn’t up to Kurtzweil “to decide if there was wrongdoing.” “She had an obligation as an attorney and as an elected member of city council to report any improprieties or the appearances of improprieties,” he said. “There’s certainly enough there to say something isn’t right. It would have been dangerous to bring this to a closed-door meeting. That’s a cover up. We need open government.” Councilwoman Mary Dedakis applauded Kurtzweil for taking a “gutsy” action in filing the complaint.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.hometownlife.com/story/news/local/south-lyon/2015/04/17/south-lyon-city-manager-lynne-ladner-employee-firing/25955383/>
April 17, 2015

Manager retracts claim councilman involved in firing

Author: Diane Gale Andreassi

South Lyon Councilman Joe Ryzyi said he hopes a lesson was learned following an apparently clumsy firing at city hall. City Manager **Lynne Ladner** wrote a letter to a former employee this week stating she "mistakenly" referred to Ryzyi as having problems with her performance during the termination interview. "He did not complain or provide any information regarding your performance," **Ladner** wrote, also stating "Nothing in this letter changes or alters the reasons for your termination from employment with the City of South Lyon."

That letter came following a heated discussion at Monday's city council meeting, Ryzyi demanded a retraction from the city manager for the original remarks made late last month. Ryzyi said he was appalled to learn that **Ladner** told the employee that Ryzyi expressed concerns about the employee's job performance. The problem is two-fold, he said. An elected official was wrongly implicated in an employee's job performance, and the dismissed employee was given inaccurate reasons for being terminated. "That lends itself to a lawsuit by having false reasons for termination," he said.

Bizarre exchange

When discussed Monday night, there was no clear direction in the council discussion. Several on the council made mention of **Ladner** admitting to a mistake, but the action was barely addressed at the meeting. Councilman Glenn Kivell said the issue raises "concerns" about the way employees are being fired. Councilman Mike Kramer turned the issue back toward Ryzyi, asking "are you trying to get another city manager fired?" He was referencing the firing of **Ladner's** predecessor, David Murphy who was booted out of office last fall by a split council vote. Ryzyi was among those favoring the dismissal. Kramer opposed it.

Ladner referred to her own employment contract saying she should have had a council performance review in February. Kivell seemed dumbfounded by this response and noted that council couldn't conduct the job review at that time, because she was on sick leave. "It's troubling that you would even go there," Kivell said to **Ladner** in response. "This is getting weirder as time goes on." Kramer repeatedly asked Ryzyi what he wanted council to do? "Do you want us to fire or suspend her?" "This isn't about firing anyone," Ryzyi said. No action was taken by council regarding Ryzyi's comments.

Human resources

Ryzyi said he was satisfied with **Ladner's** follow up letter, but he never wants to see a similar situation occur with city staff. "This really isn't about me. It's about employees and our firing practices and reasons for termination," he said. "I want to make sure proper procedures are followed and no other employees will have false accusations attributed to them. There are other

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

people fearing for their jobs and I'm fearing for them. Who's next?" Prior to Monday's meeting, Rzyzi sent the city manager a letter questioning her motives and abilities. Rzyzi said references to him regarding the employee "are not only false but indicate that maybe you were looking for reasons (that you did not have) to railroad (the employee) out of her job." He went on to say, "Your lack of professionalism on this matter is not complementary to you or the city and your handling of this matter reveals a serious lack of experience and knowledge in employment matters. I am hopeful that your performance improves and that you adopt an honest and ethical approach to documenting employees' files."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.hometownlife.com/story/news/local/south-lyon/2014/08/06/financial-impact-of-south-lyon-city-manager-firing-tallied-at-168k/13615407/>

Hometown Life
August 6, 2014

Financial impact of South Lyon city manager firing tallied at \$168K

Diane Gale Andreassi

It cost South Lyon \$168,224.81 to fire former South Lyon City Manager David Murphy and hire his replacement, **Lynne Ladner**. The numbers were tallied after Councilman Harvey Wedell requested the cost breakdown from **Ladner**, who presented the findings last week. Wedell made the inquiry after he noticed the last budget, which ended July 1 was short \$93,000. The bulk of that cost includes firing and hiring a new manager, as well as overtime costs and worker compensation claims in the Department of Public Works. The \$93,000 will be covered by the city's savings account, said **Ladner** who began work in June

Murphy was voted out of his job by Mayor Tedd Wallace and council members Erin Kopkowski, Joe Rzyzi and Bev Dixson in late October. Council members Mike Kramer, Glenn Kivell and Wedell voted against the firing. "They were decisions made prior to me coming on board," **Ladner** said of the budget overrun.

Pretty package

The payments, in accordance with Murphy's employment package, included six months severance pay at \$45,197, \$3,129 for regular pay and \$23,000 for vacation and holiday time. Murphy was paid \$90,395 annually. Murphy also received a \$2,100 six-month car allowance; \$13,872 for his retirement fund; \$8,000 for insurance benefits; dental care costs at \$791; standard insurance of \$547 and \$45 for vision insurance, as well as \$1,314 for prescription and other medical costs. The city also hired former city supervisor Rod Cook to fill in while council searched for Murphy's replacement. Cook was paid \$80 an hour and received \$50,260. His mileage reimbursement was \$582.

The city paid **Ladner** \$750 for mileage to the interview and \$3,500 for relocation fees from her home in Kansas. The cost to use the Michigan Municipal League, which conducted the nationwide search for a new manager, was \$10,772. Other miscellaneous costs to hire **Ladner** were about \$4,000.

Still fuming

"It's \$168,000 that we wouldn't have had to spend had David not been terminated," Wedell said. "And the four folks involved in terminating him still haven't told us the reason why." Residents and business people packed the council chambers the night council fired Murphy with those speaking at the meeting opposed to his termination. During that October meeting, the three council members opposing the dismissal repeatedly asked for reasons for Murphy's firing. At the time, none were offered. The Michigan Municipal League has said the average tenure for a

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manager is about five years. Murphy served five years. Murphy’s contract was set up to continue employment indefinitely without council intervention.

Last week, Wallace said, **Ladner**’s experience in grant acquisitions are promising and would offset costs incurred in Murphy’s firing. “We will gain more out of grants and so forth that weren’t even attempted for before,” Wallace said.

Said Kramer: “It was an awful lot of money to fire someone without any justification.” “It is what it is,” said Kivell. “We had an agreement with Murphy in the event that he was shown the door and it would cost us such and such and we would have to pay for a new manager to come in.” Rzyzi, Dixson and Kopkowski didn’t return calls for comment.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Tribune, The (Royal Oak, MI)
June 19, 2014

New city manager on the job in South Lyon

Author: Carol Hopkins

Lynne Ladner steers the operations as the new city manager at South Lyon City Hall. She comes to the city as the former city administrator for Hiawatha, Kan. where for seven years where she oversaw day-to-day operations, researched and administered grant applications, managed human resources, and managed budget operations. South Lyon, 3.5 square miles in size in southwest Oakland County, is home to approximately 11,500 people.

A Syracuse, Kansas native, she lived in Kansas until she married in 1993 and moved with her husband to the Rockford, Michigan area. **Ladner** spent a dozen years living in Michigan before returning to Hiawatha. She received her B.S. in political science from Grand Valley State University and a master's degree in public administration from Grand Valley State University.

Ladner served as a management intern for the City of Belding and Ottawa County, and previously worked for Steelcase in the Grand Rapids area. 'I have obtained credentialed manager designation am a member of the 2014 class of Leadership ICMA through the International City/County Managers Association,' she said.

Her goals, she said, include working with the city council 'to develop a long-term funding strategy for the city's streets, work with local business owners to continue to grow and develop our downtown and other commercial districts to ensure the stability of the community. 'I am looking forward to becoming an active member of the community and already enjoy living in South Lyon very much,' said **Ladner**.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

St. Joseph News-Press (MO)
July 29, 2013

Hiawatha loses city administrator

Author: Craig Miller

Following a closed-door executive session Monday night at City Hall, the Hiawatha City Commission voted to terminate the contract of city administrator **Lynne Ladner**. When the votes were rendered, Bill Collins, Toni Hull, Steffen Shamburg and Irv Schwalm voted in favor of the termination. Mayor Crosby Gernon was absent for the meeting.

According to Steffenn Shamburg, Commissioner of Police, **Ladner**'s termination was a personnel issue.

Following the meeting, **Ladner** issued a press release stating, "I have enjoyed my time and experiences in Hiawatha, I find that it is a friendly and progressive city and it has been an honor and joy to serve the residents and governing body of this community. "As a public servant, I know first and foremost that I serve at the pleasure of the governing body and sometimes that they feel it is necessary to move in a new direction. "I love this community and look forward to continuing to be a part of it." City commissioners offered no further information at this time for the termination.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://krwa.net/portals/krwa/lifeline/1303/94.pdf>
March 2013

Hiawatha Gets Good Rates

Author: Carl Brown

Hiawatha is a lovely town in the northeast corner of Kansas. Hiawatha had a big user rate problem brewing. But they solved it, laying down a clear path that you can follow, too. When it comes to preparing to adjust user rates, Hiawatha is fast, real fast. as a result, Hiawatha is on target to get its user charge system approved by UsDa Rural Development (RD) for a sewer system upgrade the agency will fund. The city can then finalize its bid documents and stay on track to start construction in the spring of 2013.

Now, the back story

In recent years Hiawatha's wastewater collection and treatment system has slipped out of compliance from time to time. following a string of events, procedures and communications with the Kansas Department of health and environment (KDhe) determined that Hiawatha must upgrade the system. Hiawatha went through the process of acquiring grants and loans to pay for this project. One of the final steps in that process was to prove to RD that Hiawatha's sewer rates will be adequate to repay their loan. Rate analysis does this nicely.

Over on the water side, in recent years Hiawatha has been troubled by nitrates showing up above limits in its wells. The city has tried several measures to solve this problem, including taking some wells off line and blending. it looks like the final solution will be expensive. Rate analysis quantifies revenue and rate needs for different alternatives nicely, too.

The city responds

The city council had assumed city administrator **Lynne Ladner** would handle the task of calculating new water and sewer rates. Ms. **Ladner** is quite capable in many disciplines. That includes deciding when it makes better sense to get outside help to handle a complex situation with serious pitfalls to negotiate. analysis also needed to be finished within one month, a tall order. Ms. **Ladner** contacted the Kansas Rural Water association, a smart move. They determined that the best course would be to get rate analyses done by a specialist. as a member of the association, Hiawatha qualified for the 25 percent fee discount through the Kansas RaTes Program, a nice perk of membership.

The analysis work started on December 3, 2012 and concluded on December 19. This fast turn-around was due to the excellent work of Ms. **Ladner** and her staff. The analyses determined the following:

- sewer rates need to be increased markedly but they only need slight restructuring.
- The city has been subsidizing the sewer system by making most of its debt payments. The recommended rates will enable the system to make its own payments, saving city funds for other uses.

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■ Water rates overall do not need to increase. however, rates need serious restructuring to make them fair. The rate analyses spell out and quantify all of the changes that are needed right now. and they project what will be needed over the next five to ten years, too. The analyses will serve as financial maps that Hiawatha can use to set a course into the future.

The Kansas Rural Water association was instrumental in this upbeat outlook for Hiawatha. Among the many things it does, the association provides basic in-house rate setting assistance, and at no charge. in situations where specialized rate analysis is needed, like this one, they roll out the Kansas RaTes Program. All rate setting problems are solvable. it just takes the right tools. The association has the right tools. Perhaps your city or district should contact the association about your rate setting needs, too.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.mscnews.net/news/?nk=19293>
December 4, 2012

Hiawatha Water & Sewer Rate Studies Approved

Author: Greg Bebermeyer

(KNZA)-The Hiawatha City Commission has accepted a proposal from a consulting firm to conduct a water and sewer rate analyses.

The commission Monday evening approved a proposal from Carl Brown Consulting LLC of Jefferson City, Missouri to conduct the studies at a cost of \$9,362.

The studies will determine the level of funding needed to adequately cover current operation of the utilities, build and maintain reserves, fund capital improvements and related debt service.

City Administrator **Lynne Ladner** says she thinks its a good proposal.

Ladner says a loan the city has received from USDA Rural Development for improvement of the city's sanitary sewer system requires that the city raise sewer rates. **Ladner** says the last water rate study was conducted in 2007.

Ladner says the studies could be completed by the end of the year.



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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Msc news
August 17, 2012

Ladner won't accept Colby position

By Brian Hagen

Following the release of our story yesterday, regarding Hiawatha City Administrator **Lynne Ladner** seeking the City Manager's position in Colby, Kansas, she decides to address the issue. Telling us in an email Thursday morning that she had no comment, **Ladner** has reversed her decision, now stating, in an email to this radio station, that she will not accept the job, if offered.

In the running for the vacant Colby City Manager's position, **Ladner** was interviewed by that city's governing body early last month. She had made the Hiawatha City Commission aware of her job search, with Mayor Crosby Gernon telling us yesterday that Colby is a larger community, and **Ladner** informed the commission that she was applying for the job. Gernon added that it certainly is her right to apply for a higher paying job if she chooses. He said many of the recent positive developments in Hiawatha have come from **Ladner's** efforts including the new hotel, the walking trail, and the new daycare center.

The Hiawatha City Commission recently voted to amend **Ladner's** contract with the city, increasing her base salary by more than 15-hundred to \$70,000. **Ladner** has served as Hiawatha City Administrator for six years.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hutchinson News, The (KS)
July 5, 2009

For biofuels, immigration pays - Program giving visas for investment funnels money to Kansas ethanol plants.

Author: John Green

A little known U.S. immigration program has helped quietly infuse millions of Asian dollars into development of the ethanol industry in western Kansas over the past five years. The industry's recent struggles, however, coupled with the economic crisis, has dozens of those investors now facing both the potential loss of their substantial investments and the reason they invested in the first place - a chance to become permanent U.S. residents.

An attorney for the California law firm directing the investments into southwest Kansas says several proposed plants - including ones in Ulysses, Dodge City and now Hiawatha - will be built. But the clock for investors is ticking.

That became clear late last year when the law firm forced foreclosure of the delayed Dodge City plant in an effort to recover its money or to take over the development. And though the federal government approved the development of biofuels in Kansas as a specific allowable program, an official with a company that conducts "due diligence" for investors warns it's particularly risky.

The program

Under the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, some 10,000 immigrant visas a year are available to people seeking permanent U.S. resident status or "green cards" on the basis of helping create new U.S. jobs through investment. In 2002, the program also called EB-5 was restructured to encourage more participation. Now, 3,000 of the annual visas require only a \$500,000 investment, rather than the previous minimum of \$1 million; they count indirect jobs created in the region; and they don't require the investor be engaged in the business. A crucial stipulation, however, is that a minimum 10 jobs - whether direct or indirect - must be created for each \$500,000 invested within two years.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service has designated a number of "regional centers" that qualify for such investments. The centers, now numbering 40, have purposes as diverse as building schools to supporting cruise lines. They range from wineries and shopping centers in California to spa developments in Arkansas and performing arts in Florida.

The Los Angeles law firm of Lee & Kent was approved in 2007 for two regional investment centers: the Kansas Bio-Fuel Regional Center, covering 21 counties in southwest Kansas, and Southwest Biofuels Regional Center, encompassing 40 counties in Texas and nine in Oklahoma. Both target construction of fuel-grade ethanol plants.

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A good start

For two Kansas ethanol projects that have been successful - the Bonanza Bioenergy ethanol plant in Garden City, which began operating in September 2007, and the Arkalon Energy plant near Liberal, which came on line in January 2008 - nine EB-5 investors contributed \$4.5 million, said law firm partner Thomas Kent. Conestoga Energy Partners built and manages both. Justin Lee, the other partner of Lee & Kent, is a Conestoga board member.

Both projects, Kent said, predated creation and approval of the regional center program. The firm first began working with Kansas developers in 2005. "Originally, it was one company, but it ultimately had to be split into two plants because of the small producer tax credit," Kent said. "To preserve the credit, the plant had to be under 60-million-gallon production. Investors shared the same number of units per plant."

After its early success, the firm continued to invest in other projects and began to develop its own through a separate "alternative energy" company the partners created. All those, however, now appear to be stalled. "There are EB-5 investors in multiple projects in southwest Kansas," Kent said. "All are in different stages of development. The recession has impacted credit markets and made it very difficult for projects to get funding. As the credit markets open or alternative sources of capital are found, those projects will be completed. "From an equity standpoint, those projects are ready to be completed," he said. "From the debt side, the credit markets aren't there... Even if we have the equity, we can't get loans unless we use other sources, private sources of money."

In the works?

After getting regional center approval, the partners formed Nexsun Corp. Lee is chairman, and Kent is vice president and general counsel. Nexsun Corp., in turn, formed Nexsun Energy, which created the subsidiary Nexsun Ethanol, a limited liability company registered in Kansas. Nexsun Ethanol announced in early 2007 it was developing separate ethanol and biodiesel plants on neighboring parcels 2 miles west of Ulysses in Grant County. The size of the ethanol plant has ranged in various reports from 40 million to 48 million gallons per year. Officials targeted the biodiesel plant for production of 30 million gallons per year. Lee stated in May 2008 that the ethanol plant should create 54 direct permanent jobs and up to 942 indirect jobs, and generate an estimated \$180 million in annual revenues. Ground was broken for the \$100 million project in September 2007. Since then, contractors have installed temporary underground utilities, a fire suppression system with at least 20 fire hydrants and a rail line, and a substantial amount of grading and site work are done. So far, Kent said, more than \$7 million has been spent on the site. Because of the credit crunch, however, work has been halted for months.

In March of this year, Nexsun officials gave Grant County a \$50,000 check to purchase the land for the plant. Ulysses City Administrator Daron cq Hall said Nexsun indicated at that time it was putting the ethanol plant on hold, but it would complete a smaller biodiesel plant by the end of the year, capable of producing 3 to 5 million gallons annually. "They've set up a side business on Main Street, which they said will do several things," Hall said. "They have an herbal supply company that will fill orders on site." It was unclear how many will be employed there. In April,

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Industrial Info Resources of Sugar Land, Texas, also reported on its Web site that Nexsun had put the ethanol plant on hold. Kent, however, said Wednesday that plans are to go forward with construction on the ethanol and biodiesel plants this year. "The business plan includes both," he said. "They are being built by different companies. One has nothing to do with the other except that they'll be situated next to each other. Both are proceeding, but they've been temporarily delayed because we had to make arrangements for alternate sources of financing. We're still working on it. Our hope is to have the biodiesel project up and running before the end of the year. The only thing we need to do (on the ethanol plant) is start pouring concrete and to finish the plant."

Meanwhile...

Nexsun Corp. announced June 4 that it wants to build a 3-million- to 5-million-gallon biodiesel plant in Hiawatha, in the far northeast corner of Kansas and outside the Kansas Bio-Fuel Regional Center area. The city is providing six acres for the project, said City Administrator **Lynne Ladner**, with an option for more land. It also extended tax abatements to the company based on the number of people it eventually employs. The city's agreement requires construction to start within 12 months.

Local officials were advised the plant would employ at least eight people at a beginning wage of \$10 per hour, and that local contractors would be used to build the plant. "Nexsun is the developer of that project and there is EB-5 money involved in it," Kent confirmed last week.

Dodge City plan

EB-5 investments were also tied up in the proposed Boot Hill Biofuels plant in Dodge City, being developed by Dodge City resident Gary Harshberger. Conestoga Energy Partners is identified as the development's management company and its office in Liberal was listed as Boot Hill's mailing address. With the right to appoint two board members, Conestoga had a majority vote on the board. For its investment in the Dodge project under its regional center designation, the California firm created Biofuel Venture I LLC, or BVI.

Last December, BVI filed suit against Boot Hill and Harshberger for failing to progress on the plant, forcing the company into bankruptcy court. According to documents filed in the suit, Nexsun Energy, through BVI, raised \$2.5 million for the Boot Hill project, of which it lent Boot Hill \$750,000. When Boot Hill failed to progress on the plant, Kent, on behalf of BVI, sent a demand letter in June 2008 seeking its money back to invest in another project.

By August 2008, Nexsun officials, aware of a November 2008 deadline under EB-5 to create at least 10 jobs, approached the Boot Hill board about BVI taking ownership of the Boot Hill name and its federal tax ID number. Records show Harshberger registered Boot Hill Biofuels No. 2 in September, with Marc Kliewer, the registered agent for Nexsun Ethanol, as its registered agent also.

On Nov. 13, according to bankruptcy case records and filings with the Kansas Secretary of State's office, Kent formed a company called BH Reddwerks LLC, with a resident agent listed in

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Ulysses. Ten jobs at Boot Hill 2 were then created and the employees leased to BH Reddwerks "to provide employment services," according to court documents. BVI then loaned \$1.25 million to BH Reddwerks. The Boot Hill board, however, balked at a proposed settlement plan that would give BVI majority ownership of the proposed plant. That resulted in BVI seeking the bankruptcy filing Dec. 1. The suit was filed as Chapter 7 liquidation, but Boot Hill officials were able to convert it to Chapter 11 reorganization.

Under a settlement agreement that was approved by U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Robert Nugent on April 30, BVI did obtain sole ownership of the Boot Hill name, tax number and its limited equity, and Boot Hill's share in BH Reddwerks, in exchange for paying \$110,000 in legal fees. Boot Hill 2 was dissolved, but Boot Hill and BH Reddwerks remain registered Kansas companies.

Still in the plans

The majority of investors in the original Boot Hill, meanwhile - called "Slot Note Holders" because their investments were used to "slot" construction of the Dodge ethanol plant on contractor ICM's construction schedule - had their more than \$4 million in investments and debt shifted to a new company called Prairie Land Renewable Resources LLC, said attorney David Jones of Amarillo, Texas.

Under the agreement, the 11 slot note holders received pro-rated shares of 75 percent of membership interests and 100 percent of voting rights of the new company. Equity shareholders in Boot Hill received the remaining 25 percent membership interest, but no voting rights. BVI remains a slot note holder for its \$750,000 investment. Attempts by The News last week to reach Harshberger and officials with Conestoga Energy were unsuccessful and their attorney referred questions back to them.

Though the Southwest Biofuels Regional Center was formed in June 2007, only one proposed ethanol plant has been announced within that region. Borger BioFuels LLP, a proposed 100-million-gallon plant in Dalhart, Texas, was scheduled for a December 2006 groundbreaking. An air permit was issued for the plant last November, state records show, but other details on its progress were unavailable and officials at the company did not return calls to The News.

Kent said his firm has raised \$10 million to \$15 million for projects in Texas and Oklahoma, but he declined to identify what other projects are in the works. He said investments in Kansas "are somewhere close to \$30 million," most from investors in South Korea and China. He didn't have an exact number of investors.

Other concerns

"If the project fails? It's always a gamble," said Karen Caco of International Immigration Services, which helps investors through the process. "It's unfortunate for businesses everywhere around the world. But that's why it's important to research the different regional centers. You hope they manage it, so you get your money back and you get to stay."

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Which is one reason Michael Gibson, managing director for USAAdvisors, a company in Florida that conducts "due diligence investigations" for prospective foreign investors and is affiliated with International Immigration Services, advises against going with the biofuel projects. "We try to answer two questions," Gibson said. "Will it create the required jobs in two years and will it be viable in five years' time? With biofuels, I don't think you can say it would. There are so many problems to deal with, in construction and permitting. There are a lot of problems with that. And then there's the commercial question. Do you think there's a market for ethanol when gas is at \$2 per gallon? I don't."

Gibson also raised concerns about the company itself.

Two years ago, his company visited every approved regional center to "do due diligence" and create a portfolio for investors. Lee & Kent was the only company unwilling to meet with him, Gibson said, even after he showed up outside their LA offices. "We've been trying for two years to engage them," he said. "The message I want your readers to take away is that this is a good program in 22 states. It has brought in billions of dollars in investments to projects that would never have obtained investment in the first place. But there are bad operations out there."

Kent said he'd never heard of Gibson or USAAdvisors and didn't know what Gibson was talking about. He suggested the firm may have been unwilling to speak with someone because they wouldn't sign a nondisclosure agreement. "Our programs are under regular review by Immigration Services," Kent said. "We have to submit regular reports regarding our progress. "We are looking for private-source funding, hedge funds overseas, until credit reopens," Kent said. "But when the economy turns around, things will change."

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

St. Joseph News-Press (MO)
March 25, 2009

Hiawatha issues notice on nitrate presence in water

Author: Ike Larson

Hiawatha officials are warning residents about high levels of nitrates in the city's water system. City commissioners held a special meeting Monday night to discuss the problem. Much of the meeting was held in a closed-door session with the city attorney and Water Superintendent Rick Koenig, but commissioners decided to issue a notice to protect the public.

A water sample collected on March 16 showed nitrate concentrations of 10.8 milligrams per liter, meaning the city exceeded the state and federal maximum containment level for drinking water. Nitrates above 10 milligrams per liter is considered to be "an acute MCL violation," the notice stated. High levels of nitrates pose health risks to infants under 6 months, and the city is instructing residents not to give tap water to the infants — including in juice and formula — until further notice. Adults and children older than 6 months can drink the water. Pregnant women or those with certain health concerns may wish to consult their doctors.

It's difficult to pinpoint the cause of the elevated nitrates, because levels vary in drinking water throughout the year. It could come from natural, industrial or agricultural sources, including septic systems and runoff.

City Administrator **Lynne Ladner** said residents will be notified when the city is back in compliance and residents need to understand that "this is not a boil order."

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

St. Joseph News-Press (MO)
September 26, 2007

Fired Hiawatha officer to appeal

Author: Hiawatha World

One of two police officers recently fired by the Hiawatha City Commission is appealing the decision to end his employment. Mike Williams released a written statement Monday announcing his plans. On his attorney's advice, he declined to answer specific questions. "I do not agree with the city's decision," Mr. Williams said. "I am appealing their decision and will exercise all rights available to me under local, state and federal laws."

City Administrator **Lynne Ladner** announced the termination of Mr. Williams and fellow Hiawatha police officer Jessica Merz Thursday in a brief statement. Ms. **Ladner** didn't name the officers and didn't address the circumstances, citing personnel reasons as the basis for withholding the information. The firings followed an independent investigation conducted by the office of Kansas Attorney General Paul Morrison.

Ms. Merz was unavailable for comment. Chief Evans Woehlecke has declined to speak about the matter. Both officers had been members of the Hiawatha Police Department since 2005. Mr. Williams was named the city's 2006 Officer of the Year in February.

Rumors had circulated throughout the community in recent weeks, with both the World and News-Press receiving phone and e-mail messages. Various charges have been leveled against several Hiawatha police officers over the past seven years. For instance, in 2001 a jury found a former Hiawatha officer guilty of felony official misconduct involving the destruction of evidence in a criminal drug case from the year before.

The Hiawatha Police Department had six full-time officers, one part-time officer and three reserves prior to the firings. The St. Joseph News-Press contributed to this story.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Grand Rapids Press, The (MI)
June 22, 2006

Belding retooling city logo

Author: Susie Fair

Belding wants to be branded, but not in the traditional way. The city is spending up to \$20,000 on a new logo and tagline to be unveiled in January to coincide with the kickoff of Belding's yearlong sesquicentennial celebration.

"The city's current logo does not fully represent the image of what Belding has become," Assistant City Manager **Lynne Ladner** said of the linear drawing of the city's skyline conceived 30 years ago. "We want our new logo and tagline to invite investment, by appealing to prospective residents, developers and businesses. We want people know that Belding is a great place to live, work and play."

The new logo will be developed by a marketing firm, expected to be chosen next month.

"We've had many people tell us what a great community this is, but we need to get the word out," Mayor Pro-Tem Robert Thompson said.

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Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Grand Rapids Press, The (MI)
June 15, 2006

Top aide heads back to job in native state

Author: Susie Fair

Belding's assistant city manager is heading west to run a city of her own. **Lynne Ladner** was hired as Belding's assistant city manager in January, six months after working with the city as an intern. **Ladner**, 36, plans to leave next week to become city administrator for Hiawatha, a municipality of about 3,500 in northeast Kansas.

As the county seat of Brown County, Hiawatha is the center of commerce and industry for its region of Kansas. **Ladner** said she hopes to encourage economic diversity, which also was a part of her Belding job. "Hiawatha is a progressive community that's working hard on economic development," she said. "I'm going to jump right in and continue the good work they've started."

Ladner, who has a master's degree in public administration from Grand Valley State University, will oversee a \$4.8 million annual budget and five department heads. She said the move will put her 400 miles from her hometown of Syracuse, Kan.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Grand Rapids Press, The (MI)
May 25, 2006

Belding seeks grant to buy 2 properties - City hopes to create new gateway to downtown
Author: Susie Fair

The city of Belding is looking to acquire two properties to make way for future development to serve as a new gateway to downtown. The city is seeking a federally funded \$200,000 Community Development Block Grant from Michigan State Housing Development Authority to buy the former Breimayer building at 201 S. Bridge St., and a former hair salon and residential building at 210 Pleasant St.

"The city had no intention of acquiring these properties until this grant opportunity came along," Assistant City Manager **Lynne Ladner** said. The city's only plan for the properties is to demolish the existing structures.

The city has a buy-sell agreement with John Rytlewski, owner of the Bridge Street property, and Sharon Webb, owner of the Pleasant Street property.

Both sales are contingent on Belding getting the grant. If awarded, the \$200,000 will be combined with \$91,400 in city funds to cover the project cost, **Ladner** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Elizabeth Lynne Ladner** is listed below.]

Grand Rapids Press, The (MI)
April 20, 2006

Grand Valley State releases names of graduates

Author: The Grand Rapids Press

Editor's note: Well Done recognizes West Michigan residents who have earned awards.

Graduates of Grand Valley State University,
Elizabeth Ladner

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Grand Rapids Press, The (MI)
January 26, 2006

Hearing set on taxing plan

Author: Susie Fair

City officials want to use a property tax financing tool to improve downtown Belding. A tax-increment financing plan crafted by Assistant City Manager **Lynne Ladner** would "capture" funds for projects to enhance the downtown development district. Tax-increment financing, or TIF, uses increased property taxes generated from new projects to repay certain expenses associated with the investment.

The philosophy of TIFs is more investment generates more tax revenue to make more improvements.

The district is composed mostly of the central portion of the city bordered by Ellis, Center and Hall streets. Plans are for improvements over the next 30 years, including utility upgrades, expanded parking and park upgrades, park/trail development and signs.

Belding Downtown Development Authority has authored a "Vision for Downtown Belding." "Belding lost its sense of being a special place due to the demolition of historic structures, a severed street network and building heights that were reduced to a single story," according to the document, "thereby losing a sense of scale, significance and contrast." The DDA wants to revive Belding's charm similar to what it had before the 1960s.

Ladner said the 30-year plan will have no financial impact on taxpayers since no new taxes will be levied. Instead, the plan will recapture revenue the city normally would receive from increases in the taxable value of properties in the district, which includes 26 commercial/industrial properties and 20 residences. In 2006, a little less than \$12,000 will be captured, **Ladner** said.

With property values expected to rise 3 percent annually, that funding would increase to nearly \$36,000 by 2010 and to slightly less than \$286,000 in 2036.

The City Council will review the TIF plan at its Feb. 7 meeting, with a public hearing Feb. 21, when it could consider final approval.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Elizabeth Lynne Ladner
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Grand Rapids Press, The (MI)
December 29, 2005

New hire expected to save city \$50,000 - Lynn Ladner tapped for assistant city manager
Author: Susie Fair

Belding's city manager will have a new assistant starting Monday. **Lynn Ladner** was hired as full-time assistant city manager after serving as a part-time intern since July.

Ladner, who recently received a master's degree in public administration from Grand Valley State University, will oversee Belding's economic development, planning and zoning.

Her hiring will save the city money, City Manager Randy DeBruine said. **Ladner** will be paid \$47,000 a year, saving the city up to \$50,000 annually in fees paid to LSL Planning, of Grand Rapids, for consulting services, DeBruine said. "**Lynn** has a good handle on what needs to be done and has already proven herself to be an asset to the city," DeBruine said.

Although far from her hometown of Syracuse, Kan., **Ladner**, 35, a mother of two, feels at ease. "The people of Belding have been very welcoming and friendly and make this an enjoyable place to work," she said. "I chose to take this position because it's a great opportunity to help shape the character of the city."

Research Compiled by: Liliana Oberg & Amanda Dillabough
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 10

William R. Lawrence

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

William Lawrence
5401 Barnwell Ct.
Leesburg, Fl. 34748
lbrlawrence@aol.com
207-659-9943
02/03/2025

To Mayor Peggy Wheeler and Council Members:

I am thrilled to present my credentials for the Town Manager position for the Town of Juno Beach. Enclosed, please find my resume and references.

With over 37 years of dedicated service in municipal and county government, I have traversed various roles from police officer to police chief, culminating in 12 years of successful tenure as town manager. Throughout my career, I have remained committed to fostering a better quality of life for residents and making a tangible difference in their everyday life.

I am a seasoned nontraditional manager who has proven experience in conflict resolution and consensus-building.

My extensive experience has honed my problem-solving abilities, with a core emphasis on relationship-building. I have adeptly negotiated labor contracts with essential departments such as Police, Fire and Public Works, while also collaborating with county, state and federal agencies to address local challenges effectively.

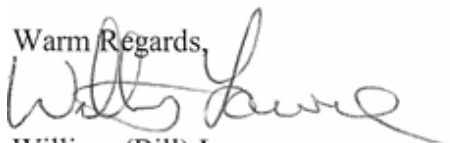
Possessing a deep understanding of public administration, I am an active member of FCCMA and the Florida League of Cities. My fiscal conservatism is balanced by a commitment to maintain high quality of services within budgetary constraints. Moreover, my communication skills have consistently fostered positive community relations, and my leadership style prioritizes transparency and full engagement with elected officials.

As a strategic thinker and innovator, I am passionate about forging and sustaining effective relationships with staff, elected representatives, business, and community organizations. I firmly believe that the Town Manager should be deeply embedded in the community fabric.

I am eagerly anticipating the opportunity to meet with you and delve into how my experience and insights can benefit the Town of Juno Beach.

Thank you for considering my resume. I look forward to discussing how we can work together to propel Juno Beach toward a brighter future.

Warm Regards,



William (Bill) Lawrence

WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE

RESUME

5401 Barnswell Ct.
Leesburg, Fl. 34748

Mobile: (207)659-9943

E-Mail: lbrlawrence@aol.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-lawrence-3a0904b3>

Summary: Accomplished seasoned nontraditional municipal manager with a proven track record of driving positive change and enhancing community well-being. A visionary, innovator, and creative problem solver dedicated to serving the public and improving quality of life. Extensive experience in budget management, economic development, grant administration, and personnel management.

Accomplishments:

- Consensus-builder
- Conflict resolution
- Strategic Planner
- Team Builder
- Implemented budget management strategies resulting in significant savings and revenue increases
- Led initiatives resulting in job creation and community engagement events
- Successfully managed various grant-funded projects and infrastructure improvements
- Negotiated labor contracts with unions across multiple departments
- Experienced in emergency management and disaster response
- Played key roles in economic development projects and revitalization efforts
- Experienced in growth management while keeping a small-town feel.

EXPERIENCE:04/2021 to present: **Town Manager of Lady Lake, Fl. Population 20,000 Salary \$172,500**

- Operating Budget \$42,000,000
- Full-service municipality with 120 full-time employees
- Experience in Growth Management – Currently Hammock Oaks 4100 residential units approved.
- Police Union Negotiations
- New wastewater expansion plant and two new water wells. \$20 million
- New Park \$1.8 million
- Library expansion project \$5 million

WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE

RESUME

5401 Barnswell Ct.
Leesburg, Fl. 34748

Mobile: (207)659-9943**E-Mail: lbrlawrence@aol.com**

Reason for Leaving: While I have enjoyed my time in Lady Lake and am grateful for the opportunities it provided, I am excited about the prospect of new challenges and opportunities brining my skill sets to the Town of Juno Beach.

04/2019 to 04/2021: City Manager of Bowling Green, Fl. Salary \$73,000

- Prepare & Present Operating Budget
- Manage day to day operation
- SRF Funding & CDBG grant for a new wastewater plant
- SRF Funding for a new Nano System water plant
- USDA Grant for new Community Center
- FDOT SCOP road resurfacing projects
- FRDAP grant for Main Street Park
- Project Manager with the new Nano Water Filtration System 1.8-million-dollar project
- Project Manager with a new wastewater plant at 4.8-million-dollar project
- EDA Grant for \$247,000 for Pyatt Park Improvements

Reason for Leaving: While my tenure as City Manager in Bowling Green has been fulfilling, I have come to realize that the professional challenges here do not align with my expectations for growth and complexity. I am seeking opportunities that offer a more varied and stimulating environment within a vibrant community.

06/2016 – 03/2019: Town Manager for the Town of Warren, Me. Salary \$70,000

- Prepare & present the operating and capital budgets. Media Relations
- Manage day to day operations
- Personnel Director -Treasurer-Tax Collector- Road Commissioner
- Negotiate contracts with unions and vendors
- Grant writer currently received DOT Bridge grant for a Smart Stream Project.
- General Assistance Administrator
- Debt free (No more TAN) – Reserves built up –Property Tax Rate lowest in the region
- General fund grew to cover 5 months of operating expenses.
- Moderate growth with new residential single-family housing added 3 million value in past 12 months.
- New Personnel Policy

WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE

RESUME

5401 Barnswell Ct.
Leesburg, Fl. 34748

Mobile: (207)659-9943**E-Mail: lbrlawrence@aol.com**

Reason for Leaving: My decision to leave Warren was primarily driven by the desire to relocate closer to family in Florida. I am proud to have contributed to the town's progress and am confident that it is in better shape now than when I first arrived.

07/2015 – 6/2016: Town Manager for the Town of Howland, Me. Salary \$58,500

- Prepared, present and monitor the operating budget. Media Relations
- Project Manager for the Town working with the Penobscot River Restoration Trust that built an 18-million-dollar fish-bypass on the Piscataquis River that will allow the Atlantic Salmon to migrate up the river.
- Promoted several community projects such as a Farmer's Market, Family Fun Day and Community Walk.
- Grant Writer for feasibility market study on economic development for the Town of Howland.
- Supervised Water / Wastewater Utilities
- Revamped the EMS service with new Fire Chief that brought in \$375,000 in revenue.

Reason for Leaving: Howland sought me out based on my reputation in budgets and economic development. After successfully accomplishing these objectives, I was presented with an opportunity in a larger community that offered greater compensation. I am pleased to note that Howland was left in a better condition than when I assumed the role.

07/14 – 6/2015: Town Manager for the Town of White Springs, FL. Salary \$49,000

- Managed the operating budget, personnel management, economic development and serve as the planning & zoning administrator.
- White Springs is one of 4 small towns in Florida designated in the new Competitive Florida Partnership that works with the Department of Economic Opportunity to enhance those opportunities in small rural towns.
- FDOT SCOP grant for road resurfacing.
- CDBG Funding and Construction of a new Fire Station with Mittauer Ass.
- I & I study on our sewer system with Mittauer Ass.
- Supervised Water / Wastewater Utilities / Police / Fire & Public Works

Reason for Leaving: Due to personal circumstances involving our house not selling in Maine and the need to support my sick father-in-law, my family and I made the decision to relocate to Florida. Unfortunately, he passed away. During this time, the Town of Howland reached out to

WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE

RESUME

5401 Barnswell Ct.
Leesburg, Fl. 34748

Mobile: (207)659-9943

E-Mail: lbrlawrence@aol.com

me and offered a more lucrative opportunity to return to Maine. I am proud to have contributed to Howland's progress and to leave it in a better state than when I initially joined.

04/2011 – 07/2014 **Police Chief/Town Manager for the Town of Lincoln, Me. Salary \$71,500**

- Manage the day to day operations of a full-service municipality. Media Relations
- Served as Economic Development Director / Tiff's.
- Negotiated police, fire & public works union contracts
- Negotiated contracts for Tiff's on economic development projects.
- While serving in Lincoln, we created 90 retail jobs and increased our tax base.
- Written State & Federal grants and several smaller grants.
- Supervised Municipal Airport Operations / FAA Grants / Land Acquisition

Reason for Leaving: My father-in-law fell ill in Florida, prompting our family to prioritize his care and support. Consequently, I accepted a position in Florida to be closer to him. Family has always been our top priority, and this decision was made in their best interest. I'm pleased to report that Lincoln was left in an improved condition compared to when I first assumed the role.

02/2003 – 04/2011 **City of Bangor Maine Police Department Salary \$50,000**

- Served as a police officer and detective.
- Bangor Housing Authority Liaison Officer for 5 years. We developed relationships with the residence, school, businesses, and the housing authority which led to the decrease in crime in the public housing neighborhood.

02/1996 – 2/2003 **Lieutenant Patrol, Penobscot County Sheriff's Office. Salary \$40,000**

- Supervised a division of 3 patrol sergeants, 4 detectives, and 33 patrol deputies.
- Developed the current command structure and presented the proposal to the County commissioners.

High Lights of Skills:

- Creative problem solver and strategic thinker
- Strong budget and fiscal management expertise
- Proven track record in economic development and grant administration
- Effective communicator and public speaker
- Skilled in personnel management and labor negotiations
- Experienced in government relations and community engagement
- Proficient in project management and grant writing

WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE

RESUME

5401 Barnswell Ct.
Leesburg, Fl. 34748

Mobile: (207)659-9943

E-Mail: lbrlawrence@aol.com

Education:

- University of Maine: Degree in Criminal Justice
- Over 200 hrs. of municipal manager workshops sponsored by Maine Municipal Ass.

Awards:

- Special Recognition by the Lincoln Town Council for serving as Interim Town Manager
- Policy King from Partnership for Healthy Northern Penobscot
- Resolution from the Town of Howland serving as Town Manager
- FCCMA Special Recognition for 5 years of Leadership Service as Town Manager

Memberships:

- International City Manager Association (ICMA)
- Florida League of Cities
- Lake County League of Cities
- Florida City & County Management Association

Candidate Introduction

Section 10**WILLIAM LAWRENCE**

EDUCATION

University of Southern Maine – Major Criminal Justice
 University of Maine in Augusta – AS in Criminal Justice with 90 credits towards BA
 Northwestern University Traffic Institute – Certified in Mid- Management
 Maine Criminal Justice Academy – Certified in Executive Development
 Maine Municipal Association over 200 hours of Municipal Manager Education

EXPERIENCE

Town Manager, Town of Lady Lake, Florida	4/2021 – present
City Manager, City of Bowling Green, Florida	4/2019 – 4/2021
Town Manager, Warren, Maine	6/2016 – 4/2019
Town Manager, Howland, Maine	6/2015 – 6/2016
Town Manager, White Springs, Florida	7/2014 – 6/2015
Town Manager/Police Chief, Lincoln, Maine	4/2011 – 7/2014
Police Officer, City of Bangor, Maine	2/2002 – 4/2011

BACKGROUND

During my time as Town Manager in Lady Lake, I had the privilege of overseeing a thriving community with a rapidly growing population—currently 17,000, with projections reaching 24,000 in just three years. Leading a team of 120 full-time employees, I embraced the philosophy of doing more with less, ensuring that our limited resources were utilized efficiently to deliver essential services. As part of a full-service town, I managed departments such as police, parks & recreation, library, public works, water/sewer, growth management, human resources, communications, IT, and finance, all of which contributed to maintaining a high quality of life for residents.

Lady Lake has faced significant challenges related to growth and infrastructure. One key issue was the staffing shortage caused by the town's rapid population increase and the ongoing need for affordable housing. With the population expected to double in the next three years, we implemented creative strategies to address these challenges, ensuring that staffing levels kept pace with demand.

Another critical issue was expanding our water and sewer utilities. The infrastructure needed significant upgrades to accommodate the growing population, and I led efforts to manage and oversee these projects from conception to execution. These projects, including the expansion of our utilities, were funded directly from the town's reserve accounts, showcasing my ability to manage fiscal responsibility and strategic planning.

Section 10**WILLIAM LAWRENCE**

One of the more complex challenges was police recruitment. The Lady Lake Police Department was experiencing a shortage of officers, with numbers dropping from 30 to just 20, creating staffing issues that impacted response times and overall community safety. I worked closely with the leadership team to address the issue, implementing a pay increase and innovative recruitment strategies. After 10 months, we successfully filled 8 out of 10 vacancies, improved officer retention, and attracted higher-quality applicants, significantly strengthening our police force.

Looking ahead, Lady Lake is focused on creating a new downtown area, and I've been involved in early-stage planning with a private developer, as well as the development of the town's strategic plan and mission statement. We are also in the process of enhancing the town's branding, which will be critical in defining Lady Lake's identity as we continue to grow.

Why Juno Beach:

With my proven ability to navigate rapid growth, lead multi-department teams, and manage significant infrastructure projects, I am confident that my skill set is well-suited to contribute to Juno Beach's ongoing success. I am particularly drawn to the opportunity to work in a coastal community and help maintain and enhance the quality of life there. I have experience of leading a team through challenges and am excited about the opportunity to collaborate with the Juno Beach team to ensure the town thrives and prospers in the coming years.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of working with municipalities that present unique challenges, which have helped shape my management style. The most significant skill I've developed is the ability to work with elected officials from diverse backgrounds, all with differing visions for their community. I've successfully facilitated solutions to various challenges and resolved conflicts, driving consensus and progress.

My attraction to the Town of Juno Beach stems from:

- The challenge of team building and conflict resolution
- Managing growth while maintaining the small-town feel
- The natural beauty of the coastal community and its friendly people
- The opportunity to develop and implement a strategic plan

The challenges Juno Beach faces are not insurmountable. With my experience working with difficult elected officials, I'm confident I can help foster collaboration to move the Town forward. My leadership has consistently brought stability to municipalities, improved employee morale, and generated positive momentum.

Section 10**WILLIAM LAWRENCE**

Management Style:

My management style is rooted in a coaching approach—I lead by example and prioritize team building. Drawing inspiration from successful leaders in sports, business, and government, I surround myself with talented individuals who are better than me in various areas. Just as a coach understands the strengths and weaknesses of their players, I recognize the importance of knowing my team’s capabilities and guiding them accordingly.

To ensure accountability, I’ve implemented tools like weekly manager reports and regular manager meetings, where we hold each other accountable, solve issues collaboratively, and foster team growth. Staff would describe my leadership as open, approachable, and supportive, with a focus on recognition and valuing everyone’s contributions.

I firmly believe the Town Manager should be actively embedded in the community, attending events and remaining accessible outside the office.

Elected Official Relationships and Achievements:

Elected officials I’ve served with would likely describe me as transparent, competent, trustworthy, and humorous, with strong integrity. I’ve received great performance evaluations and have been commended for my ability to revive stalled projects. Some notable examples include new sewer and water plant construction, SCOP road improvements, and securing new grants, such as the FRDAP park grant.

One of my greatest strengths is my ability to listen—whether it’s residents, staff, or elected officials. This helps me understand the needs of the community and take action accordingly. For instance, in Warren, Maine, residents requested American flags on every power pole along Main Street. Despite financial constraints, I worked with the power company to secure permission, and the funds were raised by an Eagle Scout project, bringing this community request to life.

Learning from Mistakes:

I believe in learning from mistakes, which are inevitable in any career. Early in my Town Manager career, I made the mistake of notifying only the mayor about a police issue and failing to inform other elected officials. I quickly learned the importance of keeping all elected officials informed to ensure transparency and trust.

While I have had to make difficult decisions, such as firing 15 employees—none of which resulted in litigation—I’ve always adhered to progressive discipline processes to correct behavior and act in the best interests of the town.

Section 10**WILLIAM LAWRENCE**

Challenges in Town Management:

One of the biggest challenges Town Managers faces is navigating the varied personalities of elected officials. The ability to adapt, communicate effectively, and align differing viewpoints toward a common goal is essential for progress and stability.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Accessible
- Proactive
- Humility
- Intuitive
- Integrity
- Humorous

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

Serving as Town Manager in Lady Lake has been a rewarding experience, both professionally and personally. I've had the pleasure of working with incredible people and being part of a community-focused team. However, I am now seeking a new professional challenge where I can apply my skills and experience in a coastal community. I am particularly interested in the opportunity to contribute to the continued success of Juno Beach. Having led a team through significant changes, I am eager to bring my leadership abilities to a community that is focused on a prosperous future.

CURRENT SALARY

- My current salary is \$172,500
- City provides a car & cell phone
- Retirement contribution of 9% with Mission Square
- PTO time
- 11 paid holidays

Section 10

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIAM "BILL" ROGER LAWRENCE**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Lake County, FL	No Records Found
Hardee County, FL	No Records Found
Knox County, ME	No Records Found
Penobscot County, ME	No Records Found
Hamilton County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Maine	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Lake County, FL	No Records Found
Hardee County, FL	No Records Found
Knox County, ME	No Records Found
Penobscot County, ME	No Records Found
Hamilton County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Maine	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

July 1995 - Chapter 7
Disposition: November 1995, Discharged
December 1995, Terminated
**See personal disclosure for
candidate explanation for record
found.*

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIAM “BILL” ROGER LAWRENCE**

Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed, except for Town of Lady Lake, FL (04/2021 – Present)
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.

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIAM "BILL" ROGER LAWRENCE
Personal Disclosure**

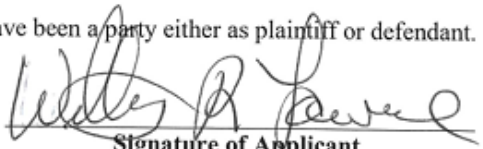
Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: William Lawrence

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 1992 I went through a divorce. All debt was in my name and we were a two income family. I had a salary position and was not allowed to work on the side. Excellent credit and credit score the last three decades.
- 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.com/billlawrence760
linkedin.com/William-lawrence-3a0904b3
- 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

William "Bill" Lawrence

Will Labrie – Former Executive Director, Lincoln Lakes Chamber of Commerce, ME (207) 290-7299

Mr. Labrie met Mr. Lawrence in 2011. Mr. Lawrence was the Town Manager for Lincoln and Mr. Labrie was the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce. The two of them worked together in many areas including economic development and substance abuse projects.

Mr. Lawrence is an outstanding and easygoing person. During his time in Lincoln, he worked hard to move the goals of the town forward. He is always professional and is open to implementing new ideas. He embraces feedback from local business-owners and does his best to support them. Many functions and activities in Lincoln required Mr. Lawrence's assistance. He helped gain support for these events, including the Redneck Regatta cardboard boat race that took place at the 2014 Lincoln Homecoming Festival. He frequently attends and participates in town functions with his wife.

Mr. Lawrence's hiring decisions are excellent. He had an outstanding staff in Lincoln. Mr. Labrie was confident in calling on any of them for information about businesses and other matters. Each staff member was knowledgeable, professional, and friendly.

Mr. Lawrence made great decisions for the town of Lincoln and the businesses therein. He is committed to helping both new and existing businesses get what they need. He made himself available to meet with any new businesses who wanted to come to town. For example, he helped bring a Dunkin Donuts to Lincoln.

Mr. Lawrence is a forward thinker and a problem-solver. At one time, the paper mill in town was having trouble. Mr. Lawrence involved state senators in the issue and was instrumental in moving the process forward to resolve the problem.

Mr. Lawrence is active in his community. In Lincoln, he worked on many economic development projects. He worked well with both individual business owners and groups. He and Mr. Labrie worked together on a No Smoking campaign as part of a substance abuse project. Mr. Lawrence was the chair of several groups for this initiative.

Mr. Lawrence's communication is excellent. He always made time for Mr. Labrie and kept him well-informed. He most often communicates in person and on the phone. Mr. Lawrence is quick to give praise where it is due. He is not a critical person but is not afraid to discipline when necessary. He believes in his staff and will not ask anyone to do a task he would not perform himself.

At one time, the town of Lincoln had a crime issue. A burglary ring was targeting many local businesses. Mr. Lawrence led a public safety campaign and worked with local law enforcement as well as the Public Safety Director to address the problem. The plan was successful and the people responsible were caught.

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

While Mr. Lawrence was the Town Manager, Lincoln always had a financial surplus. He made some difficult decisions to achieve this while keeping taxes low. For example, he cut two positions including one in the Public Safety department. He also limited staff pay increases.

Mr. Lawrence is an outgoing and amiable person. He is an excellent Manager. He has strong beliefs and always puts the town first.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Visionary,
- Professional,
- Kind,
- Courteous,
- Diligent, and
- Honest.

Strengths: Ability to motivate others, open-mindedness, and forward thinking.

Weaknesses: Too kind at times.

Chris Backman – Town Manager, Town of Orrington, ME (207) 825-3340 x6

Mr. Backman is formerly an auditor. He worked with Mr. Lawrence in this capacity in the Towns of Lincoln and Warren, ME. They have known each other since 2015.

Mr. Lawrence is an excellent person. He is approachable and a great manager. He has excellent rapport with his staff and colleagues. He is not a micromanager and lets people do their jobs. He was always involved in the town audit from the beginning, and Mr. Backman never had any issues with him.

Mr. Lawrence’s law enforcement background gives him the ability to approach tough situations with confidence. He strives to understand both sides of a conflict. He is skilled at intervening and mediating discussions. He has a strong presence. He makes well-informed decisions and asks questions to understand the reasoning behind things. He is collaborative and unafraid of asking for help when needed.

One person who might have a different opinion of Mr. Lawrence is an auditor who formerly worked with Mr. Backman. This individual performed an audit on the Town of Lincoln when Mr. Lawrence was Town Manager. She attempted to implement things for the town that were not her decisions to make. Mr. Lawrence pushed back against these changes, for the benefit of the town. The auditor had a reputation for doing things like this, and her employment with the auditing firm did not last.

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

Mr. Lawrence has a measured and analytical approach. He is open to trying new things. He listens to feedback. He is exceptionally honest and does not hide any facts. He has a friendly personality. He is confident without being arrogant. People feel comfortable around him.

When Mr. Lawrence became Town Manager of Warren, the town was in the middle of a transition. They were transitioning from a December year-end calendar system to a fiscal year end in June. Mr. Lawrence was not there for the decision-making process or the arguments for or against the transition. The decision was already made, and Mr. Lawrence led the team through the complex transition. He helped make the transition smooth.

When Mr. Lawrence is stressed, he responds in a measured way. He is collected and calm. He speaks individually to the people involved and asks questions about stressful situations. He does not lose his temper.

Mr. Lawrence is a great Manager. Mr. Backman recommends him for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Personable,
- Open-minded,
- Fair,
- Measured,
- Approachable, and
- Likeable.

Strengths: Friendly personality, lack of arrogance or ego, leadership, conflict resolution, open-mindedness, receptiveness to change, and listening skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Mark Fucile – Detective Sergeant, Penobscot County Sheriff’s office, FL 207-217-5171

Mr. Fucile has known Mr. Lawrence for at least 15 years starting in 2009. They met when they were coworkers as police officers. They have stayed in contact as friends.

Mr. Lawrence is a very good leader. He has a strong decision-making process. When Mr. Fucile worked for him, Mr. Lawrence put the town first and made decisions not for his own benefit, but what would benefit the community and the town. He is innovative. When he was Town Manager for the Town of Lincoln between 2011 and 2014, he brought new businesses into town to improve the economics. It was an old mill town and needed some fresh businesses.

Reference Notes

William "Bill" Lawrence

Mr. Lawrence was often out in the community. He walked main street to get a chance to meet and greet people to ensure both the businesses and the residents were doing well. He is hands on and customer service oriented.

Mr. Lawrence is frequently in the middle of stressful situations. He has a very calm demeanor and never panics. He does not speak irrationally. He makes sure he has the facts first and listens to what people have to say. He was very involved with the community and focused on the youth. He developed a program to deter teenagers from drinking and driving. He hosted bike rodeos, which focused on safety for kids. He was always the first one to arrive to help set up the course.

Mr. Lawrence does not have anything embarrassing or controversial in his background. He has a good reputation and will make a good city manager wherever he goes. Mr. Fucile would hire him and recommends him to any municipality.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Communicator,
- Knowledgeable,
- Leader,
- Mentor,
- Role model, and
- Compassionate.

Strengths: Public speaking. In general, he is very good with the public.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Joshua McNally – Fire Chief, Town of Howland, ME 207-732-4112

Mr. McNally has known Mr. Lawrence since he was hired by the latter in 2016. They only worked together for one year before Mr. Lawrence moved on. Mr. Lawrence is easy to get along with. He is thoughtful with his words and actions. He was a good supervisor for Mr. McNally.

Mr. Lawrence had to be innovative to handle situations in dealing with public safety while working with a small-town government. Not everything could be black and white. He had to roll with the punches and perfect the art of out of the box thinking.

Mr. Lawrence communicated very well with the public and his department heads. They met weekly to discuss all the issues that were going on in the community. Even though his workday technically ended at 4 pm, he was frequently still in the office talking to people well after 4 pm.

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

When Mr. Lawrence became the Town Manager for Howland, the town was stalled, and they really needed some leadership to correct their course of action. At the time, the selectboard were very contentious and frequently resorted to all out yelling during their meetings. Mr. Lawrence’s presence was calming and encouraged them to work together. His mannerisms and leadership helped get the town back on course. Mr. Lawrence ran the meetings well and started to smooth some of the issues out. Slowly but surely, they came together. He knows how to read the room and help people to better communicate with each other.

Mr. Lawrence is an excellent leader. He included everyone in working toward the greater good of the municipality rather than taking all the tasks upon himself. In this way he banded them together for a common goal. He handled stressful situations very well and did not get rattled when presented with challenging information. He has not been involved in anything embarrassing or controversial and is always looking forward to the next project. Mr. McNally would hire Mr. Lawrence in a heartbeat and would love to work for him again as well. Mr. McNally recommends Mr. Lawrence to any municipality as City or County Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Customer service oriented,
- Result driven,
- Community service,
- Vision minded,
- Even keeled, and
- Forward thinking.

Strengths: Mr. Lawrence can handle difficult situations with professionalism. He has a law enforcement background and has served in several town manager administrative roles. He is a problem solver.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Peggy Daigle – Former Town Manager, Millinocket, ME (207) 299-8822

Ms. Daigle is a former Town Manager who has managed nine towns. She believes she was managing the Town of Millinocket when she met Mr. Lawrence in 2010. Mr. Lawrence is an honest, straightforward person. He is thoughtful. He finds creative solutions to problems.

Mr. Lawrence is friendly and professional. He has good instincts when hiring personnel. He makes good decisions generally. He is an engaged member of his community. He is very effective with the public. He is a confident public speaker and is comfortable in front of a crowd. He is tactful because he is aware that words may be interpreted in many ways.

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

Ms. Daigle is unaware of Mr. Lawrence’s communication skills or his customer service abilities. He is a problem solver and handles stress well. He is calm in crisis. He has great financial skills.

Mr. Lawrence completes tasks in a timely manner. He was instrumental in getting a gas pipeline moved into Lincoln from 35 miles away. This task was not easy, and he played a key part.

Ms. Daigle has not encountered anyone who has a negative opinion of Mr. Lawrence. She recommends him for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Friendly,
- Good-humored,
- Competent,
- Intelligent, and
- Capable.

Strengths: Communication, and respect for the decisions of the board.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Sherry Howard – Town Manager, Warren, ME (207) 273-2421

Ms. Howard succeeded Mr. Lawrence as Town Manager of Warren, ME in 2019. She has known him since 2016. At the time they met, Ms. Howard was bookkeeper for the Town of Warren.

Mr. Lawrence has a great personality. He has an excellent work ethic and is fair in his dealings with others. He performed well as Warren Town Manager and took pride in his job.

Mr. Lawrence has great communication skills. When he came to Warren, he often walked down the hall to Ms. Howard’s office to ask questions. He makes good hiring decisions and can accurately read people.

Mr. Lawrence values the big picture and likes to see growth. At times, he presented some ideas for growth in Warren but was not received well in the small town. He has great ideas and knows how to present them well. He is engaged in his community. When he became the Town Manager of Warren, he visited many businesses and introduced himself. He attended town events and activities.

Mr. Lawrence is a great leader. He sets clear standards and expectations for his personnel. He is professional, open, and approachable. He is constantly striving for unity in the workplace. Stress does not affect him negatively at work.

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

While Mr. Lawrence was managing Warren, he discovered that the Town did not have any safety training programs for its employees. He rallied everyone together and explained the importance of safety training. With Mr. Lawrence at the head, the Town incorporated monthly staff meetings and brought personnel up to date on safety protocols.

Mr. Lawrence was a great manager for Warren and will make an excellent Manager for another community. Ms. Howard recommends him for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Compassionate,
- Leader,
- Honest,
- Transparent, and
- Hardworking.

Strengths: Interpersonal skills and using available resources to solve problems.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Sarah Newell – Attorney, Eaton Peabody, Brunswick, ME (207) 240-2925

Ms. Newell is an employment and labor attorney. She worked with Mr. Lawrence in this capacity when he served as a police chief in Lincoln as well as when he was Town Manager for various towns following his career in law enforcement. They first met in about 2012.

Mr. Lawrence is a steady person and a good decision maker. Ms. Newell has worked with many Managers in her career. Compared to other managers, Mr. Lawrence handles employment issues exceptionally well. Though Ms. Newell is unsure of his innovative tendencies, she believes Mr. Lawrence to be a creative person. He often looked for creative solutions to employment issues when they worked together.

Mr. Lawrence is skilled at talking with people both one-on-one and in a group. He has a collaborative management style. He is not afraid to make difficult decisions and take disciplinary action when necessary.

When working on union negotiations, Mr. Lawrence does an excellent job of balancing the interests and needs of his employees, the union, and the board. He will advocate for any of these groups if they are not being treated fairly.

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

Mr. Lawrence responds well to stress. He is accustomed to handling stressful situations, largely due to his law enforcement background. He has good financial skills. In his work with Ms. Newell, he was always knowledgeable about budget and wage issues.

Mr. Lawrence is an excellent Manager. Ms. Newell recommends him for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Steady,
- Knowledgeable,
- Communicative,
- Task oriented,
- Personable, and
- Reasonable.

Strengths: Practicality, steady temperament, and management skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Glen Braun – Chair, Town of Howland, ME (207) 290-5054

Mr. Braun met Mr. Lawrence in 2014, when Mr. Lawrence was Town Manager for Howland. Mr. Lawrence is a great person and was a fantastic Town Manager.

Mr. Lawrence is a careful and thoughtful decision-maker. At first, Mr. Braun had a difficult time adjusting to this. He was accustomed to moving things along at a much faster pace. But he soon realized that Mr. Lawrence’s methodical process brought a calming sensibility to tense situations.

In Howland, Mr. Lawrence took on a difficult project. A structure was being built on town property, but the town did not own the building. Many factors made this a complicated situation. Once he learned what was going on and which problems he needed to address, Mr. Lawrence came up with well thought-out plans and good solutions that were well received by the contractor. Under Mr. Lawrence’s leadership, the project was completed in a much better way than it was started.

Mr. Lawrence hires good people. In Howland, he hired the Fire and EMS chief. This person turned out to be a great asset to Howland. The hire was an excellent move for the town.

Mr. Lawrence is an active member of his community. He and his wife regularly attended town events and activities in Howland. He takes time to interact with members of the public

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

individually. When Mr. Lawrence had only been Town manager for about six weeks, he attended the funeral of Mr. Braun’s father-in-law.

Mr. Lawrence has great communication skills. He values honesty and exhibits it in everything he does. In general, all of Mr. Lawrence’s colleagues in Howland had a good relationship with him.

Mr. Lawrence is customer service oriented and has good financial skills. He inherited a budget from the prior manager of Howland and did an excellent job with it.

Mr. Lawrence’s skills and talents would be best utilized in a larger community than Howland’s 1,300 people. He is an exceptional Manager. Mr. Braun recommends him for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Honest,
- Methodical, and
- Calm.

Strengths: Honesty, critical thinking, stress management, and problem solving.

Weaknesses: He took on more responsibilities in the small town of Howland than in the larger town of Lincoln where he was used to delegating. However, he picked up things quickly and did a great job.

Stephen Clay – Former Chair, Town of Lincoln, ME (207) 290-1241

Mr. Clay was on the Town Council of Lincoln. He first met Mr. Lawrence when the Town hired him as Chief of Police in 2010. When the Town Manager left, Mr. Lawrence was hired as interim Town Manager. He applied for the full-time position and was hired.

Mr. Lawrence is a great person. He is always available to answer questions or give advice to others. He carried out the Council’s policies accurately and efficiently. At times, he recommended improvements to the policies.

Mr. Lawrence is professional and friendly. He and Mr. Clay often met in the garage where Mr. Clay worked. He is a fantastic communicator and always keeps everyone informed of important matters. He has good financial skills and managed the budget well in Lincoln. He always knows the financial status of each department.

Mr. Lawrence is a creative problem solver. He created a coalition of representatives from surrounding towns, including Lincoln, to collaborate on ways to help each other. Also, Mr. Lawrence had the idea to combine the positions of Fire Chief and Police Chief into one position.

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

The Town of Lincoln hired a Public Safety Director for this role in 2012. The person they hired was excellent.

Mr. Lawrence makes his expectations clear. He helps with problems if needed. He checked in frequently with department heads. In Lincoln, he was very popular with all town employees because of his willingness to help if he could.

In 2015, Lincoln had an issue with a large two-lane road called West Broadway. When businesses wanted to open there, they were required to pay a large fee to the town because of the amount of traffic on the road and the cost prevented many from moving forward. Mr. Lawrence obtained a referendum to open a center turn lane on the road to help the traffic and give better business access. The referendum passed, and the project was completed after Mr. Lawrence left Lincoln.

Mr. Lawrence is a fantastic Manager. Mr. Clay would hire him in a second. He highly recommends him for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Compassionate,
- Loyal,
- Hardworking, and
- Honest.

Strengths: Addresses personnel issues in private and does not tolerate any town employee talking down about any other employee.

Weaknesses: Takes things personally sometimes.

Steven Spinks – Former Town Manager, Bowling Green, FL (863) 445-0284

Mr. Spinks preceded Mr. Lawrence as Town Manager of Bowling Green. They met in March 2019 when Mr. Lawrence attained the position.

Mr. Lawrence brought positive change to the management of Bowling Green. He improved transparency and initiated beneficial policies. He is an outstanding person and very efficient. He is task-oriented and fiscally conservative. When hiring personnel, Mr. Lawrence thoroughly investigates candidates prior to making an employment offer to them.

Some examples of positive changes Mr. Lawrence brought to Bowling Green are a safety training program and regular managers’ meetings. The employees were hesitant about these

Reference Notes

William "Bill" Lawrence

things at first, but Mr. Lawrence got them involved in different projects and readily accepted feedback. The managers and other employees had a positive experience.

The safety training program mentioned above was something that Bowling Green never had before. As soon as Mr. Lawrence discovered this, he immediately met with the managers to organize one. He required each of them to brainstorm with their respective departments about what kind of safety issues were possible in their area. Then, he had the managers teach safety protocols to the employees they were responsible for. This helped employees become more aware of their surroundings.

Mr. Lawrence is a creative thinker and enjoys trying new things. He is not afraid of making mistakes and does his best to learn from them. He is active in his community and enjoys the aspect of sharing information with whomever needs it. He sits on the Economic Development Council. He often attends lunches with the County Manager and other public officials. When he is in town, he stops and talks with citizens. If he does not know the answer to a question, he does not make up an answer. He researches the answer and follows up on it.

Mr. Lawrence is a good public speaker who adds humor to his remarks. He is amiable and knows how to relate to his audience. He is also skilled at one-on-one interactions with people. He is friendly, while also following through on consequences and discipline.

Before Mr. Lawrence became Town Manager, Bowling Green was lax in many areas of discipline. Employees were only getting warnings if they did something wrong. Mr. Lawrence made the consequences clear and followed through on them. The discipline was evident, and people responded to it. Employees now come to work on time, take the correct amount of time for lunch, and so forth.

At one time, one of Bowling Green's managers in the Grounds department was doing much of the work that his employees were supposed to be doing. His argument was that he could complete the tasks faster, and it was easier to do them himself. Employees were standing around doing nothing while the manager was doing their work. Mr. Lawrence told the manager that he needed to stop doing this and train his employees and made the consequences clear. The manager did not follow these instructions. Mr. Lawrence followed through on his word and delivered the consequences. When the time came for pay raises to be handed out, the Grounds manager did not receive as high of a raise as he expected.

Mr. Lawrence is a strong communicator. If there were any issues, the Mayor was the first to know. He communicates well with anyone who needs to be involved, such as the Commissioners or the City Attorney. He has an open-door policy. He is frank and naturally affable. He jokes around with everyone but is serious about his work. He sets up boundaries and expectations in his working relationships.

One person who might have a different opinion of Mr. Lawrence is a commissioner named Sam Fite. Near the end of Mr. Spinks' time in Bowling Green, it was discovered that Mr. Fite was

Reference Notes

William “Bill” Lawrence

taking home money from town events instead of handing it over to police to be put in a safe. Mr. Fite would not comply to warnings. Mr. Lawrence could not let this continue and contacted the Attorney General’s office to make it right. Mr. Lawrence has strong morals. If he cannot remedy a situation, he contacts the appropriate people who can do so.

If Mr. Spinks had a need for a Manager, Mr. Lawrence would be at the top of his list. He highly recommends him for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe William Lawrence:

- Affable,
- Conscientious,
- Honest,
- Open,
- Conservative, and
- Goal-oriented.

Strengths: Bringing people together, accepting feedback, communication, and creative problem solving.

Weaknesses: Sometimes talks too much and reiterates a point several times.

Prepared by: Amanda Jenkins
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://lakeandsumterstyle.com/lady-lakes-new-wastewater-treatment-plant-is-now-online/>
December 20, 2024

Lady Lake’s New Wastewater Treatment Plant is Now Online

Mayor Pro Tem Treva Roberts this week toured Lady Lake’s new wastewater treatment plant alongside Town Manager **Bill Lawrence**, Public Works Director C.T. Eagle, and Utilities Supervisor Butch Goodman.

Lady Lake’s wastewater plant expansion is now operational, doubling the town’s actual treatment ability and adding an additional 200,000 gallons of treatment to the permitted capacity. The permitted capacity was 1 million gallons per day and has now increased to 1.2 million gallons per day.

The Town currently treats approximately 550,000 gallons of wastewater per day produced by Lady Lake, including 80,000 gallons per day from the City of Fruitland Park. The town has been servicing Fruitland Park for nearly a decade. This plant will service not only existing customers, but also incoming development for the next several years.

During Hurricane Milton, the Town had no reported wastewater spills, no water outages, and no reported utility damages. The brand-new wastewater plant successfully managed over 1 million gallons of water. Thanks to the recent expansion, crews were able to effectively manage the flow without any overflow incidents.

The \$16 million project took three years to build and was paid for through a combination of funding mechanisms including impact fees, utility fund, surtax money and the Coronavirus Relief Fund. No loans, bonds, or debt of any kind was incurred due to this project.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

https://www.villages-news.com/2024/11/08/lady-lake-residents-invited-to-walk-with-town-manager-at-park/#google_vignette
November 8, 2024

Lady Lake residents invited to walk with town manager at park
By Staff Report

Residents can “Walk and Talk” with Lady Lake Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13 at Snooky Park.

The town manager and department heads will be available for a casual conversation about the latest town news, services and events while walking through this natural preserve in the heart of town. The 2,000-foot walking trail is surrounded by a canopy of cedar, live oaks, water oaks and palm trees and features amenities such as picnic shelters, water fountains, restrooms and exercise equipment.

Attendees will have an opportunity to learn about town operations and ask questions while engaging with our community and meeting their neighbors. Residents should feel free to bring well-behaved dogs on leashes.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Villages-News (FL)
October 22, 2024

Lady Lake officials irritated as neighbor pleads for help with wastewater treatment

Anchor: Meta Minton

Lady Lake officials could barely hide their irritation Monday night when discussing a neighboring community's need to continue reliance on help with wastewater treatment. Fruitland Park is nearing the end of a 10-year agreement in which the city sends wastewater to Lady Lake for treatment. During that decade, Fruitland Park was supposed to bring a new wastewater treatment plant on line to increase its capacity as the community continues to grow. That hasn't happened. Fruitland Park wants to extend its current agreement with Lady Lake.

However, Lady Lake is also experiencing rapid growth and leaders want to ensure the town has enough capacity for its current and future needs. "I don't want to cut them off. We should give them time. But we need to save our capacity for Lady Lake," said Commissioner Treva Roberts.

Lady Lake is treating 550,000 gallons of wastewater per day and about 80,000 gallons per day are coming from Fruitland Park, according to Lady Lake Director of Public Works C. T. Eagle. The Fruitland Park section of The Villages is serviced by The Villages District Utilities. Eagle said that 10 years ago, Fruitland Park had a wastewater plant that was failing and had been cited for state violations. He said Fruitland Park turned to Lady Lake and Leesburg for help. That's when Lady Lake offered a 10-year agreement.

Lady Lake has another wastewater treatment plant coming on line in the future, but the town also has another 4,200 residential units to be constructed and added to the usage. It could take up to four to five years for Fruitland Park to build and activate a new wastewater treatment plant. Wildwood is struggling to bring a new plant online in an effort to keep pace with city's soaring population.

Fruitland Park leaders are hoping for another 10-year agreement with Lady Lake. However, Lady Lake commissioners weren't open to another 10 years, fearing another decade of procrastination on the part of Fruitland Park. "They have no plan. We should up their fees and give them a shorter contract. The rate should go up so it really smarts and they have to do something," said Commissioner Mike Sage, a resident of the Historic Side of The Villages. "We are going to be eating into our surplus capacity. I don't want to be a poor neighbor, but we have to look out for ourselves." Commissioners directed Town Manager **William Lawrence** to negotiate a two-year contract with Fruitland Park at a higher rate.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Villages-News (FL)
October 12, 2024

Here is why I gave up on my local government

Anchor: Robert Nyce

Richard Masso is typical of someone who does not know or care to know the facts. My opinions about the Town of Lady Lake Commission are based upon my personal experiences over the last 10 years as a resident and taxpayer of Lady Lake. It all started when I first asked for help with the speeders and reckless driving on Rio Grande Avenue and I sought to get stop signs at the El Cortez Gate on Avenida Central. The need for stop signs and cross walks at Avenida Central and Chula Vista Recreation Center should be obvious, which to some degree was agreed by Town Manager Kris Kollgaard, but the response always was, “we can’t do that because of State Regulations.”

So, I met with the State Senator, two prior State Representatives, and wrote to the last State Rep. who failed to respond, all in an attempt to get Lady Lake some help with “State Regulations.” All of them were uninterested as well. So far, in addition to attending many town meetings I have personally met with or contacted:

Representatives Marlene O’Toole, Brett Have Senator Baxley.

Town Manager, Kris Kollgaard, many times including a several hour trip to observe traffic.

C. T. Eagle, who was along for the observation.

Police Chief, Chris McKinstry.

Former Commissioner Paul Hannan who represented the Ward 4. His response was “get used to the traffic.” Former Commissioner Ruth Kussard about many issues including traffic by phone and email.

Met with and toured the area with Former Commissioner Tony Holden.

Spoke with and emailed former Mayor Jim Reitz.

Served as Chairman of the Charter Review Committee in 2018.

Served on the Planning and Zoning Board for about eight months gaining an understanding of the process.

Serve as Chairman of the Disciplinary Arbitration Panel.

Met with Town Manager **William Lawrence**.

Met with Police Chief Steve Hunt.

Most of my meetings were regarding the supposed limitations on traffic controls due to state regulation. However, **Mr. Lawrence** was able to provide speed control flashing lights and speed limit strictly enforced signs fairly quickly after he assumed his role. **Mr. Lawrence** and Chief Hunt were kind enough to also review the issues at Chula Vista Recreation Center entrance and Avenida Central and Rio Grande Avenue at El Cortez Gate where there are no stop signs or pedestrian crosswalks. How can that be, in an over 55 state regulated community, located within the Town of Lady Lake – I consider it a real safety issue. I think most clear-headed residents

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

would agree. None of this even addresses the speeding that goes on by drivers on Rio Grande Avenue and Chula Vista Avenue.

So, Mr. Masso, maybe you don't see me at meetings any more. Maybe the latest attempt by Lady Lake commissioners to extend their terms without first standing for re-election was the final straw for me. Because it is obvious that not much has changed in the 10 years, yes 10 years, that I have been reaching out to Lady Lake officials. Or, maybe I have just given up as all of what I have done, except for **Mr. Lawrence**, has fallen on deaf ears. Lady Lake Commissioners do not run the town. That day-to-day operation belongs to the Town Manager. The Commissioners set policy and direct the Town Manager.

To question the need to extend terms especially without standing for re-election and before enjoying the benefit of that extension is every resident's duty. I take it seriously. If they are not running day-to-day operations there is no need to extend their term as there is no real consequence to any one or more of them leaving at the same time – the town manager has it covered. If he leaves there is a chance for turmoil.

While it seems to me, they have a passion for annexation and granting services outside Lady Lake, I am not aware of any attempt to find a solution to the stop signs needed on Rio Grande Avenue at Chula Vista Recreation Center or on Avenida Central at the El Cortez gate – just like Del Mar and Avenida Central. Nor have I even heard of an attempt to paint crosswalks at either location. I have suggested putting the golf cars on Rio Grande Avenue, Del Mar Avenue and Chula Vista Avenue back in the traffic lane just like all the other streets in the three wards of Lady Lake within The Villages. This would avoid confusion and create uniformity for golf cart traffic with the only exceptions being Avenida Central (four lanes) and Bichara Boulevard (heavy commercial area and wide enough for golf cart lanes). Understand that annexation requires assuming all the problems related to the annexed properties, and there are many, why do that if you cannot solve existing problems within our own wards. It really is a matter of leadership and preferences.

In the end, each of us has to decide when enough is enough. I have decided that after 10 years of seeking better traffic control, a few stop signs, or any solution to the traffic problems on the West side of U.S. Hwy. 441 the effort is futile. While the golf carts travel in the traffic lanes on the east side, we deal with narrow streets with unfit golf cart lanes shared with pedestrians, bicycles, motorized wheel chairs and electric scooters while dodging speeding traffic. It could be solved by putting the golf carts back in the traffic lanes and using the current golf cart lanes for pedestrians, bicycles and other forms of low-speed travel vehicles. Since speeds are limited to 20 MPH for golf carts this would slow the automobile traffic as well – problem solved!

The long and short of all of this is that I have learned, the Lady Lake Commission demonstrates by action where its preferences are. In ten years, they have not attempted to solve the stop sign, traffic control issues on the west side of U.S. Hwy. 441 specifically the roads I have named. All of this while enjoying a 65 percent increase in property tax revenue at the same time raising

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property tax rates by 7.5 percent this year. I can only recall one member who supported any consideration for stop sign or crosswalks and that was Tony Holden. My own representative had no interest in solving anything. And recently, I had an even more troubling experience with a member of the Town Commission who had no idea what their job was and challenged my wife and I about a permit which falls completely under the Town Manager.

Mr. Masso, you are right, I do not go to Lady Lake Town Commission meetings anymore, because it is obvious to me that unless you bring an army with you, they take no notice of your issue. I am about as persistent a person as anyone I know and I am giving up. I have donated my time and effort to this issue. I think the safety of our residents should be the number one issue for Lady Lake Commissioners and if we cannot get stop signs or crosswalks – so be it! However, I will not stop commenting on issues before the Lady Lake Commission as a concerned and informed citizen.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Villages-News (FL)
August 14, 2024

Lady Lake Library receives \$1 million grant for expansion project
Anchor: Staff Report

The Lady Lake Library has been awarded a \$1 million Lake County Library Impact Fee grant to support its ambitious expansion project. This allocation will contribute to the Children’s Library portion of the project, with the Town of Lady Lake funding the remaining cost that includes an expansion of the Information Technology Department and addition of the Growth Management annex. The project aims to enhance the library’s offerings by enlarging the youth library area from 4,560 sq. ft. to 7,697 sq. ft., a 69 percent increase. It includes an expanded lobby, an additional public elevator, and a landing area for the new second floor Children’s Library, adding more than 3,000 sq. ft. to the public spaces.

“This expansion is crucial for meeting the growing needs of our community,” said Library Director Aly Herman. “We have quickly outgrown our current youth library, and this project will allow us to significantly enhance the library’s collection and programs, benefiting all our patrons.”

The county’s impact fee grant is justified by the library’s extensive reach and the expected Town population growth. The Lady Lake Library, part of the Lake County Library System, serves over 16,000 registered cardholders and welcomes approximately 14,500 visitors each month. With the town anticipating a dozen new development projects with an estimated population increase of 8,500 people within the next four years, the expansion is timely. “The Lady Lake Library is a vital resource for our community,” Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** said. “This expansion will ensure we can continue to provide excellent services to accommodate our growing community. We are thankful for the generosity and support we have received from Lake County towards realizing this vision.”

The expansion will provide much-needed space for additional shelving, reading areas, a larger storytime room, a multipurpose room, and more study spaces. The library hopes to grow its children’s collection by 25% and the expanded space will allow for a greater number of programs. “We are proud to assist our member libraries, such as Lady Lake, in worthy projects that not only benefit their municipalities, but also community as a whole,” said George Taylor, Director for the Office of Library Services for the Lake County Library System. “I would like to thank the library directors for their thoughtful applications, our dedicated Library Advisory Board for their recommendations and the Board of County Commissioners for their support of these projects.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Villages-News (FL)
April 1, 2024

Lady Lake town manager will see sizable pay increase

Anchor: Meta Minton

The Lady Lake Commission has awarded a big pay raise to Town Manager **William Lawrence**. Mayor Ed Freeman made a motion Monday night to give **Lawrence** a 28 percent pay raise, which will increase his base pay from \$134,000 to \$167,500. Commissioner Treva Roberts seconded the mayor's motion. The commission approved the pay raise on a 4-0 vote. Commissioner Mike Sage was absent from the meeting.

Lawrence was hired away from Bowling Green, Fla. in 2021 at an annual salary of \$120,000. **Lawrence** earned a degree in criminal justice from the University of Maine and spent several years in law enforcement. In 2016, he became the town manager in Warren, Maine and in 2019 he was named city manager in Bowling Green. **Lawrence** succeeded Town Manager Kris Kollgaard who resigned over the controversial dismissal of Police Chief Chris McKinstry.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.wesh.com/article/lady-lake-police-pay-raise/45989148>
November 29, 2023

Lady Lake approves pay raise, salary increases for police department

Anchor: Paola Tristan Arruda

The town of Lady Lake is raising the starting wage for police officers. Town officials say this new deal will make their police department the highest paid in Lake County. Recently, the town commission approved a new contract with the Police Benevolent Association, the union representing the Lady Lake police department, which offers a 30% raise across the board and a starting salary of \$62,000 per year.

Lady Lake town manager **William Lawrence** said the department has struggled to retain officers. "It's hard across the nation to recruit people to the law enforcement field, so this is going on everywhere here," **Lawrence** said. "Here in Lady Lake, we have 30 full-time sworn officers, and we've been understaffed by four, five, or six officers constantly for about two or three years." According to police Chief Steven Hunt, the department has about 22 officers right now, and that number will go down to 20 with a recent resignation and military leave.

After looking at what neighboring communities were paying their officers, town officials decided to look at a new compensation package. "This is a really nice place to be a police officer. We're part of a community, and it's a place that people would want to come and work in," Hunt said. "I don't know if we messaged that very well in the past, but we're here to send a message now. It shows support and kind of getting with the times."

The pay increase puts Lady Lake just above the Leesburg Police Department's starting salary of \$61,255. The raise also measures against other cities and county departments as well.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.villages-news.com/2022/04/05/lady-lake-commissioners-reward-town-manager-with-5-percent-raise-on-one-year-anniversary/>
April 5, 2022

Lady Lake commissioners reward town manager with 5 percent raise on one-year anniversary

Author/Byline: Meta Minton

Lady Lake commissioners have rewarded the town manager with a 5 percent raise on his one-year anniversary. The Lady Lake Commission on Monday night unanimously agreed to a pay hike for **William Lawrence**.

Commissioner Ruth Kussard praised **Lawrence** for the positive impact he has had at Lady Lake Town Hall and his work with town staff. He has become well known for his public “shout outs” for town employees who are going above and beyond their duties.

Lawrence was hired away from Bowling Green, Fla. at an annual salary of \$120,000.

Lawrence earned a degree in criminal justice from the University of Maine and spent several years in law enforcement. In 2014, he made the jump to town manager of White Springs in Florida. That decision was fueled in part by a sick father in Florida. In 2015, the town of Howland, Maine reached out to **Lawrence**. His house in Maine wasn't selling and his father had passed away so he made the move back to the Pine Tree State. In 2016, he became the town manager for Warren, Maine and in 2019 made the move back to Florida when he was named city manager in Bowling Green. **Lawrence** succeeded Town Manager Kris Kollgaard who resigned over the controversial dismissal of Police Chief Chris McKinstry.

The commission hired a search firm and initially made an offer to Kenneth City Town Manager Matthew Campbell. Negotiations with Campbell hit rough waters when he asked for perks like bringing his dog to work, flex time and continuing to live in Wesley Chapel. Campbell later withdrew from consideration.

Lawrence's resume was obtained through the same search firm and commissioners reached out to him for the job.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Villages
March 2, 2021

Lady Lake Commission seals deal with new town manager

Author/Byline: Meta Minton

The Lady Lake Commission has sealed a deal with its new town manager. **William Lawrence**, city manager in Bowling Green, Fla., inked a contract Monday night with the commission. He has agreed to a \$120,000 annual salary and will relocate to within a 30-mile radius of Lady Lake. He will be under contract for two years.

Commissioner Paul Hannan added a bit of drama to the situation Monday when he pointed out that **Lawrence** was the third choice last month in the commission's original ranking of the five finalists. Hannan said he misunderstood during a special meeting Feb. 18 and thought that the commission had agreed to offer the job to the second-ranked candidate. Hannan pointed out that **Lawrence** would be making a lucrative leap from the \$73,000 annual salary he is currently earning in Bowling Green to the \$120,000 he will earn as Lady Lake's town manager.

Lawrence earned a degree in criminal justice from the University of Maine and spent several years in law enforcement. In 2014, he made the jump to town manager of White Springs in Florida. That decision was fueled in part by a sick father in Florida. In 2015, the town of Howland, Maine reached out to **Lawrence**. His house in Maine wasn't selling and his father had passed away so he made the move back to the Pine Tree State. In 2016, he became the town manager for Warren, Maine and in 2019 made the move back to Florida when he was named city manager in Bowling Green.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://knox.villagesoup.com/p/Lawrence-resigns-as-warren-town-manager/1803434>
Mar 01, 2019

Lawrence resigns as Warren town manager

Author/Byline: Beth A. Birmingham

The Warren Board of Selectmen accepted the resignation of Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** as of March 30 at its Feb. 27 meeting. **Lawrence** said in his letter of resignation that he has been offered a city manager position in Florida. "It has been a pleasure to be of service to you and the town of Warren for the past three years," **Lawrence's** letter stated.

Just last November, the board voted 4-1 to approve a new work agreement and raise for **Lawrence**. The open-ended agreement, which was to begin June 1, included a raise of \$10,000 from his current \$70,000 salary and percentage increases in line with other town employees.

When he was hired in June 2016 to replace Interim Town Manager Robin Bennett, **Lawrence** brought with him more than 30 years' experience in municipal government, including having served as a police officer, detective, police chief and as a town manager.

His priority has been to find ways to increase revenues while decreasing costs through economic development, which has been a struggle. "I would like to think the town of Warren is in a better place than when I arrived three years ago," **Lawrence** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
 William R. Lawrence
 (Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Herald-Advocate
 February 21, 2019

BG Hires New City Manager
 Author/Byline: Jim Kelly

BG Hires New City Manager

By **JIM KELLY**
 Of The Herald-Advocate

The Bowling Green City Commission voted 4-0 Monday night to hire William

(Bill) Lawrence to be the new city manager beginning April 8. He has been the town manager of Warren, Maine, for the past three years.

Lawrence, 62, will be paid \$70,000 a year, the same as his current salary. He was town manager in Howland, Maine, for one year, town manager of White Springs, Fla., for one year, and town manager/police chief in Lincoln, Maine, for three years. He has experience in economic development, TIF projects, state grants, and water/wastewater utilities.

He met with city commissioners Monday night. Steve Spinks made the motion to hire, seconded by David Durastanti, and Lawrence received affirmative votes also from Duane Gardner and Vice Mayor Shirley Tucker.

The city has major projects underway in wastewater treatment and drinking water improvements. The original sewage treatment plant was built in 1970 and is being

See MANAGER A2



PHOTO BY JIM KELLY

Shown (from left) are current city manager Jerry Conerly, new city manager Bill Lawrence and Vice Mayor Shirley Tucker.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

MANAGER
Continued From A1

enlarged and upgraded at the same site.

Lawrence and his wife have relatives in Florida and wanted to move back to the Sunshine State. He was the top choice of current city manager Jerry Conerly who conducted the search for his successor and presented a list of five finalists to the commission.

Lawrence may have to find a temporary residence outside

the city but hopes to live in the city within two years. Rentals often require a year's lease, and there is a limited housing market within the city.

Earlier Monday he met with Mayor Sam Fite who is at home recuperating from pneumonia.

Previous city managers in Bowling Green have included David Elbertson, Yvonne Kimball, Mack Bryan, Perry

Knight, David Durastanti, Earl Crawley, and George Burris. Crawley and Bryan served the longest terms.

Conerly has served seven years.

"I think he will be a good fit for the city, and he enjoys a challenge," said Fite on Tuesday. Fite last month caught the flu which worsened, and he spent nine days in AdventHealth in Sebring.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/warren-community-rallies-behind-farm-after-vandalism/97-3c936a5a-293a-46d8-b4f0-1a6c30259d5f>
January 17, 2019

Warren community rallies behind farm after vandalism

Author/Byline: Sean Stackhouse

During the first week of January, Spear Spring Farm’s new greenhouse was vandalized. “Our new greenhouse that was just completed in December, had been completely slashed from top to bottom,” said Spear Spring Farm President Jamien Richardson. The vandalism left the new greenhouse beyond repair, and spirits low at the farm. “This sense of powerlessness just came over us,” said Richardson.

Since the vandalism however, the nearly 300 year-old-farm is feeling anything but powerless. The farm received an outpouring of support from the Warren community. Support came from local farm, businesses, and the town manager. “We got over 2000 responses by the end of the day. So, I think it was pretty immediate that we were feeling better about our place here in this community,” said Richardson.

One of the local farms that reached out in support was Warren based Barely Joe Farm Greenhouses. “It's what you do. We're a nice community and we care about each other,” said co-owner of Barely Joe Farm Greenhouses Jan Macdonald. “Sometimes it takes a tragedy to draw people together. Unfortunate, but I see nothing but good coming from this,” added Macdonald.

Another Warren resident offering support was town manager **Bill Lawrence**. “We wanted to reach out and help them as much as possible because they're a big part of the community and we want to see our farming community thrive here because it's a big part of Warren,” said **Lawrence**.

The biggest support towards Spear Spring Farm came from Johnny’s Seeds and Ledgewood Farm, who supply seeds and greenhouse materials for the Spear Spring Farm. “We've had such an outpouring of love and support from our community. From Maine in general. We've gotten calls from people pretty far away offering to come down here for a day or two and help us put it back up,” said Jamien Richardson.

Spear Spring Farm plans to re-open in early spring after making repairs to its greenhouse.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://freepressonline.com/Content/Default/Hannon-archives-2018-19/Article/Rockport-Firm-Wins-Warren-Cleanup-Bid/-3/943/62210>
December 6, 2018

Rockport Firm Wins Warren Cleanup Bid
Carpet materials to be removed from site and burned in Thomaston
Author/Byline: Brian P. D. Hannon

Farley, Inc. of Rockport will take up an effort to clear a Warren site of a large amount of carpet material that has been decomposing there for years after the state Department of Environmental Protection chose its cleanup bid earlier this month. Bill Longfellow, DEP director of innovation and assistance, confirmed a \$270,000 contract with Farley. The Rockport firm and its subcontractor, Dragon Products Company of Thomaston, are in final negotiations with the state DEP to remove approximately 27,000 tons of the material, which is half of the total at the site.

The 70-acre site on Route 90 in Warren has a diverse and, at times, contentious ownership history. Between 1900 and 1950 there were five private owners, while in 1972 the owner was listed as Schoolphoto Inc. The Overlock Family Trust took over the property in 1994, until 1997 when the owner of record was Steamship Navigation Company. The property was listed as a solid waste facility with licenses held by Steamship Navigation and Cascade Fiber. Steamship principal owners Randy and Cathy Dunican collected \$1 million to bring in the flammable carpet material to build berms to stop bullets for a rifle range being developed by R.D. Outfitters beginning in approximately 1998. After Steamship was unable to complete the project, the DEP took over the site through a court action and received \$400,000 from the owner for cleanup.

A June 2018 environmental assessment found the berms made of “a non-woven fabric used to manufacture automobile trunk liners” covered 25 percent of the property. “The berms are in various stages of completion ranging from uncovered to completely covered and vegetated. It is unknown if the berms, used as bullet stops, were ever cleaned to remove spent bullets and associated fragments,” according to the assessment by Beacon Environmental Consultants. Longfellow said price was the biggest difference between the bids submitted by Farley and two other firms. “Farley proposed a per ton cost which was much lower than other bidders. Farley proposed shipping the material to Dragon in Thomaston, which reduces trucking expenses,” Longfellow said. “The contract with Farley will be conditional upon Dragon being permitted to burn the material from this site at its Thomaston facility.”

Dragon produces cement materials for construction of highways, bridges and buildings, according to its website. A message left at its facility was not immediately returned. Longfellow said the company is working to attain permitting for the Warren project. “Dragon is currently licensed to burn the carpet material if it were to come directly from the manufacturer or source, so this is not a new fuel for Dragon,” he explained. “Very little ash would remain as most of the ash would be incorporated into the cement product being manufactured.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Warren Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** said he has “mixed feelings” about the project. “I am happy to see some movement in the cleanup since it had been 19 years. I am disappointed that it’s not a complete site cleanup,” **Lawrence** said. “The town does not own the property at this time so our hands are tied. Every year the property comes up for foreclosure on back taxes and the residents vote no to acquire the property for fear the town would be responsible for the cleanup.”

Final negotiations between the DEP and Farley will be conducted “over the next several weeks,” according to Longfellow. “Once a contract is completed and Dragon has proper permitting, then work can commence,” he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://wgme.com/news/local/three-story-building-destroyed-in-warren-fire>
September 12, 2018

Three-story building destroyed in Warren fire

Author/Byline: WGME

Warren fire officials say a three-story building was destroyed after an overnight fire, and town officials say the property had been a concern for them for about a year.

Warren fire officials say a large building at 45 High Street caught fire before midnight on Tuesday. They say that the fire was hard to fight due to the amount of cars on the property. "We couldn't get in the yard to setup the apparatus because of the cars that were in the way," Warren Fire Chief Greg Andrews said.

The owner of the property says that he runs multiple businesses at the site, including an auto body repair shop. Warren's town manager says just last Friday, a Knox County judge declared the property owner was running an "illegal junkyard" on the property, not an auto shop.

"He was assessed \$100 a day for clean-up, and that's where it stands right now," Warren Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** said.

The owner wouldn't speak with on camera with CBS 13, but says that he only runs licensed businesses.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

https://www.valdostadailytimes.com/news/ga_fl_news/white-springs-council-votes-to-declare-miller-seat-forfeited/article_f5dde65e-e828-5125-9a91-df12683c240b.html
June 23, 2017

White Springs council votes to declare Miller seat forfeited

Author/Byline: Jessie R. Box

The White Springs Town Council received a majority vote to declare council member Helen Miller's seat forfeited at its June 13 meeting.

After a lengthy discussion, the motion to declare the seat forfeited passed with a 3-1 vote, with Walter McKenzie voting against. McKenzie earlier requested the review of Miller's actions be postponed until she was present since she was unexpectedly on vacation. His request was denied.

Town manager Stacy Tebo said a letter of notice was sent to Miller on Friday and she has seven days upon receipt of the letter to request a hearing in writing.

If she does not respond in seven days, her seat is forfeited. If she requests a hearing, Miller has to present evidence disputing the allegations. The council will then vote whether the evidence is sufficient to overturn the forfeiture.

Prior to the board's review of Miller's actions — which included more than 200 pages of receipts, purchase order request forms, emails, copies of Facebook posts and an affidavit from **William Lawrence**, former town manager, stating his support of Tebo and examples of Miller's actions while he was manager that were included in the council members' packet for the meeting — several people spoke out in support of Miller during public comments.

"I am so disappointed in you guys as council members," Merri McKenzie said. "Shame on you that you could not give Helen Miller a second to table what Walter asked for and put it on another time on the agenda. "I am so embarrassed and ashamed of all of you."

Maddie Moore added: "Helen Miller and I have disagreed 1,000 times on 1,000 different subjects but to not know her heart is in here working for every single person that lives in this town to bring this town up is more than I can say for many of you sitting up there now."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
July 18, 2016

Warren public works director sues former board chair

Author/Byline: Stephen Betts

The public works director for the town has sued the former chairman of the board of selectmen, claiming the official assaulted him more than a year ago.

The lawsuit filed July 1 by Douglas Gammon against Michael York seeks unspecified damages for assault and deprivation of constitutional rights. In November, District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau announced no criminal charges would be filed in the matter, saying he did not believe the state could prove beyond a reasonable doubt that either man was not acting in self-defense. Rushlau pointed out that the only two people who witnessed the Nov. 5, 2014, altercation were York and Gammon. The standard of proof in a civil lawsuit is less than for a criminal conviction.

Rushlau said each man claimed the other was the aggressor. The two also disagreed on exactly where the altercation occurred, the prosecutor said, with Gammon maintaining it occurred on his property. The issue of where the incident occurred was crucial to whether York could be prosecuted for criminal trespass or to determine if Gammon was justified in using force to end a trespass, Rushlau had said.

Gammon filed a notice of claim with the town in December 2014 indicating he intended to sue the community for more than \$150,000 in damages. York ran for re-election shortly afterward, in March 2015, and was defeated in a write-in campaign by former state representative Wes Richardson. In his lawsuit filed July 1, Gammon states that York came on his property to check on the status of a town snow plow. Gammon said York began yelling at him and then grabbed and bent back Gammon's thumb, tearing a ligament and damaging a tendon.

Last year, York's attorney Christopher MacLean, said Gammon punched York in the face without provocation. An email message sent Monday morning to MacLean was not immediately returned. Gammon is represented by attorneys Walter McKee and Matthew Morgan of Augusta.

The town is not named in the lawsuit. Warren Town Manager **William Lawrence** said Monday there has been no action against the town on the matter since the notice of claim was filed.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

https://knox.villagesoup.com/news/warren-names-new-town-manager/article_f814a6b0-7f15-5bb3-a4fc-a7c146d5a50c.html
May 2, 2016

Warren names new town manager

Author/Byline: Beth A. Birmingham

Chairman Arnold Hill said the Warren Board of Selectmen has chosen the new town manager. **William Lawrence** of Lincoln, who currently serves as manager of Howland, will assume the position June 1, taking over for Interim Town Manager Robin Bennett. Bennett's last day will be May 28, according to Hill.

Out of the eight applicants, the selection of **Lawrence** was unanimous. Bennett did not seek the position. The board made an agreement April 25, and **Lawrence** accepted the three-year contract at a salary of \$70,000. "All told, he [**Lawrence**] has about 30 years of municipal experience in different capacities," Hill said, which was a deciding factor.

"I am excited about Warren giving me this opportunity," **Lawrence** said in a phone interview. He said he feels this is the right move for him and his wife, Kathy. The couple have two grown children who reside in the Bangor area, along with several grandchildren, so they will not be too far away. "We are very familiar with Midcoast region," **Lawrence** said, adding he is looking forward to serving the people of Warren.

Lawrence served a six-month probationary period in Howland beginning in May of last year, and was retained as the town manager with a three-year contract extension at \$57,500, according to previous reports. He said it is bittersweet for him, as he has a great staff, but added that he feels he has more of an opportunity to help Warren through economic development and growth.

Lawrence served as town manager for the town of White Springs, Fla., from July 2014 to June 2015, before taking on his current position as town manager for Howland. Prior to that, he served in the same position in the town of Lincoln from June 2013 to July 2014. He was police chief for Lincoln for two years, and was a member of the Bangor Police Department for eight years.

Lawrence graduated from the University of Maine with an associate's degree in criminal justice and Maine Criminal Justice Academy's basic police school.

"I wish the best for the town of Warren," Bennett said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
February 6, 2016

Howland tannery site cleanup resumes as officials work to improve parcel

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr

With the cleanup of the former Howland tannery site resuming, town officials are starting to look toward applying for grants that would fund water and sewer service to the town-owned property in 2017, they said Friday. The cleanup of the site resumed Tuesday, a day after the Maine Department of Environmental Protection issued a permit allowing the removal of debris by contractors employed by the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, Town Manager **William Lawrence** said. "The trust and their subcontractor weren't going to move any further on the contract [for site cleanup] until those permits were in hand," **Lawrence** said Friday.

The trust is finishing the construction and cleanup of a fish bypass on the Penobscot and Piscataquis rivers with the goal of having that work completed by the summer. With that work finished, the town hopes to begin marketing the tannery land for development as a retail site, according to Glenn Brawn, chairman of the town Board of Selectmen.

Cleanup work stalled for several months because of a dispute between PRRT and town officials over the scope of the work and the lack of an appropriate permit, town officials have said. Town officials had argued that the massive mounds of dirt and other debris on the site were not their responsibility to remove. PRRT officials disagreed. A great deal for both sides rides on the successful conclusion of the project. They have worked together since 2008 to build the \$3.2 million fish bypass on land adjacent to the town-owned tannery site. Its access to Route 155, Interstate 95 and the rivers have made the site the centerpiece of town economic development efforts that began about 5½ years ago. The bypass, meanwhile, is part of trust plans to open nearly 1,000 miles of habitat to endangered Atlantic salmon, sturgeon and other species of migratory, sea-run fish.

Town officials hope to apply for federal Community Development Block Grant funds to pay to run the water and sewer service under the road near the site. A developer then would likely run the hookups to the service. A developer also could pay for the water and sewer service without the aid of grants. To qualify for block grants, the town would need to do an engineering study of the hookups, **Lawrence** said. Such studies cost several thousand dollars. The property already has three-phase electrical power, **Lawrence** said.

The site's section of Route 155 is the most trafficked in town, with about 6,000 cars passing it daily, according to an economic development study town officials had done. Town officials' next question is whether to consider relocating athletic fields on the other side of Route 155 to another location to further transform the area into a good site for retail or commercial development, Brawn said. Town officials are considering approaching SAU 31 officials or leaders in other towns either to use the schools' ballfields at Penobscot Valley High School of Howland or as part

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

of an exchange of services that would allow Howland and the other towns to save money by eliminating redundant services or sharing equipment, **Lawrence** and Brawn said.

Selectmen will discuss those ideas first. No dates for the discussion have been set, **Lawrence** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
October 10, 2015

Historic \$24 million Penobscot River project nearly finished

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Atlantic Ocean-based salmon, sturgeon, American shad and alewives will be able to find spawning grounds in northern Maine for the first time in more than a century with the culmination of a 16-year project next spring, officials said this week. Engineers have been testing the Howland fish bypass since water began flowing through it Sept. 28. They are confident it will be ready for spawning season, said Laura Rose Day, executive director of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust. "Fish will be swimming above Howland into waters this spring that they haven't been able to reach since the dams were put" on the river in the 1800s, Day said. "The moment of completion will be when everything is done in the spring, but this is the last piece to the puzzle to open fish passage from Penobscot Bay to the upper reaches of the Penobscot River, in particular the Piscataquis River watershed," she said.

Made up of a coalition of organizations, the restoration trust bought the Veazie, Great Works and Howland dams from PPL Corp. in December 2010 in a historic deal worth \$24 million. Under an agreement brokered in 2004, PPL in return gained authorization to increase power generation at six other dams along the river, entirely offsetting the generation losses incurred when the three dams were decommissioned. The bypass is part of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust's plan to open nearly 1,000 miles of habitat to at least 11 fish species, including several endangered types. Those species help support other commercially important species, such as cod and lobster. The Veazie Dam was breached in stages during several months in 2013. The Great Works Dam, which stretched across the Penobscot River from Bradley to Old Town, went down in 2012. The Howland Dam near the confluence of the Piscataquis and Penobscot rivers is bypassed and hasn't generated electricity in years. The trust began work on the project in 1999, Day said. Results from initial fish counts through the first two dam sites have been encouraging, she said.

The work has combined fairly well with town efforts to redevelop the town-owned site of a former tannery building adjacent to the bypass. Town officials are making good progress in negotiations to have the trust remove from the site large debris piles left by the project, Town Manager **William Lawrence** said. Some site cleanup has occurred in the last few weeks, **Lawrence** said. "We are not quite there yet, but we have made big progress," **Lawrence** said. "We have been coming to agreements on a lot of things."

Both sides are hopeful the town land, once the site of the town's largest employer, will be ready for commercial development in the summer. They also believe it will be a tourist attraction. "Howland has recognized that there is an opportunity here. I think people will be interested in leaving the highway [Interstate 95] to take a look at what this about," Day said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
August 28, 2015

Talks stall between Howland, river group over fill removal

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Negotiations between town officials and the Penobscot River Restoration Trust have broken down due to the trust's apparent failure to remove about 70 yards of fill from a town-owned site on Lagoon Lane, officials said Friday.

Town Manager **William Lawrence** said that talks between he and PRRT Executive Director Laura Rose Day have been broken off for more than a week. Town officials have turned the matter over to the town's attorney, Andrew Hamilton of the firm Eaton Peabody of Bangor, and will discuss it during the Board of Selectmen's meeting at 6 p.m. Monday, **Lawrence** said. "That's on our front burner," board Chairman Glenn Brawn said Friday. "It will be discussed."

Attempts to contact Day and Hamilton were unsuccessful. **Lawrence** said the nonprofit environmental group's officials believe they have not violated their agreement with the town to remove the fill, which was taken from the former Howland tannery site on Route 155. The fill, town officials said, leaves the Lagoon Lane land undevelopable. The trust had agreed to remove it by Aug. 7, **Lawrence** said.

The agenda for Monday's meeting does not list the topic. It lists an executive session with the town's attorney and selectmen's and town manager's reports. Town officials declined to identify the subject of the executive session.

A great deal rides for both sides on the successful conclusion of the project. They have worked together since 2008 to get the \$3.2 million fish bypass on land adjacent to the town-owned tannery site, which is at the confluence of the Penobscot and Piscataquis rivers. Due to its access to Route 155, Interstate 95 and the rivers, the site is the centerpiece of town economic development efforts that began five years ago. The bypass, meanwhile, is part of trust plans to open nearly 1,000 miles of habitat to endangered Atlantic salmon, sturgeon and other species of migratory, sea-run fish.

The Lagoon Lane and tannery sites must be cleared of all debris before the project concludes, **Lawrence** said. The PRRT timeline calls for bypass construction finishing this month, the clearing of at least part of the tannery site in October, and PRRT turning the site over to the town for development in 10 months, he said. "I am just hoping that we can hold them to their timeline because of our plans to develop the site," **Lawrence** said.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
July 9, 2015

Howland firefighters stay at post after threat to quit

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

After a new town manager was hired late last month, some local firefighters threatened to quit, but the town's fire department roster remains about the same, officials said Thursday. The number of firefighters on the Howland Fire Department roster is 26, with three more applications pending, interim Fire Chief Bob Thomas said. "We have only lost two people. We have had two more sign up and I have had interest from several others. We are in pretty good shape," Thomas said Thursday.

Fire Chief Phil Dawson and his brother Dwight eventually resigned, and nine volunteers who attended a Board of Selectmen's meeting June 8 said they were at least considering resigning from the department effective June 26, the week before the new town manager, **William Lawrence**, took office. Dawson, 59, tendered his resignation letter at a board meeting May 11 immediately after selectmen voted 4-1 to hire **Lawrence**, Lincoln's former town manager, to replace interim Town Manager Peggy Daigle July 1. **Lawrence** and Dawson, Lincoln's former fire chief, clashed when they served in Lincoln. Several of the volunteers who attended the June 8 meeting spoke favorably of Dawson but also said they did not want to leave the town's emergency services understaffed. The board voted June 9 to effectively accept Phil Dawson's resignation and also voted to appoint Thomas, an assistant chief, as interim fire chief.

Officials said they were glad that the department's roster remained essentially unchanged. In a state where the volunteer firefighter population is shrinking, volunteers are needed more than ever before, they said. The town runs an ambulance service, as well as a fire department.

Lawrence said he didn't see any immediate issues with the fire department. He is working instead on familiarizing himself with the town's financial workings and town office routine. "We are going through our year-end audits and I am following their methods of cash flow because every town is different. I am also learning the personalities of the staff and seeing how they conduct their business," **Lawrence** said Thursday. "Change is difficult for everybody, and it's a lot easier for me to learn their system right now" instead of imposing one on the staff.

Meanwhile, Thomas said he is working to expand the number of area fire departments Howland has mutual-aid contracts with beyond Lincoln, Passadumkeag and Seboeis. They have agreed to participate in Penobscot County-wide mutual aid and are working on contracts with LAGRANGE and Lowell, he said. Howland firefighters will meet at the station at 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 14, and will host an area fire chief's meeting at the station the next day at 6 p.m. People interested in becoming town firefighters are encouraged to attend, Thomas said.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
May 13, 2015

Howland hires new town manager, fire chief resigns in protest

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Moments after selectmen hired former Lincoln Town Manager **William Lawrence** to oversee Howland's government, fire chief Phil Dawson resigned in protest, officials said Wednesday. When the board voted 4-1 at a meeting Monday to hire **Lawrence**, Dawson immediately tendered his resignation, saying he was "adamantly opposed" to the hiring "because of past dealings [with **Lawrence**]," board Chairman Glenn Brawn said Wednesday. The two clashed when they served together in Lincoln, but Dawson said his resignation also resulted from his "frustration with this whole situation and basically on principle."

Selectmen on Friday "had advised town employees of their pending decision [to hire **Lawrence**] and the response I have heard of is largely negative. But despite that, the board has continued to move forward with the hiring process," Dawson said Wednesday. "Why ask the question if you are going to go do what you are going to do anyway?" "They [selectmen] are not listening to the employees, and there is plenty of opposition from the employees" against **Lawrence's** hiring, Dawson added. "I am concerned that his track record doesn't suggest that he is the best person that they could have found. His longevity anywhere in a job is questionable."

A police officer for more than 20 years, **Lawrence** has about three years of experience as a town manager and presently works as manager of White Springs, Florida, he said Wednesday. **Lawrence** impressed selectmen despite his lack of experience, Brawn said. "The board is not hiring **Bill Lawrence** on whether town employees like or dislike him. He is being hired based on the merits of his ability," Brawn said. The conflict between Dawson and **Lawrence** occurred in May 2013, when **Lawrence** was Lincoln's interim manager and Dawson resigned as Lincoln's fire chief. **Lawrence** had placed Dawson on administrative leave with pay the day before to investigate a potential conflict of interest, which Dawson denied.

The conflict claim arose after Lincoln and East Millinocket fire departments had agreed to start an ambulance service, replacing Penobscot Valley Hospital's service. Lincoln officials had learned Dawson, who served as Howland's fire chief at the same time he held the Lincoln chief's position, was negotiating with Millinocket fire officials possibly on Lincoln town time. Lincoln officials hoped Howland would join the communities being served by its new ambulance service. Dawson said he was negotiating ambulance service with Millinocket because Howland had no coverage. **Lawrence** never finished his ethics investigation because of Dawson's resignation. **Lawrence**, who left Lincoln in July 2014 to take his present job, said he has no animosity toward Dawson. "He has a clean state," **Lawrence** said of Dawson.

Selectmen haven't accepted Dawson's resignation. Brawn said **Lawrence** will serve a six-month probationary period before his salary will increase from \$56,000 to \$57,500 and his contract will

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be extended for three years. Selectman Will Lloyd said he voted against hiring **Lawrence** because he felt that the job search should have been more extensive.

Selectmen will discuss Dawson's resignation when they meet May 25. In the meantime, Brawn said, interim Town Manager Peggy Daigle will see whether Dawson will retract his resignation letter. The 59-year-old Dawson said he is reconsidering because many town firefighters and several residents have urged him to stay on. He has served as fire chief, earning a \$3,800 stipend in that position, for 19 of his 46 years as a member of the largely volunteer department. Brawn said whether to resign is "a personal choice for Phil, and I will accept his choice whatever it will be."

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jasper News, The (FL)
May 28, 2015

White Springs town manager resigns-Council at odds over interim manager replacement
Author/Byline: Joyce Marie Taylor

White Springs Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** submitted his resignation on Monday, May 18, and a special called meeting of the town council was held Wednesday, May 20, to discuss options to fill the vacancy. At the end of a lengthy and, at times, argumentative meeting, former town clerk Shirley Heath was selected to serve as interim town manager by a vote of 3-2 until the vacancy could be filled. **Lawrence** served as town manager for almost a year. He started July 19, 2014, and his last day at work, he said, will be June 19 with an official end of employment date of July 20. **Lawrence** said he was going back to his hometown in Maine where he has already accepted a job offer. He will be leaving at a critical time for the town of White Springs, as they will soon be in the midst of preparing their annual budget for the next fiscal year.

Mayor Rhett Bullard asked the council if they wanted to hire an interim town manager until a replacement could be found, and if there was anyone they wanted to reach out to. Before anyone could respond, Bullard said he had already spoken to three potential candidates; Shirley Heath, former town clerk, who retired in January 2014, former town manager Bob Farley, who served from January 2013 to June 2014 before retiring, and former town manager Robert Townsend who served as town manager for 11 years before being placed on paid administrative leave and then resigning when the town learned he was under investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

According to Bullard, Townsend would be out of town when **Lawrence** leaves, and Farley indicated he was interested, which Bullard said would be a good thing because he already knows how to do the job. Heath, he added, reached out to him on Facebook that she was interested and the two spoke on the phone the previous evening.

Vice Mayor Walter McKenzie interjected that he thought the town council needed to fix a broken system first before advertising for a new town manager because the current employment package isn't enough to bring someone in who will actually stay a while. He suggested they schedule a workshop to discuss the matter. "I understand we're on a tight budget... but we've got to figure out a way to where we can get somebody onboard so that we won't be sitting here in another 18 months," McKenzie said. He added that bringing in an experienced town manager like Farley would be good for the town, and bringing Heath in would keep things going but not growing.

Bullard noted that Farley and Heath are both retired and would not have to be on the town's insurance policy, which would save money. Councilwoman Tonja Brown, Councilman Willie Jefferson and Bullard all said that Heath's 19 years of experience working for the town, being involved with the budget and her experience serving as interim manager would make her the best

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

candidate. “I think it kind of tilts more favorable to Heath than Farley, based on the fact that she has been here for that long a period of time,” said Bullard. “I didn’t know until she told me... I guess she was the interim manager when I got elected, but when you first get elected you’re not even sure what’s going on, so it’s easy to forget stuff.”

McKenzie recalled when Farley was let go from his job in Live Oak before coming to White Springs, and he said a lot of people in Live Oak confided in him. “They said, ‘you were lucky to get him and we were sorry to lose him,’” said McKenzie. White Springs resident Nichole “Nikki” Williams was in the audience and stated her opinion.

Williams said, “Even though we all love Ms. Shirley (Heath)... she did a wonderful job at what she was doing, but if Farley is more qualified... and evidently you felt like that before because you previously hired him for that position... if he has a little more qualification and he is technically qualified to be a town manager, it would seem more feasible to me that he would be the one that you would put in that position until you can search and find a permanent one. That’s just me speaking as a citizen using logical thinking, not just because somebody is more friendly,” she added.

Bullard asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to hire either Heath or Farley, but McKenzie interrupted, stating he would like an opportunity to interview the two of them first before voting. Councilwoman Helen Miller agreed, but Brown said it would be a waste of time because they already know both candidates. Bullard noted that Heath was the only one who had experience as an interim town manager on two separate occasions. “I think you have to give it to that person that was here nearly 20 years and actually served in that capacity versus a person who was only here a year,” said Bullard. “At the end of the day, too, you are bringing a familiar face into town hall with the residents of the town and they’ll see somebody that is coming back in just on a temporary basis, then they’ll see somebody they have known for many years... maybe that has some value, maybe it doesn’t,” he added.

McKenzie said the interviews were necessary in order to ask the candidates questions, such as how many hours they could work, what salary they wanted, and how long they would commit to staying on until a replacement town manager can be selected, and that only Bullard had spoken to the two candidates. Bullard said both candidates said they would stay as long as necessary.

Miller asked if Heath and Farley would qualify for the town manager position if they applied. Bullard said, “I think they’d both be on the short list, most assuredly.” McKenzie again said he’d like to interview both candidates first so that he could make a more informed decision. Bullard said the interim manager, aside from putting out the daily fires, would be concentrating on the town manager search and doing the budget.

Jefferson made a motion to hire Heath as interim town manager and it was seconded by Brown. McKenzie said a third time that he wanted to interview Heath and Farley first. The motion to hire

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Heath as interim town manager passed by a vote of 3-2 with Miller and McKenzie voting against.

Salary

The next discussion concerned Heath's salary. Finance Director Pam Tomlinson said that after paying **Lawrence** what was due him, including vacation and unused sick time, there would be about \$9,200 left in the budget to pay Heath for 14 weeks until the next fiscal year's budget is set. "That would give you approximately a salary of \$660 a week," said Tomlinson.

McKenzie said since both Farley and Heath are retired and neither one needs health insurance through the town, the council missed out on an opportunity to talk to them first and see if they would work for less than \$660 per week.

Jefferson made a motion that Bullard speak with Heath to work out the salary issue to see if she will work for less in order to save the town some money or if she would like the \$660 a week salary. McKenzie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Attorney Fred Koberlein advised Bullard that another meeting needed to be scheduled for the council to approve Heath's acceptance of the position and at what salary, as well as a start date. He also suggested that **Lawrence** get started on a request for proposals for the town manager position and specify a 30-day deadline.

Miller interjected that she would appreciate being notified of future town meetings. She said she did not receive notice of this particular meeting because it was sent to her old e-mail address that has been closed out for about two years. She also said she wasn't notified about a previous meeting concerning the nature and heritage center closing because **Lawrence** misspelled her name in the e-mail address. Jefferson made another motion that **Lawrence** immediately get a help wanted ad posted at the Florida League of Cities noting that the town manager salary would be negotiable, which passed unanimously. A notice was sent out via e-mail on Thursday, May 21, that a special called meeting of the White Springs Town Council would be held at town hall on Tuesday, May 26 at 6:30 p.m. to ratify/accept Heath as interim town manager.

On May 23, Heath sent an e-mail to the Jasper News with the following statement: "I am looking forward to working with Mayor Bullard, the council and staff during this transition period. I will be continuing with the current manager, **Bill Lawrence** and councils vision and plans for White Springs. I am excited to again serve the citizens of White Springs." At the May 26 meeting, the council voted 4-1 to accept Heath as interim town manager beginning June 16 for a weekly salary of \$660 with no benefits until a new manager can be found. Miller, who opposed the motion, read a long letter prior to the vote that detailed why she was in support of Farley being selected rather than Heath, according to **Lawrence**.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
May 13, 2015

Howland hires new town manager, fire chief resigns in protest

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

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The two clashed when they served together in Lincoln, but Dawson said his resignation also resulted from his "frustration with this whole situation and basically on principle." Selectmen on Friday "had advised town employees of their pending decision [to hire **Lawrence**] and the response I have heard of is largely negative. But despite that, the board has continued to move forward with the hiring process," Dawson said Wednesday. "Why ask the question if you are going to go do what you are going to do anyway?" "They [selectmen] are not listening to the employees, and there is plenty of opposition from the employees" against **Lawrence's** hiring, Dawson added. "I am concerned that his track record doesn't suggest that he is the best person that they could have found. His longevity anywhere in a job is questionable."

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The conflict claim arose after Lincoln and East Millinocket fire departments had agreed to start an ambulance service, replacing Penobscot Valley Hospital's service. Lincoln officials had learned Dawson, who served as Howland's fire chief at the same time he held the Lincoln chief's position, was negotiating with Millinocket fire officials possibly on Lincoln town time. Lincoln officials hoped Howland would join the communities being served by its new ambulance service. Dawson said he was negotiating ambulance service with Millinocket because Howland had no coverage.

Lawrence never finished his ethics investigation because of Dawson's resignation. **Lawrence**, who left Lincoln in July 2014 to take his present job, said he has no animosity toward Dawson.

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"He has a clean state," **Lawrence** said of Dawson. Selectmen haven't accepted Dawson's resignation. Brawn said **Lawrence** will serve a six-month probationary period before his salary will increase from \$56,000 to \$57,500 and his contract will be extended for three years. Selectman Will Lloyd said he voted against hiring **Lawrence** because he felt that the job search should have been more extensive.

Selectmen will discuss Dawson's resignation when they meet May 25. In the meantime, Brawn said, interim Town Manager Peggy Daigle will see whether Dawson will retract his resignation letter. The 59-year-old Dawson said he is reconsidering because many town firefighters and several residents have urged him to stay on. He has served as fire chief, earning a \$3,800 stipend in that position, for 19 of his 46 years as a member of the largely volunteer department. Brawn said whether to resign is "a personal choice for Phil, and I will accept his choice whatever it will be."

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Suwannee Democrat (Live Oak, FL)
February 26, 2015

White Springs town manager declines raise

Author/Byline: Joyce Marie Taylor

White Springs Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** advised the town council on Tuesday, Feb. 10, that he was declining the salary increase that is due him after completing his first 180 days of employment, which was spelled out in his employment agreement, but unfortunately not budgeted for. “When we worked together and agreed to offer the employment package to **Bill Lawrence**, we did say that in six months we would do a review and offer an increase in salary, based on performance,” Mayor Helen Miller said to the other council members.

Finance Director/Town Clerk Pam Tomlinson offered a recommendation, noting that they had a very tight budget when negotiations were completed for the current fiscal year. However, she said they had some savings from the COPS grant that was extended of about \$5,200. “That would help to give **Lawrence** an increase of \$5,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year,” said Tomlinson. “To do that, we would need approximately \$3,600.”

Miller noted the \$3,600 would be the pro-rated amount that would be given to **Lawrence** for the remainder of the fiscal year. “That would be my recommendation,” Tomlinson said. “I would like to add that it has been a pleasure working with **Lawrence** these past six months. He’s a very professional gentleman and he’s honest. It’s been a pleasure working with you and for you,” she told **Lawrence**.

Lawrence was visibly humbled and asked to make a comment. “We didn’t budget for my raise,” he said. “I do appreciate this and I do appreciate the comments, but to take this money from what I think is a line item for the police department...” he added, trailing off and shaking his head.

Miller interrupted and stated that the money would in no way conflict with the COPS grant fund allocation. “If you don’t feel good about taking an increase in salary, we won’t feel bad about not giving it to you,” said Councilman Rhett Bullard, which drew laughter from everyone. Even **Lawrence** laughed and said, “You didn’t let me finish.”

Lawrence again said he was appreciative that the town thought he was doing a good job and was deserving of the raise, but he said he didn’t think it was right to accept it since it wasn’t budgeted for. “For me to get a raise and not the other employees to get a raise, is tough for me to accept,” he said. He suggested that an across the board raise for all the staff utilizing the extra funds would be more acceptable to him because they didn’t get a raise this year. “You can do with it what you want, but that’s how I feel,” said **Lawrence**.

Councilman Willie Jefferson said he agreed with **Lawrence** that the money should be divided among all the employees and he made a motion as such, which was seconded by Councilwoman

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Tonja Brown. After some discussion about whether or not the other town employees felt comfortable with accepting a proportionate raise from those funds, Bullard interjected that it needed to be accepted by the town's citizens. He noted that earlier in the meeting it was brought up that a fire hydrant on CR 25A was not working and in need of repairs that would cost about \$4,800.

“So, now that fire hydrant is going to stay not working, but we're going to give a salary increase to everybody at town hall,” said Bullard. “So, when there is a house that catches on fire on CR 25A and we can't service them for the service that they're paying for, I want us to remember that.”

Bullard said he thought public safety was more important than giving out raises. After even more discussion, including the possibility of obtaining a safety grant to repair the hydrant, it was agreed to table the previous motion and move forward with **Lawrence** trying to find an alternative way to repair the hydrant before voting on what to do about his salary increase. Miller thanked **Lawrence** for putting the welfare of the town ahead of his own needs.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
November 4, 2014

Lincoln names new town manager

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Town Cemetery, Parks and Recreation Director Ron Weatherbee is Lincoln's new town manager, officials said Tuesday. The Town Council voted 7-0 on Monday to upgrade Weatherbee from interim to full-time manager with a \$65,000 salary, Town Council Chairman Steve Clay said.

Weatherbee was named Lincoln's interim town manager on July 21. Weatherbee, who earned \$47,146 as parks and rec director, received an additional \$288 weekly stipend for his interim role, officials have said.

"During the last few months, it hasn't been the easiest of times with the town office issues and all, and he has done a pretty good job throughout that," Clay said Tuesday of Weatherbee. "We just thought he deserved a shot at the full-time job. He is well known and respected throughout the community. [Weatherbee's hiring] gives people in town someone they can look to that they trust and have confidence in."

Weatherbee replaces Town Manager **William Lawrence**, who resigned effective July 11 to take a job in Florida. **Lawrence**, who was paid \$71,500 when he left the post here, said he had hopes of retiring within a few years in Florida, where his wife's family resides. He also said he was resigning because he felt some councilors were micromanaging. Councilor Dede Trask denied the accusation.

Hired as Lincoln's police chief in April 2011, **Lawrence** was named town manager at a salary of \$70,000 in June 2013. He had served as interim manager twice before. Weatherbee did not immediately return a telephone message left Tuesday.

Twenty people applied for the town manager's job, Clay said. Among Weatherbee's first tasks, Clay said, would be the restart of the search for a new town office. The new town manager also will have to deal with the results of a referendum vote Tuesday on whether to widen West Broadway.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Suwannee Democrat (Live Oak, FL)
September 18, 2014

White Springs crunching the numbers

Author/Byline: Joyce Marie Taylor

The town of White Springs, like many other government entities are doing around this time of year, has been holding budget workshops in preparation for hearings and final budget approval for the next fiscal year. The first workshop was held Aug. 19, and a second one was scheduled for Aug. 26, but due to advice from counsel that reasonable notice was not given to the public, the workshop was rescheduled for Friday, Aug. 29.

Council member, Mayor Helen Miller, stated, “White Springs’ budget, like any household budget, is a delicate balance between income and costs, and never easy to attain. For White Springs, much of its potential revenue is lost to adjacent cities and counties where our residents spend their monies for clothing, household items, vehicles and medical care.” To achieve a meaningful balanced budget without drastically reducing services or increasing taxes, Miller said, White Springs needs to broaden its tax base in a manner that creates employment opportunities for its citizenship. “This means taking full advantage of Florida’s Department of Economic Opportunity and other agencies’ support for infrastructure improvements and entrepreneurial ventures,” she added.

Aug. 19 workshop

At the Aug. 19 workshop Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** advised the council that there is \$246,434 less revenue for the upcoming year than was anticipated. The budget for the upcoming fiscal year is \$1.1 million, down from last year’s \$1.3 million. Cuts were made everywhere and his main concern was not having enough cash flow to meet debt obligations. Additionally, because water and sewer rates had not been adjusted over the years as they should have been, he did not recommend lowering those rates. The alternative, he intimated, was that property taxes would have to be increased.

Suggestions were made by council members for ways to increase revenue, such as lowering the community center rental rate, which might allow more people to utilize it. However, it was noted that parking was an issue and perhaps another reason why it wasn’t rented out more often. Another suggestion was to find more cell tower rentals to generate more revenue. It was also suggested that the old town hall rental facilities be added to the budget. It was noted that the town’s portion of the local option fuel tax revenue generated by Love’s Truck Stop has helped the budget.

Town Attorney Fred Koberlein requested an addition to the budget to cover the cost of two interns to revise the old Land Development Regulation manual, which would be a line item increase of \$2,500. For the police department, insurance has decreased for the department as a whole, due to changes in personnel. The fire department continues to cause concern as the largest

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

cut to their budget was to capital outlay, which the department had been operating off of. Those reserves have diminished and there is no carry-over as in the past. Funds have been requested to add to the budget for animal control to take care of stray dogs, and a line item for mosquito spraying was removed because that function is provided by the county.

Aug. 29 workshop

Lawrence added a breakdown of salaries and benefits for town employees, and accurate insurance quotes, along with a breakdown of fire department monies. Some of the fire department funds are not being included in the operating budget upon advice from counsel, **Lawrence** explained, but they will be available for viewing from the public. The council again went over the budgets for all of the departments and there was much discussion on each, as well as suggestions to come up with a balanced budget.

There were a couple of items that garnered a lot of discussion, one being Police Chief Tracy Rodriquenz taking the company vehicle home with her to Jacksonville where she resides. That benefit was included in her \$34,500 package when she was offered the job. Vice Mayor Walter McKenzie said if they took that benefit away from Rodriquenz, “we’d be setting ourselves up to put the position in jeopardy.” “We’ve got a good chief with years of experience, is well accepted throughout the community, and her package is not overpaid,” McKenzie said. Miller added, “In addition, she has recruited an excellent police force and it’s a team we’re looking at, as well.” **Lawrence**, a former police officer, explained that the police chief is basically on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so he saw no issue with her taking the car home with her. “It’s part of the job,” he said.

A second item that evoked even more discussion was whether or not the town intended to lower sewer rates. Some of the council members seemed adamant about lowering rates, but **Lawrence** reminded them that if they cut sewer revenue, then they would have to make even more cuts to other departments to the tune of about \$18,000. **Lawrence** said the budget was already down to the bare bones and it would be difficult to make any more cuts without raising property taxes.

In the end, **Lawrence** said the balanced budget summary reflected \$1,157,584, down from last year, and is based on projected revenue being down. “Obviously, our goal will be to look at many different ways of increasing revenue,” said **Lawrence**. “We’re doing that almost every day.

First budget hearing

On Tuesday, Sept. 9, the first budget hearing was held, just prior to the regular council meeting. The first reading of the tentative budget ordinance reflected \$691,224 in the general fund and \$590,986 in the Enterprise fund for a total budget amount of \$1,282,210. Additionally, Miller announced a proposed millage rate of 6.0 mils shown in the TRIM notice and **Lawrence** proposed a millage rate of 4.3691, which is the rolled back rate for 2014. The meeting was recessed until Sept. 15.

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Sept. 15 budget hearing continuation

On Monday, Sept. 15, **Lawrence** advised council members that appropriations for the general fund were reduced to \$677,212 and the Enterprise funds were reduced to \$572,466.

Lawrence noted that the new proposed budget reflected a decrease that would allow water/sewer rates to decrease, and that there are no funds left for capital projects for the upcoming fiscal year, which will put the existing five-year capital budget behind schedule. The budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year is \$1,249,678, which will take effect Oct. 1, and end Sept. 30, 2015. An ordinance stating as such passed on the first reading. **Lawrence** also noted that the town has just applied for a \$187,000 grant for road and drainage improvements.

The final budget hearing is set for Sept. 23, at 6:30 p.m. at town hall and the board will cast their final votes on the millage rate and the budget for 2014-15.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
July 28, 2014

Lincoln leaders see \$1.8 million road-widening project as investment in local economy
Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Voters will decide in November whether to approve allocating \$1.2 million to widen much of West Broadway no sooner than 2016 as part of a \$1.8 million plan, town officials said Monday.

The Maine Department of Transportation is in the process of signing a letter of understanding that would allow the state to pay \$600,000 of the \$1.8 million bond. Town leaders hope to raise the rest of the money without using local tax funds, said Ruth Birtz, the town's economic development coordinator. The road widening would establish a center turning lane from the Hannaford Supermarket lot to River and Transalpine roads. It covers about a mile of West Broadway, which is one of the town's main business arteries. Town officials see the project as a job and business creator that will broaden Lincoln's appeal as a service hub to the Lincoln Lakes and Katahdin regions, Birtz said.

The widening would effectively free about 254 acres for business development along West Broadway and near Transalpine while making the road safer, said David Cole, a former Maine DOT commissioner who is helping Lincoln officials with the project as a private consultant with David Cole Consulting of Brewer. "It really is the development corridor of Lincoln," Cole said of West Broadway. "If you look around at Lincoln at the other corridors leading into the community, there isn't a lot of land available for development. They have been developed." "If you look to development for the next 30 years, that would seem to be your development corridor. Traffic has increased to the point where it has become a burden for developers to get access to the highway," he said.

The mile of road that would be widened has about 107 acres of business development representing about \$13.5 million in investments and drawing about \$250,000 in taxes to Lincoln annually. The businesses employ 667 people. An equal rate of investment on the 254 acres could spur more economic development. Developers could pay the road widening costs themselves but have balked because the traffic impact fees range as high as \$250,000 -- too much for them to pay individually, Birtz and Cole said.

Town officials hope to use tax-increment financing funds drawn from an agreement with Lincoln Paper and Tissue LLC, state aid and grants, and interest from town investments, Birtz said. "The town of Lincoln does not have a history of sitting back and waiting for [economic development] things to happen, yet we have to always be watchful for our taxpayers that we don't have increases in mill rates like we had last year," Birtz said Monday. The Town Council awaits comment from the town's attorney on the referendum question that will go on the November ballot. Treasurer Melissa Quintela is also beginning to assemble the financing package for the road work for councilors to review, Birtz said.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The plan was among several economic development initiatives former Town Manager **William Lawrence** helped start.

Voters should support the initiative, council Chairman Steve Clay said. "I think it is very important because any business in the future that wants to go in on West Broadway will have to pay quite a [traffic] impact fee, which discouraged them from investing out there," Clay said Monday.

The project design and engineering process would take about a year to complete before construction could start, Birtz said.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
July 2, 2014

Lawrence to resign as Lincoln's town manager, will take Florida job

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Town Manager **William Lawrence** will resign effective July 11 to take a municipal government job in Florida, he said Wednesday. **Lawrence**, 58, said the job in Florida, which he declined to describe, was difficult to resist. He had hopes of retiring in Florida, where his wife's family resides, within a few years. Hired as Lincoln's police chief in April 2011, **Lawrence** was named town manager at a salary of \$70,000 in June 2013. He had served as interim manager twice before.

"It gets us closer to our dream of retirement," **Lawrence** said Wednesday. "It's bittersweet for me. I didn't come back to Lincoln originally to be town manager. I had five- and 10-year plans and I am obviously quite shy of that. We are thinking about retirement and have the opportunity to get down there sooner." "We still have projects in the works," **Lawrence** said of town officials. "My concern would be that they would go to the wayside, but I would hope that somebody would carry them forward."

Lawrence said that "constant criticism" from some Town Council members also motivated him to leave. He called it his "only frustration" with the job. He declined to identify his critics or provide details but said "it is hard to play offense when you are constantly playing defense." "It is basically constant criticism, I guess, by some individuals. Nitpicking. It is hard to move a town forward when you're facing that," **Lawrence** added. "Some individuals want to operate town government like it was years ago instead of where it is today."

Council Chairman Steve Clay said he knew "of a few issues" where councilors seemed to press **Lawrence** hard but "I am not going to get into it. That's a tough question to answer about somebody else," he said. "I think it [**Lawrence's** resignation] is a big loss to Lincoln. He was well-liked throughout the community," Clay added. "On each issue, **Bill** hit it head on. As the problems came up, he didn't run away from them. If he didn't know the answer, he would find the answer. He would be honest. If he didn't know [an answer] he would tell you." "He had contacts all over the state that were used to our advantage and I just hope that we could keep these things up when he is gone," Clay added.

Lawrence has tackled large projects and handled some delicate personnel issues during his tenure as manager. Two town government department heads resigned and a public safety director was hired to replace him as chief. **Lawrence** said he would hope to see town government continue with the proposals he has been nurturing:

-- The widening of West Broadway for a new center turning lane that would run between Penobscot Valley Avenue and the Hannaford shopping center. A project town officials have been

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

handling with the Maine Department of Transportation, the widening would allow 10 more business lots onto West Broadway, which with Main Street is the town's largest business thoroughfare.

The widening project should be ready for a November referendum vote. Cost estimates aren't yet available. **Lawrence** said the project's approval would spare businesses Maine DOT traffic impact fees ranging from \$70 to \$250,000 depending on the size of the business. "In the past we lost out on development because they [prospective investors in Lincoln] refused to pay the impact fees," **Lawrence** said.

A Dunkin' Donuts and S.W. Collins hardware store under construction on West Broadway and Penobscot Valley Avenue almost didn't open due to the issue. The new lane would allow traffic to expand from its current average of 10,000 vehicles per day to 18,000 vehicles without incurring impact fees, **Lawrence** said.

-- The creation of a shared East Millinocket-Lincoln ambulance service. Started in June 2013, the service nets Lincoln about \$70,000 annually in revenue that pays firefighter salaries and equipment costs. Firefighters have disputed that all the revenue goes to them. It is by far the largest revenue-producer Lincoln government has, **Lawrence** said.

-- A \$7.5 million natural-gas pipeline being installed from near Interstate 95's Exit 227 along River Road through Chester to West Broadway and the Lincoln Paper and Tissue LLC mill. Phase One connecting the mill is expected to be completed by this fall. Several ensuing phases would allow gas service to West Broadway and downtown-area residents, officials have said.

-- The cutting of the town's \$4.2 million municipal budget for 2014-15 to \$3.68 million to save taxpayers from the impact of the layoff of about 200 workers from Lincoln Paper late last year. The town's property tax rate should decline from \$22.96 to \$22.86 with the budget when the rate is set in the fall.

Lawrence has warned that unless its economic fortunes improve, Lincoln could face significant cuts to town services next year. "You just don't start it [initiatives] and see what happens. They have to be constantly worked before you see any kind of positive results," he added. Town officials are considering hiring an interim town manager to replace **Lawrence**, Clay said. The council will discuss the idea at its meeting on July 14.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jasper News, The (FL)
June 26, 2014

White Springs selects new town manager

Author/Byline: Joyce Marie Taylor

The town of White Springs announced that **William R. Lawrence** accepted the position of town manager on Friday, June 20, with a beginning salary of \$48,000, plus benefits. The announcement comes at the conclusion of a four-month search process that included two separate job postings and interview sessions. **Lawrence** will be relocating from Lincoln, ME, where he served as town manager, personnel director and economic development director. His first day on the job will be on or about July 21.

“The town council was impressed with **Lawrence's** management experience, communication skills, understanding of team dynamics, and his sincere appreciation of the hardships experienced by seniors on a fixed income who are struggling to make ends meet in the face of rising costs for basic necessities,” said Mayor Helen Miller. “Many communities in Maine and the surrounding northern states are experiencing economic dislocations due to the movement offshore of traditional industries,” she added.

Miller said **Lawrence's** experience, as well as his efforts in implementing new economic strategies in Lincoln will be welcomed in White Springs. “The community will soon begin the process of implementing its own asset-based strategic economic development strategy based on its efforts as part of the Competitive Florida Partnership pilot program,” Miller said. “The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and the town of White Springs are in the process of planning a "next steps" meeting for early August.”

Lawrence said he was drawn to White Springs because of its historic charm and natural resources, as well as the town’s efforts to revitalize the local economy for the benefit of all residents, young and old.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
May 6, 2014

Howland, Lincoln leaders looking to start joint sharing agreement of services, save money together

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

The leaders of Howland and Lincoln are putting together a list of services, training efforts or products they can share or buy in bulk to save taxpayer money, officials said Tuesday. Lincoln Town Manager **William Lawrence** and Howland Town Manager Tracey Hutton met Friday to exchange ideas after **Lawrence** and Lincoln Town Council Chairman Steve Clay went to a Howland Board of Selectmen's meeting on April 28 at Howland leaders' request, **Lawrence** said.

Both towns want to save money, Clay said. "If we can work with any town, and it benefits each town, then yeah, I think we should," Clay said Tuesday. "The times economically are not good right now, and any time we can save money, then definitely we should."

A joint sharing agreement of governmental services would be a first in the Lincoln Lakes region but it does exist in other areas. East Millinocket, Medway and Millinocket share the services of a code enforcement officer and recreation department. East Millinocket police and ambulance services serve Medway, and Millinocket schools share some arts, education and sports efforts, with efforts underway to share more.

Other Katahdin region efforts, such as school consolidation, have been stalled for lack of political will, officials have said. No one in Howland or Lincoln is discussing anything so vast as school consolidation, merely such things as bulk purchasing of common supplies or joint firefighter training, said Clay and Glenn Brawn, chairman of Howland's Board of Selectmen. "There has not really been an open dialogue. We were just trying to shore that up and be willing to explore any ideas that could benefit both communities," Brawn said. "One of the big things is that we can save money in joint ventures -- bulk purchases or anything that we can come up with. Hopefully they have some ideas. Any EMT and fire training that can be done jointly is a big plus. It makes it easier in an joint situation, I would think."

Lincoln and Howland leaders agreed that the first step is to find sharing efforts that would not cost either town anything, **Lawrence** said. "If there is a cost, right now, it's probably not a good idea," **Lawrence** said.

Both towns expect state aid declines, and Lincoln has been working toward cutting \$600,000 from its municipal government budget to offset an expected loss in tax revenue from Lincoln Paper and Tissue LLC caused by an explosion last fall that destroyed a mill boiler. The town Budget Committee and town officials have cut about \$569,000 to lower the town's budget to about \$3.8 million municipal budget. That process is not finished, **Lawrence** said. "It's a lot of

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money, and if this continues next year, I am concerned that we would be talking about the elimination of departments," **Lawrence** said.

"Howland is going through its budget right now. Unfortunately, it will be up from where it was," Brawn said. "Being a hard winter and having some [unexpectedly harsh] winter conditions, it taxed our budget really hard. We have had to increase it in some ways." Brawn said some selectmen hope to meet with Lincoln councilors at the Lincoln Town Council meeting on May 12. No agenda has been set, Clay said. **Lawrence** said it would be more likely that they will meet June 2.

Howland and Lincoln have a mutual aid agreement in place between fire departments and Penobscot Valley Hospital. Lincoln held a large-scale disaster drill on Saturday in which Howland was among the departments participating.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
May 6, 2014

Lincoln bracing for possible layoff of firefighters, clerks as budget process continues

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Lincoln's town government would lay off four workers, including two firefighters, and leave two positions unfilled under a \$3.8 million municipal budget being compiled, officials said Tuesday. The firefighters, a part-time library clerk and another part-time town clerk would be laid off. An empty police officer's position and an unfilled part-time library clerk's position would be left unfilled, Town Manager **William Lawrence** said.

Lawrence said that while the budget process is incomplete, he wanted to caution residents to expect longer lines in the town office and library and possibly see slower response times from police and firefighters should the cuts be affirmed by the Town Council next month. "It is not a great situation, but it can be done. When you reduce a budget like this, you do have the potential for a reduction of services," **Lawrence** said Tuesday. "The reduced response times [with police and firefighters] might not happen, I don't know, but it could." "Lincoln is on good, solid financial ground, and we want to keep it that way," he added. "With our reserve and investment accounts in good shape, we don't want to go to the till and drain those accounts. We are trying to protect those and keep services intact."

If left unfilled, the empty police position would leave one officer patrolling Lincoln on most nights. Public Safety Director Dan Summers could offset the loss with part-time officers. State police and Penobscot County Sheriff's Department deputies also ride through town and assist town police on calls regularly, **Lawrence** said. The two cut firefighter positions would leave only one firefighter on duty during some shifts. Call-in firefighters could offset that, he said. The Lincoln Budget Committee, a subcommittee of the council, is due to hold its last of a monthlong series of public hearings at 6 p.m. Thursday. The council will discuss the budget at 6 p.m. June 2, with a budget vote later that month. That vote has not been scheduled.

Reserve accounts, which the town sets aside for purchases or emergencies, contain about \$400,000. The town's capital projects reserve account, which addresses large projects such as the Public Works Department garage built in 2012, has \$224,500, Treasurer Melissa Quintela said. At **Lawrence's** direction, town officials have worked since February to cut \$600,000 from the town's \$4.3 million 2013-14 budget. As of Tuesday, administrators have cut \$487,000, and the budget committee suggests cutting \$76,000 more for a total of \$563,000 in cuts, Quintela said. Budget committee members also are considering recommending the usage of some reserve funds to offset some of the cuts, Quintela said, but exactly how much that will be remains unclear. "The \$600,000 is just a goal. That doesn't mean that we are going to use the reserve accounts to make up the difference," she said.

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Lawrence said he would prefer to leave the reserve accounts untouched. "When you drain those accounts, you can have a low mill rate for a few years, but if you are faced with a real emergency [afterward], you can see your mill rate jump right up again and be in real trouble," **Lawrence** said.

The town's mill rate increased in October from \$19.86 per \$1,000 of valuation to \$22.96 -- about \$155 on properties worth \$50,000 -- in response to declines in the town's total valuation and an increase in the town's budget.

Lawrence set the \$600,000 goal to offset the impact upon residents of 200 layoffs at the Lincoln Paper and Tissue LLC mill in December. A boiler explosion in November and the loss of a tissue contract to an Indonesian firm caused the job loss. **Lawrence** said he also expected a reduction of state revenue sharing with municipalities, which has been the trend for the last several years.

Lincoln leaders also have tackled the threat of dwindling population and businesses in the wake of the layoffs. They are working with Northern Penobscot Tech on marketing videos, building recreational trails, working to develop joint purchasing and service-sharing arrangements with Howland, supporting the installation of a \$7.5 million natural gas pipeline and associated worker retraining, increasing town trash fees residents pay, and working with Bangor officials to attract and retain 20- and 30-somethings regionally.

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William R. Lawrence
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Bangor Daily News (ME)
February 25, 2014

Wanted: Young people in Lincoln -- Town manager's plan aims to attract, retain 20-somethings

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Kayla Lingley moved to Lincoln about a month and a half ago and the 20-year-old nanny says she plans on moving out again as soon as she can. Her reason: For people her age, there's nothing to do in Lincoln. "I am moving away because of the lack of stuff here," Lingley said Tuesday as she shopped at Marden's on Main Street. "I moved here because their [the children she watches] family is from here. But there's nothing really here. It's just stores to shop in. There's no movies or places to hang out at for people my age."

Input like Lingley's will be the centerpiece of a multipoint plan that town officials will begin implementing over the next several weeks, said Lincoln Town Manager **William Lawrence**. Basing his initiative on news accounts that show northern Maine is losing its young people, **Lawrence** said he wants to refocus some town programs and create some new initiatives, including informally polling town teens and 20-somethings to see what the community lacks for younger residents.

And he wants to see if the town can gear more activities toward drawing and retaining those folks. **Lawrence** also wants students in the video production class at Northern Penobscot Tech to put together marketing videos on why young people such as themselves should come to or remain in Lincoln. "With the situation with the mill, the time is right. Some of these things we have done anyway or already have going," **Lawrence** said. "Along with those problems that we have been attacking, instead of sitting here wondering what is going to happen to us, we are asking, what else can we do? What other points can we address?"

Council members have approved **Lawrence's** town government initiatives, he said. They include:

- Obtain feedback from youth organizations on what it would take to keep them home and encourage youth participation in local government such as Town Council meetings.
- Expand the use of social media and explore recruitment of residents and businesses beyond Maine.
- Promote a culture of opportunity by hosting "how to start a business" workshops through Penquis Cap and Northern Penobscot Tech-Region III of Lincoln and working with Region III on workforce development.
- Create a video series, "Why live, work and visit Lincoln" and post it on the town website, Facebook and YouTube.
- Expand the exercise trail systems to be built near Mattanawcook Academy, the town's snowmobile and ATV trails, and the town's art, music and food festivals to include job fairs, festivals, road races, tournaments and shows.

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William R. Lawrence
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-- Promote Lincoln as a government and public safety training destination and widening West Broadway to draw more business there.

According to the 2010 Census, Lincoln's median age is 40.3 years, about three years younger than Maine's median age, 43.5 years. The census shows that of Lincoln's 5,085 residents, 3,911 were age 18 and older. The largest single segment, 1,092, was 50 to 64 years old. The number of people ages 20 to 34 was 770. There were 244 people between ages 20 to 24. **Lawrence's** list echoes Bangor City Council Chairman Ben Sprague's 38-point population growth strategy list, which Sprague issued Feb. 1. That list also combined recreation, entertainment and economic development initiatives geared toward attracting and retaining young people. Lincoln Town Councilor Curt Ring, a guidance counselor at the Lincoln-based Region III school who suggested the town use tech students to do the documentaries, likes **Lawrence's** initiative but said it would likely be cut back somewhat by a lack of finances.

Since the Lincoln Paper and Tissue LLC paper mill laid off 200 workers in December, **Lawrence** and town department managers have been working to cut as much as \$600,000 or 15 percent of the town government's \$4.3 million municipal services budget effective July 1. "I think it is a wish list. If I had my way, this [list] is what I would do, too, but I think that we have to be careful. Anything we can do for nothing or very little money, I think we have to do it," Ring said. "We can sit here and continue to pretend that the status quo is working for us or we can take action, instead of resting on successes of the past. Those days are over. We need to look to the future."

The council might draw money from the economic development reserve funds culled from its Tax Increment Financing agreement with LPT, Ring said. The council will meet at Northern Penobscot Tech on March 10 to review the student video production program, Ring said. **Lawrence** said he expects that town government will start implementing the steps of his proposal over the next several weeks.

Lawrence's list drew favorable responses from Lincoln resident Dan Millett, a 29-year-old clerk at Marden's, who called the list "awesome." He called **Lawrence's** initiative "a wonderful idea to help stabilize the community." "This town has been my life so I will always stick with it, but it will be nice to see more people hanging around," Millett said. He added that would love to see town officials complete the recreation center on Route 6, a fundraising effort which has foundered for several years.

Most of the students who will be making the video are from Lincoln's surrounding towns, but they said they understand why young people want to leave. "I could do video here, but there is not a lot of jobs around for video production. But I would like to stay in Maine, if I could," 19-year-old Dylan LeClair of Howland said Tuesday. To LeClair, the No. 1 reason people his age and in their 20s leave Maine is "jobs and money." "They want to have a good career. They want more money" than Maine typically offers, LeClair said.

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"There's not a huge selection of jobs in Maine for people to get," 17-year-old Bryce Martin of Howland agreed. Martin, who attends Penobscot Valley High School of Howland, said he believes that the town and students will benefit from the videos. "As long as we all put our full effort into it, I think we can all actually make a fairly good video and portray what they want us to portray," Martin said. "I say that because a lot of people don't think that kids put a full effort into what they are doing and really if they do, they can do anything they wanted to, I believe. "We could make professional-level videos if we put ourselves into it, and this is just the first steps of our careers," Martin added.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
January 29, 2014

Lincoln heating-aid program keeps pace with the weather, officials say

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Generosity that has more than kept pace with the cold weather is leaving town leaders confident that they won't have to allocate funds to Lincoln's heating-aid fund for at least a month, they said Wednesday. As of Tuesday afternoon, the town's heating fund had \$4,800. It has served 61 families. Workers running the donation-driven effort have been seeing five to 12 potential clients a week, Town Manager **William Lawrence** said. "It trickles in. I would have expected [the fund] would have run out of money a long time ago," **Lawrence** said, "but anytime there's a story [on the fund in local or statewide media] it triggers more donations."

Last winter, the program supported 23 families, totaling 66 people, Lincoln Treasurer Melissa Quintela has said. The vast increase, which she had worried was fueled by the layoff of 200 workers at Lincoln Paper and Tissue LLC, caused her to predict in mid-month that the funding would be exhausted by February if more donations didn't come in.

Created in 2008, the town's heating-aid program targets town households that fail to meet General Assistance, Salvation Army or Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program standards -- typically senior citizens or single parents. It serves those who have less than a quarter-tank of home heating oil or other energy source and need 50 to 100 gallons. The Town Council has occasionally allocated money to the fund since its creation.

Council Chairman Steve Clay was pleased that the program remained well-funded. Councilors had discussed allocating town money to it at a meeting earlier this month but decided to wait to see whether the program would exhaust itself. They balked at mixing town funds with donations unless necessary, especially since they wouldn't have the legal right to withdraw the contribution. Councilors will likely discuss the issue again in March, Clay said. The program's strength "just shows you that people in the area are looking out for their neighbors and fellow citizens," Clay said Wednesday. "They are good people who want to donate and help those who are out of a job right now."

Lincoln's program might be faring better than expected because the Lincoln Regional Food Cupboard, which represented the majority of workers at the paper mill, created a home-heating fund at the Lincoln Federal Credit Union on West Broadway for laid-off mill workers, **Lawrence** said. As of Monday, the Governor's Energy Office found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil was \$3.87 per gallon, up seven cents from last week. The average statewide price for kerosene is also up seven cents to \$4.27 per gallon. This week's average statewide price for propane (for heating customers) increased by 10 cents to \$3.35 per gallon.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Heating fuel prices are higher this week than they were at any time last year, according to the listing at maine.gov. Anyone interested in securing aid or making a donation to the town's program can call Quintela at 794-3372 or visit her in the town office on Main Street. Donations can be mailed to the town office at 263 Main St., Lincoln, Maine, 04457.

Donations to the food cupboard effort can be mailed to the Lincoln Federal Credit Union, 171 West Broadway, Lincoln, Maine 04457. Checks or money orders made out to "Lincoln Regional Food Cupboard" that carry a note referring to the mill workers' relief fund will be donated to the appropriate account, a credit union worker said Wednesday.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
January 29, 2014

Lincoln eyeing \$600,000 budget cut to offset mill layoffs, feared revenue-sharing declines
Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

The 200 layoffs at the local paper mill last month are among the forces compelling leaders to push for up to a \$600,000 cut in the town government budget they hope to approve by July 1, officials said Wednesday.

Town Manager **William Lawrence** described the \$600,000 as a goal that he informed town department heads of during a recent meeting. They have until the end of February to see if or how close they can come to achieving it, he said. If achieved, the \$600,000 cut would represent about 15 percent of the town's \$4.3 million municipal services budget, **Lawrence** said. He described the reactions of town officials as "lots of long faces." "That's a lot to cut from a \$4.3 million budget but right now we are in good financial shape," **Lawrence** said. "We don't want to get in danger so we shall make appropriate moves now to prevent it." RSU 67 Superintendent Ray Freve has discussed the situation with **Lawrence** and agreed to limit school expenses as much as possible, **Lawrence** said.

Lincoln Paper and Tissue LLC co-owner Keith Van Scotter announced in early December that an explosion of a recovery boiler at the mill on Nov. 2 forced the indefinite but not permanent layoffs. He and other company officials have said they will not seek to replace the boiler, a key element to the papermaking components of their mill, until market conditions improve. Such boilers can cost as much as \$100 million to replace. The mill's three tissue machines continue to run, company workers have said. In a petition the company filed on Dec. 16 with the U.S. Department of Labor seeking job retraining and employment services for the 200 affected workers, company officials also disclosed that the loss of a tissue contract to an Indonesian firm caused the job loss. The petition did not mention the explosion. The last of the layoffs was due to occur by Dec. 19. The federal government approved retraining program funding for Lincoln on Jan. 17.

Another factor motivating the cut is very early word from state leaders that state government revenue sharing with municipalities would be cut drastically in the next fiscal year, Town Council Chairman Steve Clay said. "The state is saying they will cut revenue sharing this year. We don't know by how much. That was the problem last year. We were going to cut it [the town's budget] last year but there were five to 10 proposals on the [state revenue sharing] budget and we didn't know what they were going to do," Clay said Wednesday. Town leaders expect Lincoln Paper to eventually apply for a reduced mill valuation that takes into account the destroyed boiler and unused paper machines, Clay said. How much that would affect the town's budget is undetermined.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Town officials already have been ordered to keep expenses as low as possible. Tax Assessor Ruth Birtz in October raised the town's mill rate from \$19.86 per \$1,000 of valuation to \$22.96 -- about \$155 on properties worth \$50,000 -- in response to declines in the town's total valuation and an increase in the town's budget, she said.

Town leaders opted to hire Public Safety Director Dan Summers in August to replace Fire Chief Phil Dawson when he resigned and **Lawrence** when he was promoted to town manager. They plan to create a fire captain's position by July 1 to assist Summers in that department's administration. Overall, the creation of Summers' position is expect to save the town about \$36,000, they have said.

They increased the town's transfer station fees and are in talks with Maine Department of Transportation officials to see about widening a significant portion of West Broadway, which they believe would add significantly to the number of businesses there. Construction of a natural gas pipeline to the mill and West Broadway businesses is due to start by summer.

The town's budget committee usually starts its reviews in late February or early March, Clay said. The budget is usually approved by June. The fiscal year ends June 30.

Clay complimented **Lawrence** for displaying what he called good crisis-prevention skills. "It is going to be difficult anytime you cut anything but we have to be reasonable on what the future might bring," Clay said. "When it gets to a point where you have to make that big a cut there will be some services that suffer. We will see how it turns out when we get the first budget in a month or two and take it from there."

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
December 13, 2013

Lincoln's mill layoffs 'will have a trickle-down effect on everybody'

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Kim Damboise makes food and stocks shelves, tasks far from papermaking, but the layoff of about 200 Lincoln Paper and Tissue LLC workers has her fearing for her livelihood. "If nobody comes in, I am not going to have a job," said Damboise, a Howland resident and clerk at High Street Market of Lincoln. "A lot of people who live in Howland work at the mill and are going to be out of a job, and Howland is struggling to begin with. My thoughts go out to them all," Damboise said. "It's just a sad, sad thing."

Business workers and owners in Lincoln echoed Damboise's reaction to Wednesday's layoff announcement. Several interviewed Thursday and Friday said that the halving of the workforce of the Lincoln Lakes region's largest single employer would have widespread and unanticipated effects on the quality of life of northern Penobscot County.

Lincoln Trading & Pawn shop manager Luke Shorey, whose business is at near the mill site on Katahdin Avenue, said he expects to see more workers pawning than buying goods over the next few months. "When the economy is down, pawning goes up," Shorey said. "We will usually see a lot of workers come in once every few weeks. It's a lot easier to shop when you've just cashed your paycheck."

Though the layoffs are still underway and are not expected to conclude for perhaps a few weeks, workers started being sent home on Wednesday afternoon, mill co-owner Keith Van Scotter said. The layoffs were announced in the wake of a boiler explosion on Nov. 2 that has crippled papermaking and pulp production.

Town Council Chairman Steve Clay said he has already felt the effect of the layoffs with his business. One client who had agreed to pay a funeral bill told Clay Thursday that he has been laid off from his mill job and didn't know whether he could afford it, Clay said Friday. "It is not just people who lost their jobs," said Clay, who owns Clay Funeral Home of Lincoln. "It's the trickle-down effect down to the people who cut the wood, who ship the paper and tissue they make, who depend upon their workers for customers. "It will have a trickle-down effect on everybody," Clay said.

The layoffs, Clay said, have him pondering what, if anything, the town council can do to help the laid-off workers, the mill, and the town recover. Town officials have discussed seeking federal aid with representatives at the offices of U.S. Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Angus King, I-Maine, and with state Sen. Emily Cain, D-Orono, Town Manager **William Lawrence** said.

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William R. Lawrence
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Town leaders, **Lawrence** said, have pursued economic development aggressively but incrementally. Their biggest initiative over the last two years, the installation of a 12-mile natural-gas pipeline along West Broadway starting in spring 2014, will not be affected by the indefinite elimination of paper manufacturing at the mill that Van Scotter disclosed Thursday, he said. Mill and gas company officials "have a contract. They need it [natural gas] to operate on the tissue side of mill operations, and that is still a go," **Lawrence** said Friday.

Although the mill's owners have been targeted with a \$5 million lawsuit over allegations that they manipulated a demand-response program administered by ISO-New England that paid users to reduce their electricity consumption during peak hours, the explosion is the worst setback the mill has faced since Van Scotter and co-owner John Wissman revitalized the former Eastern Pulp and Paper Corp. in 2004.

Mills in Bucksport, East Millinocket, Madawaska, Millinocket and Rumford have closed or reduced workforces since that year but Lincoln's mill has performed steadily, making its revitalization one of the highlights of Gov. John Baldacci's tenure. Its success, Clay and **Lawrence** said, has allowed Lincoln leaders to avoid pressing voters for big-ticket investments that taxpayers loathe paying to finance.

The layoffs might change that, Clay said. Lincoln officials are in talks with Maine Department of Transportation officials over widening West Broadway from the Hannaford Supermarket shopping center to River Road, which connects with Interstate 95. The widening, plus the pipeline installation, might create enough momentum to allow town officials to press for a multimillion-dollar bond to pay for water and sewer utility installations on River Road, thus spurring development of eight open lots on West Broadway and River Road itself, **Lawrence** said. Lincoln could also accelerate its plans to build an industrial park near its airport or its airport expansion, which town officials added to by buying a campground earlier this year. They are also planning seaplane dock expansion in the Penobscot River, **Lawrence** said.

Several businesses, including Dunkin Donuts and a hardware store, are slated to go in along West Broadway and Penobscot Valley Avenue in 2014, complementing a Dollar Tree store that opened on West Broadway several months ago. Many other businesses continue to inquire about Lincoln, **Lawrence** said. "It is not good to depend on one major employer or company to provide the value that they do to the town. We should diversify. We should get bigger businesses in here so that we are not always relying on the mill," **Lawrence** said.

But **Lawrence** and Clay said they don't see anything big enough to offset the loss of 200 jobs happening anytime soon. That is one reason why High Street Market manager Julie Zagorianakos says she worries about what the next year will hold for her shop, which opened in July. "Our hearts go out to the people who were laid off, but we knew it wasn't going to be good for the mill when we first heard of the explosion," she said. "We had hopes that they would somehow keep the mill going. It's the foundation of the community."

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.newscentermaine.com/amp/article/news/local/lincolns-new-town-manager/99-320355486>
June 13, 2013

Lincoln's New Town Manager

Author/Byline: News Center Staff

With a vote held Monday night, Lincoln's town council approved a new town manager, **Bill Lawrence**. **Lawrence** is a thirty year veteran police officer who served with the Bangor police and the Penobscot County Sheriff's office. He spent the last two years of his career as Lincoln's Chief of Police and as the interim town manager.

Now that his position is permanent, **Lawrence** is eager to use his expertise to help his home town thrive. "The town is facing some tough challenges, and I feel I am in the best position, where I've been working, to make those changes," **Lawrence** said. "I don't want to leave a job unfinished, so I feel a need to come to fruition and complete the projects I've started."

Lawrence said he will set to work filling vacant positions in Lincoln, including his former position as police chief. He said he hopes to name an interim Chief in the next week or two.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
May 8, 2013

Lincoln fire chief resigns, denies conflict of interest

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Fire Chief Phil Dawson abruptly resigned on Wednesday because of what he described as concerns about his health and a dispute with a town official over a possible conflict of interest. "I am tired of the bull," the 57-year-old Dawson said Wednesday. "This isn't worth the battle of going on and fighting one thing after another. I would like to get into retirement and enjoy it while I still have my health."

Interim Town Manager **William Lawrence** announced on Tuesday that Dawson had been placed on administrative leave with pay. On Wednesday, Dawson said he retired effective immediately because **Lawrence** disliked Dawson's recent discussions with Millinocket Fire Chief Andrew Turcotte about placing a Millinocket ambulance at Howland's fire station. Dawson is also the Howland Fire Department's chief and a member of the Penobscot Valley Hospital board of directors, he said. "It was construed that I was negotiating a service away from Lincoln," Dawson said. "The intent was not to negotiate away from the Lincoln-East Millinocket consortium but to provide a service to Howland and taxpayers from the Greater Howland area." **Lawrence** issued a brief email statement on Wednesday saying that Dawson had resigned his position effective immediately. **Lawrence** declined further comment.

Officials from PVH, East Millinocket Fire Department and Lincoln announced this week that East Millinocket will station two ambulances at the Lincoln Public Safety Building starting in July, when the hospital discontinues its ambulance service. East Millinocket will handle the bulk of PVH transfers and emergency calls. "The intention wasn't to directly compete with them. It was just to survive and share some of the transfers so that we could maintain crew skills and interest," Dawson added. Email and telephone attempts to reach **Lawrence** on Wednesday were unsuccessful. Lincoln Town Council Chairman Steve Clay also declined to comment.

A retired state police trooper, Dawson said he earned about \$38,000 annually from Lincoln, plus a reimbursement for not needing health care benefits. Dawson said he will continue as Howland's chief and as a member of the hospital board. He said he abstained from board votes on the service transfer. Dawson said he was clear in all of his dealings regarding who he was representing. Turcotte agreed. "In the times that we have spoken it was more to discuss how do we enhance the quality of service for the region. There were no discussions on any particular department," Turcotte said. "I think he is a standup guy. He is trying to do the right thing and I will miss working with him."

Conversations between Howland and Millinocket are in very early stages, Turcotte said. Since becoming Millinocket's fire chief in November, Turcotte has said that one of his goals is to increase Millinocket's revenue by expanding its ambulance service. Under the deal with Lincoln,

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East Millinocket Fire Chief Les Brown has said that East Millinocket would provide emergency medical technicians and Lincoln would provide drivers, with East Millinocket paying for four hours of overtime to fill in when both ambulances are handling emergencies. East Millinocket would pay Lincoln \$75 per call. About \$90,000 would be generated for Lincoln annually with 1,200 calls and \$112,500 would come from 1,500 calls.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
February 28, 2013

Lincoln schools on security alert after student reports parental abuse

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Town schools remained on security alert Thursday as a precautionary measure after a junior high school student complained Wednesday of parental abuse, officials said. Exterior doors remained locked to outsiders at Ella P. Burr, Mattanawcook Junior High School and Mattanawcook Academy for the second day after the student reported the abuse, said RSU 67 Superintendent Denise Hamlin.

No problems were reported. The parent, who came to the junior high to pick up the student at dismissal Wednesday, was met by several officers and cooperated with police, said Police Chief **William Lawrence**. Police turned the matter over to a Maine Department of Health and Human Services caseworker after investigators found no evidence of a crime, **Lawrence** said.

Lawrence complimented school officials for handling the matter swiftly. He said they contacted police almost immediately on Wednesday morning and took sensible precautions, given what he described as the parent's past temperamental behavior. "They worked with us right from the beginning," **Lawrence** said of school officials. "By the time the parent did show up, we were already there and had a good game plan." As a precaution, town police Officers Brandi Alton and Mark Fucile, Penobscot County Sheriff's Deputy Patty McLaughlin and state police Sgt. Ted Millet were at Mattanawcook Junior High School when school was dismissed for the day, **Lawrence** said.

Besides secured exterior doors, a security alert entails locked classroom doors and students venturing into halls only as part of normal transitions, Hamlin said. School administrators and staff handled the situation well, Hamlin told them in a memo on Thursday. RSU 67 serves the students of Chester, Lincoln and Mattawamkeag.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
January 23, 2013

Lincoln looking to make its police chief the town manager

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Police Chief **William Lawrence** and other town leaders are negotiating whether the chief will become the next town manager, he said Wednesday. Already serving as the interim town manager and police chief, **Lawrence** said he was trying to balance his personal interests with the town's. He will remain in town government no matter how the negotiations go. "If things work out well, then we can get the deal done," **Lawrence** said. "If it doesn't work out well, I will continue doing both jobs until they come up with more arrangements and happily go back to being the police chief."

Town Council members have discussed keeping **Lawrence** on as town manager and will continue the discussion at their next meeting in February, Chairman Steve Clay said. If they opt to hire **Lawrence** as town manager, they would replace him as police chief, **Lawrence** said. "The biggest thing [problem] is uncertainty on the part of [town] employees on what is going to happen. Hopefully we can get that straightened out next month," Clay said. "When you have an interim anything, the workers in that department are going to feel a little uncertainty. "We owe it to them to get this situation straightened out as quickly as we can," Clay added.

The council voted 6-0 on Oct. 18 to terminate probationary Town Manager Bill Reed's contract and appointed **Lawrence** his temporary successor. Councilor Shaun Drinkwater was absent. Reed's six-month review was due in November. He was hired in June after having served as town manager in Veazie. **Lawrence** is serving as interim manager for the second time. He served as manager when former Town Manager Lisa Goodwin left to become Bangor's city clerk.

Lawrence "is doing excellent work," Clay said. "I am just concerned about the wear on him from doing both jobs."

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Bangor Daily News (ME)
November 14, 2012

Lincoln might seek \$500,000 tax anticipation note

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Town leaders can apply for a \$500,000 loan to cover the late mailing of property tax bills caused by the discovery of about \$1.2 million in budget errors, officials said Wednesday.

The Town Council voted 6-0 on Nov. 5 to give Treasurer Gilberte Mayo the authority to seek a tax anticipation note from Machias Savings Bank for as much as \$500,000 within 60 days of that date. The loan would carry a 0.99 percent interest rate. Councilor David Whalen was absent. The loan might not be needed or sought, Mayo said. "We are not running a deficit but it is very tight as far as cash flow goes," Mayo said Wednesday, "and because the council meets only once a month, I wanted to have the ability to borrow in case I needed it." As of Wednesday, the town had about \$278,000 in cash, which is usually enough to pay four weeks of expenses. Town workers mailed 3,600 property tax bills on Friday, about two months late, with Dec. 17 the date at which taxpayers start paying late-payment interest, Mayo said.

Councilors had no problem authorizing the possible expenditure, Chairman Steve Clay said. "It is a matter of cash flow more than anything else," Clay said Wednesday. "I don't think it is damaging. I think it will just be a matter of possible need."

The Oct. 2 discovery of errors in the 2011-12 budget totaling what interim Town Manager **William Lawrence** said was \$1.2 million forced town officials to redo the budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2013.

On Nov. 5, councilors passed with a series of votes a new \$4.2 million municipal budget for 2012-13. The next day, Assessor Ruth Birtz committed the town to pay \$7.6 million in property taxes to the county and state at 19.86 mills, the mill rate in the original 2012-13 budget, Mayo said.

Tax anticipation notes are tools often used by municipalities to cover short-time lags between tax billings and payments. Millinocket officials use them almost annually. Lincoln hasn't sought one in about 25 years, said Mayo, who has worked for the town for 27 years. The notes were necessary then, usually in late fall, because the town ran its budget on a calendar, not fiscal, year and sometimes encountered shortfalls in November, Mayo said.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News
October 29, 2012

Spreadsheet problem contributed to Lincoln budgeting woes

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

A premature release of information about the town's recent budgeting errors led to a \$575,000 overstatement of the errors' impact, interim Town Manager **Bill Lawrence** says. In a weekly memo to residents called the Town of Lincoln Weekly News, **Lawrence** implicitly criticized former probationary Town Manager Bill Reed for releasing to the media information about the errors prior to the completion of an independent audit of town books by Mindy Cyr of Maine Municipal Audit Services. He also disclosed for the first time that problems with a mathematical formula used in town financial spreadsheets caused errors in the original 2012-13 budget.

In Friday's edition, **Lawrence** restated two of the three errors Reed said had been discovered: a \$200,000 overbudgeting of revenue due to the double-booking of Homestead Tax Exemption funds and what Reed described as an \$809,000 underestimation of projected expenses in the town's Tax Increment Financing accounts. Both errors occurred in the 2011-12 budget. That fiscal year ended June 30. "We can only make decisions and take action after all the facts and evidence are gathered," **Lawrence** wrote in Friday's Weekly News. "We cannot work on rumors and newspaper reporting. Our decisions may not be popular, but they will be made."

"Our budget issues were reported to the media before the auditor's report was released, and thus incorrect information was reported because of the premature release," **Lawrence** added. During an informal news conference also attended by Treasurer Gilberte Mayo and Assessor Ruth Birtz, Reed — whose name was not mentioned in **Lawrence**'s report — announced on Oct. 2 the two errors, which he said were found in the 2011-12 budget.

He, Birtz and Mayo also discussed a third — a \$575,000 overestimation of projected revenues in the town's four Tax Increment Financing accounts listed in the budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year, which will end June 30, 2013. Cyr's audit report was dated Oct. 9 and only addressed the 2011-12 fiscal year. The Town Council voted 6-0 on Oct. 18 to fire Reed about 1½ before the end of his probationary period. He has since not responded to requests for comment. Town officials, **Lawrence** said, also did not transfer about \$1 million from the town's undesignated fund balance to cover the errors, as Reed said on Oct. 2. In his report, **Lawrence** disclosed the discovery of a new issue — a problem with the mathematical formula within the Excel Spreadsheet program "where the budget preparation was done." "This has resulted in errors that needed to be corrected to keep the mill rate the same as what was voted on by the [Town] Council in June 2012" as part of the passage of the budget for the 2012-13 budget year, which began July 1. **Lawrence**'s report does not discuss the errors. The town's new budget will not increase the town's 19.86 mill rate, officials have said.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Associated Press State Wire: Maine (ME)
Bangor Daily News (ME)
June 15, 2012

Lincoln police to start anti-teen drinking patrols this summer

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Police will use a \$1,500 grant to pay for extra-duty patrols to stop underage drinking incidents like one Reserve Officer Roy Bickford found in Prince Thomas Park earlier this week, Police Chief **William Lawrence** said Friday. Bickford was on patrol at about 6:30 p.m. Sunday when he said he found a juvenile boy in a car parked at Prince Thomas who had passed out from overconsumption of alcohol. Three others also were there drinking, **Lawrence** said.

Neil May, 18, and Brandon Briggs, both of Lincoln, were issued summonses for furnishing liquor to minors, **Lawrence** said. Both are due in District Court in Lincoln on July 17. The minor who had lost consciousness was taken by Penobscot Valley Hospital ambulance to PVH for treatment. Another minor was there drinking but didn't require treatment, **Lawrence** said. Aside from Sunday's incident and an incident involving 28 Bangor High School students last December, Lincoln hasn't had much of a problem with underage drinking during **Lawrence's** one year and two month tenure as chief, he said. "With the help of this Sprint for Life grant we are going to see if there is a problem here and attack it if there is," **Lawrence** said Friday.

The Sprint for Life grant will fund four-hour shifts on staggered weekends over the summer in which officers will target Prince Thomas, Veterans Square off Main Street and other areas where teens congregate, **Lawrence** said. Police patrols in those areas last summer helped curtail problems and will hopefully have the same impact this year, **Lawrence** said. In the December incident, 31 students, all ages 15 and 16, were issued summonses for illegal possession of alcohol and one was charged with illegal possession of marijuana in connection with what police called an overnight drinking party at a camp on McGregor Road in Lincoln.

Given the students' circumstances — exposure to single-digit temperatures, heavy intoxication and sleepiness from being awake most of the night — responding Officers Jacob Ferland, Bickford and state police Trooper Thomas Fiske immediately called Penobscot Valley Ambulance Service and had the teens examined for alcohol poisoning and hypothermia, police said. The officers also were worried that some students might have frozen to death in those conditions, **Lawrence** said at the time.

Bangor High officials issued two-week suspensions from extracurricular activities to 28 of the 31 students. The others did not face disciplinary action because they did not participate in extra- or co-curricular activities. School officials typically don't hold students accountable for activities outside school or school-sanctioned activities, but student-athletes and participants in any other co- or extracurricular activities can face disciplinary action because those activities are considered a privilege, school officials said.

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Bangor Daily News (ME)
June 13, 2012

Lincoln municipal budget cuts mill rate slightly

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Residents might pay slightly less in property taxes in the fiscal year starting July 1 under the \$5.3 million budget town leaders approved earlier this week, officials said Wednesday. In a series of motions that garnered votes ranging from 4-3 to 7-0, the Town Council on Monday night approved the municipal budget, which carries with it a spending increase of \$248,297, or 4.9 percent. Most opposing votes came from the husband-wife team of Councilors Michael and Marscella Ireland.

As projected, the new budget would produce a mill rate of 19.78 mills, a decrease of 0.08 mills from the 19.86 mill rate charged for the 2011-12 fiscal year, which ends June 30. Under the projected new mill rate, a property worth \$100,000 would be taxed \$1,978 annually next year, compared to \$1,986 now. A \$50,000 property would face taxes of \$989 next year, compared to \$993.

Among the elements that make the lowered mill rate an uncertainty: a \$12.4 million budget for RSU 67, the school unit that serves Chester, Lincoln and Mattawamkeag, was voted down 359-183 during Tuesday night's election, and the mill rate's being set in October. No new date for another school budget vote has been set, Town Clerk Shelly Crosby said.

If the predicted mill rate holds, an anticipated increase of \$15 million in the town's overall valuation prompted by the completion of the Rollins Mountain industrial wind site, and TIF funds created by the project, will be the cause, Assessor Ruth Birtz said Wednesday. About 90 percent of the projected valuation increase comes from the value of the project's turbines and other equipment, Birtz said.

Funds generated by the Rollins Mountain TIF will go from \$402,239 this year to \$556,583 next year, an increase of \$154,344 the town can use for recreation and economic development. The 2012-13 fiscal year will be the first full tax year of the First Wind project's operation.

The budget first proposed by former Town Manager Lisa Goodwin and interim Town Manager **William Lawrence** called for a mill rate of 19.72 mills. Tax increment financing is among the state's leading tools for aiding economic development. When a town sees an increase in valuation created by an investment, it also experiences a reduction in its share of state revenues and an increase in county taxes. A TIF allows a town to "shelter" the new valuation from the calculations of state revenue sharing, education subsidy and county tax assessment -- in effect creating more money for the town. TIF agreements usually run 20 years.

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With a TIF, however, the money that a town gains must be invested in community economic development projects, such as industrial parks or infrastructure improvements that aid businesses, or be paid to those whose work includes economic development efforts. The votes during Monday's meeting proceeded smoothly until councilors at first voted down spending about \$30,000 to maintain the Ballard Hill Community Center. That sent Town Clerk Shelly Crosby into the other room during an intermission to recompute the budget. Apparently the leader of the councilors who opposed funding Ballard Hill, Councilor Curt Ring, recommended revisiting the issue when the council reconvened. Votes of 6-1 and 5-2 to reopen the discussion and approve funding Ballard Hill followed.

After the meeting, Ring said he promoted the vote halting funding for Ballard Hill to force the council to face the building's \$16,000 annual heating budget. "It's a huge expense," Ring said. Ring acknowledged that with the Haunted Hill effort, which council Chairman Steve Clay created and oversees, the building gets more use than ever, but "we need to have a serious discussion" about how to cut the heating cost. The budget allocation that has funded the aged and somewhat decrepit community center for the last several years is almost exhausted, Ring said. Councilor David Whalen agreed with Ring.

Several previous attempts by some councilors to close the building have been opposed by Councilor Rod Carr, who has said he believes that the building provides great service to the Meals on Wheels program used by many local seniors. The council will probably discuss the issue at its next meeting. No agenda has been set.

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William R. Lawrence
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Bangor Daily News (ME)
April 7, 2012

Lincoln police improve case clearance rate by 11 percentage points, chief says
Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

When **William Lawrence** became Lincoln's police chief in mid-April 2011, the Police Department had a 20 percent case clearance rate for the previous 12 months, about 10 points below the national average for cases closed by arrest. The department was understaffed, its officers were inexperienced, strings of burglaries and thefts had gone unsolved and the police command staff had totally turned over several times within the previous five years.

As of this month, the department's roster is at full staff, with six fulltime officers and 10 reserve or part-time officers, **Lawrence** said. A new detective's position has been filled with an officer with about 12 years of experience and, best of all to **Lawrence**, so far its April to April clearance rate is 31 percent, meeting the goal he set a year ago with a percentage point to spare. "I am excited that we hit that figure," **Lawrence** said Friday. "We were a young police department that had very little experience. Now that we've met our 30 percent goal, I am hopeful that next year we'll be at the 40 percent mark."

Another statistical indicator, the department's clearance rate for the 2011 calendar year, shows an increase to 27.7 percent, according to a report **Lawrence** released Friday. That report lists 64 of 231 reported incidents as cleared by arrest from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2011. Another six incidents are listed as unfounded. The report lists one robbery and one attempted rape each as unsolved, with 36 of 62 assaults listed as cleared, a clearance rate of 58.1 percent. Four assaults involved minors, the report states.

Four of 43 burglaries (9.3 percent), two of 15 forcible entries (13.3 percent), one of 21 unforced but unlawful entries (4.8 percent), and one of seven attempted forcible entries (14.3 percent) were cleared, according to the report. Twenty-three of 120 larcenies (19.2 percent) were cleared, with an additional one of five motor vehicle thefts (20 percent) were cleared, the report states.

Town Council Chairman Steve Clay believes **Lawrence** is responsible for most of the department's improvement. "Chief **Lawrence** has brought to the table a good understanding of management and how to manage people. He plays to people's strengths," Clay said Saturday. "He finds their strengths and assigns them accordingly and I think that has made a huge difference." People feel safer in Lincoln than they did a year ago, former Town Manager Lisa Goodwin said. **Lawrence** has hired well, lets his officers know when they've done well, has improved their training and is building partnerships within the community, she said.

As an example: **Lawrence** used the town's first bath salts arrest in June to raise awareness of the town's problems with illegal drug dealing and to start teaching local businesses and agencies about the new drug, Goodwin said. "We were talking about and addressing bath salts before

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

anybody else did in the state," Goodwin said. "He took it a step further and is educating people on it. It's not something that the people of Lincoln don't know about."

Clay also attributed Lincoln's improvements to the lack of staff turnover. The constant change brought with it turf battles and a general sort of instability that led to poor investigative follow-up, he said. "Over the years there has been a lot of undermining of the chief," Clay said. "Undermining did happen. It wasn't for a lack of the police chief trying." "We would send people to school and they would end up leaving for other jobs," Clay added. "It caused a lack of consistency, follow up on cases, the investigating that needed to be done. Bam, a person would be gone."

Penobscot County District Attorney R. Christopher Almy said he has seen some improvement in Lincoln police. He recommended last May that Lincoln hire a detective because of the department's lack of follow-up in dealing with registered sex offenders who live in town. Also, six child sexual abuse referrals had made to the department in the several weeks prior, indicating a need for an officer who could investigate possible sex crimes full time instead of bouncing from call to call the way patrolman typically do, he said.

The lack of a detective left police hamstrung, Almy said Friday. "From our experience, when a police department, especially a small department like Lincoln, had a detective, they will have a better ability to catch and convict people who commit serious crimes such as burglary or felony theft," Almy said. "Lincoln patrol officers investigate burglaries at the beginning. They are able to do a certain amount of work but not the follow-up we need."

Besides investigating possible links between crimes, conducting surveillance and doing follow-up interviews, a detective can help prosecutors answer questions vital to successful prosecutions, Almy said. Patrolmen "don't have the experience or the time to interview the people that need to be interviewed in a serious case," Almy said. "The more you have a detective in there, the more they anticipate what we [prosecutors] need. He will see the report a patrolman writes and say, 'I know what we need.' I won't have to ask for it."

Good report writing, a key element to police work, isn't something Lincoln lacks, but experience is, said Assistant District Attorney Steve Burlock, who has handled Lincoln cases since July. "Some of the officers are fairly new at their trade," Burlock said, "but the other thing I can say, which is positive, is that they seem very well motivated. They want to do a good job. That's important because in the long run, like in any other trade, you run into folks that are not well motivated and that's another part of the problem. That's not the case with these folks."

Almy and Burlock credit **Lawrence's** hiring of former East Millinocket patrolman David Cram in June 2011 and promoting him to detective in January with sharpening Lincoln's attack on crime, particularly drug-related malfeasance. Cram's position is paid for with a three-year grant. Almy said he has seen two or three cases in the last month where Cram's efforts have been

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helpful. "Their reports are more responsive and they seem more interested in looking at more serious crimes," Almy said.

"One of the things I have observed in Lincoln is a fair amount drug related activity with bath salts," Burlock said. "It is my sense that having the detective position just for that category of crime has been very beneficial for them. They are big enough up there that a detective is a very logical addition to their department. Their detective is doing a good job and can't help but help."

Lawrence made several managerial moves that he said have helped Lincoln's officers gain expertise and confidence. He promoted interim Sgt. Glenn Graef to a permanent sergeant's post in May 2011, also assigning Graef to work a 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. shift, **Lawrence** said. With **Lawrence** and Cram working day shifts, Graef's shift change gave Lincoln's officers direct supervision during their busiest times, **Lawrence** said. Several previous police administrations hadn't done that, leaving inexperienced officers to fend for themselves.

The shift change "fills a need. With a young department, you have young officers looking for assistance, a guide, a mentor, a person they can go to and trust for their answers," said **Lawrence**, who was recently named Lincoln's interim town manager. **Lawrence** and Cram also got out of the office to help handle cases themselves while broadening the department's reach into the community with talks on bath salts and a bicycle safety program. "David's experience is on gathering evidence and understanding the elements of a crime that need to be proven," **Lawrence** said. "For awhile I was teaching this. David knew this and after a few weeks, he filled in for me. He started teaching and taking a little bit of that burden off of me."

Lawrence said he didn't begin to see improvement in police performance until June, when the department's command structure had solidified and the officers started seeing the value of what they were being taught. Police had also begun attacking the root of most property crimes, the use and sale of illegal narcotics, and seeing results, he said. "When we started attacking the bath salt issues and thefts and were still doing the patrol work we needed to, we saw the property crime problem and how it all interlinks," **Lawrence** said. "We started getting search warrants and getting arrests."

Today, Lincoln's police are just about where they need to be, **Lawrence** said. They share information, run cases by one another for second opinions, and have a good sense of teamwork. Graef and Cram handle much of the department's day-to-day operations and report reviewing, leaving **Lawrence** free to concentrate on individual issues and planning. His next issue, he said, will likely be retaining his officers -- keeping other, larger departments from luring them away. "They are Type-A personalities. They are doing a great job," **Lawrence** said.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
March 27, 2012

Police chief named Lincoln's interim town manager

Author/Byline: Nick Sambides Jr.

Police Chief **William Lawrence** is the town's interim town manager, officials said Tuesday. The Town Council voted 6-0 during a special meeting Monday night to install **Lawrence** as Town Manager Lisa Goodwin's temporary successor, Chairman Steve Clay said. Councilor Rod Carr was absent.

Councilors originally had planned to spread Goodwin's responsibilities among town department heads until her permanent successor is found, but the town's attorney told them late last week that the town charter required an interim appointment, Clay said. Councilors had asked the attorney a few weeks earlier whether the responsibility split conformed to the charter. "When we split up Lisa's responsibilities a few weeks ago, [**Lawrence** was tasked with handling] personnel so it made sense that he be the person to replace her," Clay said. Goodwin resigned as town manager effective Friday to assume a new job as Bangor's city clerk. Lincoln councilors are working to find her permanent successor.

Lawrence will get a temporary 10 percent pay increase, increasing his salary to what would be about \$62,000 annually, as part of the deal, **Lawrence** said. The chief doesn't expect to be performing much more than a caretaker's role, handling everyday operations and communication between councilors and town department managers, in the three or four months it might take to find a permanent manager. "Lisa left the town in great shape," **Lawrence** said. "She's taken care of the budget and we have great department managers that know how to do their jobs."

Besides managing Lincoln's police force, **Lawrence** managed personnel as Pittsfield's chief of police and helped handle personnel as a lieutenant in the Penobscot County Sheriff's Department, he said. **Lawrence** likely will split his work time between the town manager's office on Main Street and the public safety building on Adams Street, he said.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
October 10, 2011

Lincoln police get grant for new position

Author/Byline: Nick Smabides JR.

Police Chief **William Lawrence** hopes to hire an investigative-overlay officer to help offset a sagging case clearance rate and will fund the new position with a \$193,533 federal grant, Town Manager Lisa Goodwin said Sunday. The three-year U.S. Department of Justice grant, Goodwin said, will pay for a position the Town Council included in the 2011-12 budget and will go to what in other circumstances might be called a detective position, except this officer likely will wear a patrol uniform and supplement regular police patrols. "It is going to relieve the caseload of our regular officers and will allow police to do more investigative work," Goodwin said Sunday. "We should have higher clearance rates and a safer community."

The department's case-clearance rate — the number of cases disposed of typically through arrests and convictions — from April 2010 to April 2011 was about 20 percent, **Lawrence** has said. The national average is 30 percent. The fundamental problem, **Lawrence** has said, is the town's failure to retain the officers it hires and lack of uniformed or plainclothes detectives, which leaves Lincoln with a police force that spends most of its time going from call to call. **Lawrence** created and councilors approved the overlay officer's position in response to that, Goodwin said.

When **Lawrence** was hired in mid-March, the department's entire six-member roster had turned over at least twice since 2008, and **Lawrence** was the sixth interim or full-time chief to take the position since 2004. He succeeded full-time former Chiefs Scott Minckler, William Flagg and Hank Dusenbery and interim Chiefs Phil Dawson and James "Jamie" Slauenwhite. The recent case clearance rate was not available on Sunday, but Lincoln police have made some notable arrests recently:

The seizure of \$5,000 to \$10,000 worth of the synthetic drug "bath salts" and two marijuana plants on Sept. 11 during the arrest of two suspects. Both posted \$700 bail and are due in Lincoln District Court on Nov. 22

The arrest of two burglary suspects at Clay GMC Chevrolet, 470 Main St., on July 3. State police and Piscataquis and Penobscot County sheriffs are investigating whether the two are connected to several other burglaries in the Ellsworth area.

The return of a \$13,000 engine diagnostic tool to a Guilford auto repair shop on Aug. 25 after officers found it on a burglary suspect. That suspect's case is pending.

The seizure of 200 small packets of heroin packaged for street sale, 121 oxycodone pills, cocaine, crack cocaine, 11 hypodermic needles and \$590 in cash — items worth about \$7,000 in

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

total — when officers arrested a Connecticut man on drug-trafficking charges on Oct. 4 after he called to complain of people trying to break into his house.

Lawrence also met with local businesses and residents last month to discuss a crime issue, bath salts and other narcotics, the first time a chief has done that in Lincoln in more than a year. And officers held a free bicycle safety course at Veterans Square off Main Street on Sept. 10 a week after a 7-year-old boy was accidentally hit by a car on Katahdin Avenue. About 25 town youths attended the bike rodeo.

Since **Lawrence's** arrival, he has hired and promoted several officers on the staff, bring the department to six full-time officers for the first time in years, Goodwin said. The new position will be the department's seventh. "The department is doing fabulous," Goodwin said. "The officers are doing great work and he [**Lawrence**] stays within his budget. I am very pleased with his performance. He is a very good manager."

As part of the grant requirements, Lincoln will have to retain the new officer for at least a year beyond the three-year term, Goodwin said. **Lawrence** is interviewing candidates now and hopes to have the new position filled in a month, Goodwin said. The council will formally accept the grant money next month. **Lawrence** and council Chairman Rod Carr could not be reached for comment on Sunday.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
March 15, 2011

Bangor officer hired as Lincoln police chief

Author/Byline: Nick Smabides, Jr.

Bangor police Officer **William Lawrence** will be Lincoln's next chief of police. with council Chairman Rod Carr out of state performing in a musical competition, the Town Council voted 6-0 during a meeting Monday to hire **Lawrence**, Town Manager Lisa Goodwin said. **Lawrence** is due to begin his new job on April 11. He succeeds Reserve Officer James "Jamie" Slauenwhite, an Old Town Police Department patrolman and former Lincoln police sergeant who was appointed interim chief to succeed Police Chief Scott Minckler, who resigned effective Jan. 30 to return to Massachusetts. As part of the deal, Slauenwhite worked 20-plus hours a week as Minckler's replacement.

The 54-year-old **Lawrence** is a Bangor resident and works as the Bangor police liaison officer with the Bangor Housing Authority, is a former lieutenant in the Penobscot County Sheriff's Department and a former police chief with the Pittsfield Police Department, Goodwin said.

Goodwin recommended him to the council out of 20 interviewees, she said. "His extensive law enforcement experience and the strength of his leadership" are among the qualities that recommend him for the job as Lincoln's top cop, Goodwin said Monday. "He will bring stability to the department, which is what the community needs."

The department has suffered from an unprecedented turnover of officers that hasn't been traced to any single factor. Various town officials attribute it to better salaries offered by police departments elsewhere. Minckler has said the difficulty in being away from his wife, Jennifer, a financial analyst, and their 11/2-year-old daughter, Alexa, as well as maintaining two households, left him with no choice but to return to the Bay State. The family had been split between Maine and Massachusetts since his hiring in March 2010, and her efforts to find a job in Maine were unsuccessful. The department's No. 2 officer under Minckler, Sgt. Patty McLaughlin, resigned her position on the department on Dec. 20 to take a job as a Penobscot County sheriff's deputy. McLaughlin joined the Police Department in February 2008 and was promoted to sergeant, No. 2 in the six-member force, in March 2010. As sergeant, she replaced Kevin Giberson, who rejoined the Millinocket Police Department in late 2009.

Minckler replaced Police Chief William Flagg, who left the department in late August 2009 to rejoin the Sheriff's Department in a part-time capacity as he worked toward a faculty position at an area college or university. **Lawrence** will earn about \$56,000 annually in his new position, Goodwin said.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
June 3, 2006

Man summoned after threat with knife at campground

Author/Byline: Unknown

A man staying in the tent area at the Paul Bunyan Campground in Bangor told police Friday that when he went to strike up a conversation with a neighbor, the other man became belligerent and pulled out a knife.

The man told police that the other man, Andrew Lewis, 37, told him to mind his own business and then pushed him. The men exchanged pushes, then Lewis pulled out a knife and began making stabbing motions at the other man, witnesses told Bangor police Officer **Bill Lawrence**. **Lawrence** found the knife in a bag on the ground at Lewis' feet and summoned Lewis on charges of criminal threatening with a dangerous weapon and disorderly conduct.

Investigating a complaint of a group of men being disorderly and throwing trash on Center Street in Bangor late Thursday night, police found one of the men wearing gloves, carrying a ghost mask and brass knuckles, and hiding behind a vehicle. Confronted by police after 11 p.m., Joshua York, 21, of Bangor claimed he was wearing the gloves because he was cold. York explained that he had the gray-colored ghost mask under a ball cap because he had "a lot of enemies," Bangor police Officer David Bushey reported. York was summoned on a charge of carrying a concealed weapon without a permit and was given a warning for drinking alcohol in public and for disorderly conduct. A transient man was charged Friday morning with assault after it was reported the night before he had struck two people in the emergency room of St. Joseph Hospital.

Charles Watson, 50, reportedly struck the arm of a physician's assistant who was trying to check him out Thursday night and then kicked a security officer who intervened and stepped between them. Watson was summoned for assault. He told Bangor police Officer Brad Hanson the next morning that he drank about a liter of vodka straight and didn't remember what had happened.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
February 17, 2004

Bangor police cruiser involved in accident

Author/Byline: Unknown

A Bangor police cruiser was involved in an accident Monday morning.

Lt. Jeff Millard reported that at about 8:40 a.m. a Dodge passenger car driven by Nancy Eshnaur, 48, of Bangor rear-ended a cruiser stopped on the side of Kenduskeag Avenue. **Officer William Lawrence** was in the cruiser, having just pulled another car over.

Lawrence complained of pain in his neck, and Eshnaur complained of pain in her face. Eshnaur evidently had been unable to see the cruiser's flashing lights because of glare from the sun. Damage to the cruiser was estimated at \$5,000. Damage to Eshnaur's car was estimated at \$4,000.

Millard's report did not cite any improper action on the part of **Lawrence** or Eshnaur. Both drivers were wearing seat belts.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
November 1, 2002

Sheriff's race sports long, thorny roots

Author/Byline: Doug Kesseli

For longtime residents of Penobscot County, the race for sheriff is a case of *deja vu*, pitting two-time adversaries Glenn Ross, the Republican incumbent, against Democrat Tim Richardson, who held the office in the early 1980s.

At a recent candidates night the two challenged each other by raising some of the same issues that were raised 18 years ago. There's a lot of history here. Ross, a one-time Democrat, defeated Richardson in the Democratic primary in 1984. Richardson once fired Ross, who was a patrol sergeant. Both candidates have lengthy lists of training and educational accomplishments in law enforcement, and in broad terms support many of the same things. They each want to improve conditions at the Penobscot County Jail, a facility built to house 136 inmates but now with a population that peaks at 180. They also want to maintain a strong police force in the county.

As sheriff from 1980 to 1984, one of Richardson's main contentions is what he describes as the deplorable conditions at the jail and unacceptable personnel turnover in the department. Richardson points to what he has calculated to be 71 percent turnover in the department over the past two years. To buttress his case about problems in the jail, in the waning minutes of the candidates forum Tuesday, Richardson produced a letter showing that a consultant has been hired to "regain the professional reputation" of the department. Richardson said that in order to regain the reputation, you had to have lost it first.

Ross, named sheriff after the death of former Sheriff Ed Reynolds last summer, denied Richardson's main assertions and chided his opponent. "Some numbers have been thrown out here, but the numbers are not valid and I would urge you to recheck the math there, Tim," Ross said.

According to Ross and the department's financial point man, Lt. Keith Hotaling, turnover isn't uncommon across the state or nationally, especially in the corrections division. Hotaling said earlier this week that the average full-time corrections employee stays slightly less than five years and part-timers stay for less than a year. That has led to turnover in county corrections that has averaged 33 percent per year over the past 15 years, he said. In the patrol division, turnover has averaged only 9 percent over the past six years.

At Tuesday's forum at the Greater Bangor Area Central Labor Council in Brewer, Richardson pointed out how during his 15 years operating a towing company, turnover averaged only 8 percent. But while Richardson was sheriff, a deputy resigned complaining that 55 officers had left the department between 1982 and 1984 at a time when the department's staff was 45 people. That works out to 40 percent turnover a year. Along with these personnel issues, supporters of

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William R. Lawrence
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Richardson question whether politics and retribution were involved when patrol Lt. **William Lawrence** - who ran as chief deputy for sheriff candidate Richard Stitham in the Democratic primaries - was transferred to the court security division where Stitham works. **Lawrence's** lieutenant's job is to be transferred to the jail and the position to be opened for applicants. Ross denies any involvement in the transfer, citing a letter from Reynolds in June that temporarily transferred **Lawrence** to the courts out of concern for jail security. Ross said he sought to retain **Lawrence's** position and add a second lieutenant's position to improve oversight at the jail, but was told by the Penobscot County commissioners that the jail position needed to come from existing positions.

For his part, **Lawrence** has referred any comments to his attorney Warren Silver, who in turn declined to comment.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
July 16, 1999

Stop Fraud Seminar set to stop scams in Lee

Author/Byline: Unknown

A Stop Fraud Seminar, an effort to stop telemarketing scams and frauds in the community, will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday, July 22, at the Lee Town Office. The seminar is hosted by the American Association of Retired Persons, the Penobscot County Sheriff's Department and the town of Lee.

The seminar is open to the public. The purpose is to alert both younger and older people to popular scams and frauds. Americans of all ages are victims and lose billions of dollars every year.

Speakers will be Sgt. **William Lawrence** and Deputy Paul Gaucher of the Penobscot County Sheriff's Department. For information, call 947-4585 or 738-2134.

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[CB&A Note: To view this Lawsuit in its entirety, please follow the links below.]

<https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/924/1219/1471524/>
<https://casetext.com/case/comfort-v-town-of-pittsfield>

Bangor Daily News (ME)
May 23, 1996

Pittsfield man wins \$385,000 in suit against police officer> 1993 arrest for OUI led to accused's charges of excessive force

Author/Byline: John Ripley

A Pittsfield man Pittsfiwho accused a police officer of excessive force three years ago has reached a \$385,000 out-of-court settlement with the town.

Kenneth Comfort claimed in a federal lawsuit that Pittsfield Officer Christopher Tremblay shoved his head against a door jamb after arresting him for drunken driving on May 15, 1993. In documents filed in U.S. District Court, Comfort, 33, said he agreed to take a sobriety test after being stopped for driving erratically as long as his truck would be returned to him if he passed the exam. But upon arriving at the station, an officer allegedly asked a dispatcher to have Comfort's truck towed. After a heated argument, Comfort was arrested by Tremblay, who handcuffed him and allegedly shoved his head against the door jamb. In the lawsuit, Comfort recalled receiving a second blow before losing consciousness and striking his head on the floor of the station. He later was treated at a hospital for damage to his right eye, bruises, cuts on his chin, and broken teeth. Comfort claimed in the lawsuit that he did not resist arrest, and that another officer, Ronald Richards, corroborated much of his story.

Tremblay allegedly told Richards he thought he had killed Comfort, who also claimed that police altered incident reports to cover up the alleged beating. Comfort was acquitted of the OUI charges in December 1995, partly because of Richards' testimony.

In response to the lawsuit, the town of Pittsfield, former Chief **William Lawrence**, Officers Wilfred Dodge and Tremblay and dispatcher Mary Heath argued that they should be protected by the qualified immunity standard, which generally protects public officials from civil lawsuits.

Though some of Comfort's claims were dismissed, a federal judge last month allowed the crux of his case to proceed to trial. Within two weeks, the case was settled. The bulk of the \$385,000 settlement was paid by the town's insurance company, said Town Manager Dwight Doherty. Doherty referred further comment to attorneys, who could not be reached Wednesday.

Comfort's lawyer, Joshua Tardy, said Tuesday, "Mr. Comfort views it as a fair settlement of his claims, and he's extremely happy to get the case over and done with and he's looking forward to moving on."

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
December 7, 1995

Man suing officers > Case alleges police brutality

Author/Byline: Sharon Mack

Having been acquitted in court, a Pittsfield man is turning the legal system back on police he said brutalized him. Kenneth "K.C." Comfort of Pittsfield was found not guilty Wednesday of operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquor, after a three-day jury trial in Somerset County Superior Court. The OUI charge was the first of two cases involving the Pittsfield Police Department and Comfort. The second case is a pending police brutality suit in U.S. District Court in Bangor.

According to Pittsfield Police Chief Steve Emery, the testimony of former Pittsfield Police Officer Ronald Richards was a major factor in Comfort's acquittal. Emery said Richards' testimony contradicted that of two other Pittsfield officers -- Chris Tremblay and Wilfred Dodge -- who arrested Comfort in Pittsfield 2 1/2 years ago. Emery said Richards' testimony planted doubts in the jurors' minds. He said the jury deliberated only a few minutes before returning the not guilty verdict Wednesday morning.

Comfort filed the brutality suit in May 1995, alleging he received serious injuries during an arrest by two Pittsfield police officers in May 1993. Comfort also alleges that police reports were altered to cover up the incident. Comfort, 30, had to be taken from the Pittsfield Police Station by ambulance after he sustained a fractured jaw, possible nerve damage, vision loss in his right eye, a chin laceration, and damaged and fractured teeth.

Specifically named in the suit are former police Chief **William Lawrence**, Officers Christopher Tremblay and Wilfred Dodge, and dispatcher Mary Heath.

According to the incident log at the Pittsfield Police Department, Tremblay and Dodge struggled with Comfort during his arrest on the OUI charge. The log stated that Comfort was resisting arrest and that all three men fell during the altercation. Neither officer was injured.

The suit, however, states that Comfort was pushed through a narrow doorway by the officers "with excessive force" and landed on his face. His hands were cuffed behind his back. The suit further states that a report on the incident, filed by Officer Dodge, was altered without his knowledge and was part of a conspiracy among the other officer, the chief and the dispatcher to hide the truth about the incident. After Dodge filed his report, Tremblay and **Lawrence** removed it from the file and altered it, without Dodge's consent, the suit maintains.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
July 28, 1995

Man acquitted of assaulting ex-police chief > Craig confronted investigator after being followed for a year

Author/Byline: Sharon Mack

Daniel Craig, 34, of Bangor, was acquitted in Penobscot County Superior Court Thursday afternoon of charges he threatened, assaulted and robbed a private investigator that had been following and filming his family for a year. Craig had been charged with attacking **William Lawrence**, Pittsfield's former police chief and a private investigator who had been observing Craig and his family for a Workers' Compensation insurance adjuster.

The incident happened on Nov. 17, 1994, nearly a year after Craig had noticed a red pickup truck following and photographing various members of the Craig family. Craig maintained throughout the four-day trial that he believed **Lawrence** was stalking his family and was frightened for their well-being, "I knew that if we were to go in that courtroom and just tell the truth, the system would work," said Craig following the verdict. "This verdict proved that **Bill Lawrence** is dishonest. The man has made my life a living hell for over a year."

Craig testified that he approached **Lawrence** as he was sitting in his truck at the WZON radio station in Bangor. He said he put his arm out to stop **Lawrence** from advancing on him. **Lawrence** said he was 6 feet tall and weighed 225 pounds and lifted weights. Craig weighs about 120 pounds, is 5-feet-5 inches tall and is 100 percent disabled from a back injury. Craig said he repeatedly demanded to know who **Lawrence** was and why he was stalking his family, but **Lawrence** just swore at him and told him it was none of his business. When Craig asked for **Lawrence's** film and video, he willingly handed it over, Craig said.

The jury of nine men and three women chose not to believe **Lawrence's** version of the incident. **Lawrence** testified that Craig threatened him with a metal pipe, struck him in the chest and stole his films. "This is not Dodge City. This is Bangor, Maine," Assistant District Attorney Gregory Campbell told the jury in his closing remarks. "We don't settle our disputes by rounding up our family and going after somebody. We use the law." But Becky and Dan Craig said the law had failed them when they repeatedly tried to report what they believed was a stalking.

In desperation, after more than a year of being watched, filmed and followed, Dan decided to take matters into his own hands. He confronted **Lawrence** as the private eye was videotaping his family and demanded to know who he was and what he wanted. He asked **Lawrence** for his film and **Lawrence** handed it to him. Once it was developed, the film was turned over to the Bangor police, part of the evidence Craig believed he needed to stop a stalker.

The jury deliberated less than 90 minutes, a period of time that included a lunch break, before bringing back not guilty verdicts on all three charges: criminal threatening with a dangerous

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weapon, assault and theft. In his closing remarks, defense attorney N. Laurence Willey Jr. said that **Lawrence** had lied to the investigating officer, lied to the company that had hired him for the surveillance and lied on the witness stand. "It is outrageous. This family has been terrorized for over a year. **William Lawrence** was the aggressor. He was the aggressor every day that he terrorized this fine family." Willey also maintained that **Lawrence's** motive was to harass Craig and force a confrontation because if convicted of a criminal charge, Craig would lose all workers' compensation benefits.

Lawrence is not done with court proceedings, however. He, along with two Pittsfield police officers, a dispatcher and the town of Pittsfield, are defendants in a police brutality civil suit filed in federal court in Bangor. The suit alleges that **Lawrence** changed police reports following an arrest in Pittsfield in May 1993 in which the person arrested sustained serious injuries. The reports indicate the man fell in a stairway and was injured.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
November 18, 1993

Police chief quits to take position in private sector

Author/Byline: Sharon Mack

Pittsfield's controversial police chief resigned his position this week. **William Lawrence**, in a letter to Town Manager D. Dwight Dogherty, said, "It has been a great experience working for you and the town of Pittsfield. However, I've had an offer to return to the private sector that I cannot turn down."

On Wednesday, **Lawrence** said, "After three years as chief here, I have reached all the goals I originally wanted." **Lawrence** said he had been entertaining offers for private-sector jobs for the last year and the most recent offer, which he would not disclose, "was just too good to pass up."

Town councilors expressed concern recently over serious complaints made by residents regarding **Lawrence's** job performance and implications by some of his own officers that he is difficult to work with. But the chief said the complaints were based on his "get-tough" policing methods, which contrasted with previous policing philosophy in town. "Unfortunately, that's the role we have to play," **Lawrence** said in an October interview. "Sometimes the police have to make tough decisions. I'm not saying (the decisions) are always right, but they have to be made."

Lawrence said this week his tenure in Pittsfield "had been both positive and negative. Right now, I really don't want to be in the public eye any longer." **Lawrence** said he eventually will move to either the Bangor or Portland area from Pittsfield.

Dogherty said he will begin advertising the position immediately and conduct a search for a new police chief. He said the process will take at least two months. **Lawrence's** last day as chief will be Dec. 11, and Sgt. Timothy Roussin will be acting chief until a replacement is hired.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
October 23, 1993

Complaints raised about head of police > Chief blames his 'get tough' policy

Author/Byline: Sharon Mack

Chief **William Lawrence** "Unfortunately, that's the role we have to play. Sometimes (the police) have to make tough decisions. I'm not saying (the decisions) are always right, but they have to be made. I am not a fence sitter," said the chief. "I have tough decisions to make and I'm not afraid of making those decisions," said **Lawrence**. "I am a working chief," he explained, "sometimes people expect me to be a politician."

Town Manager D. Dwight Dogherty said this week "I am concerned that the image of the police department is not better than it is." He said complaints had been more frequent recently and that he is dealing with them on a "case by case basis."

Although the Pittsfield department's standard operating procedure forbids officers from making "any derogatory, discreditable or disparaging public statements concerning the department or its officers," several law enforcement officers have brought their concerns to the NEWS. At least three residents have also talked to NEWS reporters about alleged inappropriate behavior by the chief after they made official complaints to town administrators.

They charge that **Lawrence** has violated his own policies by: having unauthorized persons in the cruiser while on duty; pitting one officer against another within the department; using the department's computer link with state police files to provide information to private detectives; allowing unauthorized personnel into the dispatch center while the computer is being used; and not telling the truth when dealing with citizens or the media.

Lawrence said no one has brought forth any problems to his attention regarding the use of the dispatch center. He didn't respond directly concerning any of the other complaints. "When a citizen has a problem with one of my officers, the citizen comes to me with his complaint. When they have a complaint with me, where do they go? To the town manager and the media," he said.

The chief defended his aggressive police style with statistics. "Before I came here, we had a 9 percent clearance rate. Since I've been here, it's been 30 percent or better. That tells me that not much was being done before I got here." **Lawrence** also said that he has made important strides in updating equipment and training for his officers, despite a bare bones budget.

Rumors of dissatisfaction within the department have been rampant in past months, including complaints that **Lawrence's** own officers are having difficulty working with him. One officer, Ronald Richards, recently was suspended for four days without pay by **Lawrence** and has filed a grievance with the police union regarding that action. "I may have stepped on some toes," said

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Lawrence, but he added that "my position is not a popular position. I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't."

Mayor Robert Downs confirmed this week that he had received complaints from some residents regarding **Lawrence's** actions both on and off the job. He said he followed up each complaint with a visit to the town manager. He said he had received infrequent complaints throughout the two years that **Lawrence** has served in Pittsfield, but that the number and severity of the complaints has increased in recent months.

Councilor Kathleen Brattoya said she also had received complaints, both in person and in writing. When asked if she felt the complaints were frivolous or serious, she said "Any complaint against a public official is serious. But also, there are usually three sides to any story: the complainant's version, the official's version and the truth. I have received more than a few letters regarding his performance. I am very concerned. We may have to look at our choice of chief in the future."

Dogherty attributed many of the complaints to "aggrieved parties" and said that **Lawrence's** administrative style was very different than his predecessor, Spencer Havey's, and had made some residents uncomfortable. "I think this has a lot to do with this being a small town with a city mentality in the administration of police procedure. What appears to an innocent bystander as out of line or poor judgement, may have been police techniques to evoke an admission," he said.

Dogherty said there clearly was dissension in the department, but he said it was not serious enough to impede police operations or efficiency. "If an officer needed assistance, there is no officer that would not respond. But in interpersonal dealings, there is some strain."

Lawrence was hired as Pittsfield's chief in March of 1991, following a brief stint as a private investigator. From 1977 to 1988 he served first as a patrolman and eventually as a detective for various police departments, including Pittsfield, Bangor, and Waterville.

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William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
October 6, 1993

Weekend incidents at MCI raise questions by FBI, attorney general

Author/Byline: the NEWS Staff

In the wake of a near riot on the campus of Maine Central Institute last weekend, reportedly racially motivated, state and federal law enforcement agencies have begun asking questions of the Pittsfield Police Department. Pittsfield Police Chief **William Lawrence** said the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Maine Attorney General's Office were pressuring him for information because the incident had been characterized as racial in nature.

U.S. Attorney Jay McCloskey confirmed Tuesday that he had asked the FBI to conduct some preliminary inquiries about the incident to determine whether further investigation is appropriate. McCloskey said his office was interested in possible federal civil-rights violations. McCloskey said his request to the FBI was standard procedure and was prompted by newspaper articles. Meanwhile, at least one parent kept her child home from the school on Tuesday, fearing for the student's safety. The parent said she knew of other parents who also kept their children home, but school officials said attendance was normal. Headmaster Douglas Cummings said Tuesday that he was considering cancellation of homecoming activities this weekend because of concern over other outbreaks of violence. No decision had been made late Tuesday and youngsters were busy with homecoming preparations.

Throughout the day Tuesday, MCI students and administrators made their way through the Pittsfield police station as **Lawrence** took statements and tried to sort through divergent stories of the weekend's activities. Calls to **Lawrence**'s office were not returned and he did not make himself available for interviews. However, all three officers involved in the weekend incidents -- Christopher Tremblay, Jason Richards and Sgt. Tim Roussin -- reportedly met with **Lawrence** Tuesday night to assess progress in the investigation. Earlier in the day, **Lawrence** placed a gag order on all Pittsfield officers, forbidding them to discuss any of the weekend's events.

The reports of violence last weekend included altercations between town and boarding students, an alleged sexual assault on a town student by a boarding student, and an alleged armed robbery of town students by boarding students. Donald Chute, 21, of Pittsfield, who was charged with criminal threatening with a dangerous weapon during a confrontation between two groups of students, maintains that his actions had nothing to do with any fighting going on between the students. He said he was defending his brother and his brother's property with a BB gun. Chute and a group of his friends said in an interview that the problems between the town and dormitory students have more to do with cultural differences than race. "They claim they come here hoping to get away from all the big city street violence. That's not true because they just bring it here with them," said a local youth who didn't want to be identified because he said he feared for his safety at the school.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
May 10, 1993

Newport police review response policy

Author/Byline: Sharon Mack

Police and town officials are reviewing their police response policy in Newport this week. Newport police came under fire in past years because of a quirk in the location of their commercialized zone, called the Triangle, which straddles the town line. Many small police departments, particularly in rural areas, are grappling with the questions, "When do we cross that town line? Do we have the authority to do so?"

Most organized police departments in central Maine have no policies. Some have specific guidelines, but many have a simply understood agreement that they will respond outside their town limits only when another officer requests help. East Millinocket, for example, borders Medway and Millinocket, and all three towns have organized police departments. According to Officer Willard Brannen, an informal agreement exists, not in the form of a policy or contract, that allows for mutual aid among the three towns. Brannen said that each police department responds when requested by any other for an officer needing assistance or in a serious emergency situation. Fairfield will respond when requested by Waterville, Oakland, Skowhegan or Winslow. Lincoln will respond in the middle of the night to assist with an accident on Interstate 95, said Officer Ken DeBeck, "as will Medway up above us and Howland down below."

Pittsfield police Chief **William Lawrence** said that his department would respond out of town for three reasons: another officer requesting assistance; as part of the mutual aid contract with Newport police; and to stand by at a traffic accident with injuries until the proper agency can arrive. Pittsfield also has no organized police departments bordering its jurisdiction. "It is a very gray area," said **Lawrence**. "If we respond to a situation out of town, we could probably be held liable. But if another agency requests our assistance in an emergency, we could probably be held accountable if we didn't respond." **Lawrence** said Pittsfield police are sworn in when hired "to uphold the state, federal and town laws for the town of Pittsfield. Nowhere else. But we also have an obligation to protect the community and uphold other officers. Crime doesn't stop at town lines. The drugs in Hartland are being sold in Pittsfield. And the drugs in Pittsfield are being sold in Hartland."

Pittsfield officers also use town cruisers to attend court in Skowhegan. In Newport, the District Court is across the street from the police station but Superior Court is in Bangor, along with the jail. In Newport, the Triangle is a strip of fast-food restaurants, car dealerships, gas stations, auto supply and other businesses that is bisected by the town line. Some of the businesses sit on the Palmyra side of the border. Problems arise with coverage of the area because unlike many of the other mid-Maine departments, no organized police department borders Newport. Palmyra is covered by state police and Somerset County agencies. If it is 3 a.m. and no county or state

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

officer is on duty, the only law enforcement person within miles is the Newport on-duty officer. The situation already has been put to the test: Two years ago, a Newport officer had to sit in a gas station parking lot, just feet from a brawl at a restaurant, unable to respond until a county or state officer arrived, because of the response policy.

The practice of crossing town lines, for any reason, is expected to be a sticking point in the negotiation of the new policy. The original response policy was created in 1991, but revised in 1993 specifically to address response concerns at the Triangle. Some Newport residents did not want the town police responding out of town for any reason, believing that the town would be liable for being outside their jurisdiction. The policy was changed at that time so Newport can go over the line to crime scenes in Palmyra only when specifically requested to do so by another officer who is already at that scene.

With the current construction of a Wal-Mart just over the Newport line in Palmyra, and the possibility of several more spinoff businesses, town officials are more concerned than ever about police coverage at the border.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bangor Daily News (ME)
December 1, 1992

Police force reduction still a Pittsfield option

Author/Byline: Brenda Seekins

A reduction in the police force is one of the options Pittsfield town councilors left open as a way to trim the proposed 1993 municipal budget. More than \$20,000 was cut from the 1993 municipal budget in Pittsfield during the first night of budget deliberations by the council Monday. A majority of the savings in the proposed budget came from the police department budget. While \$5,200 in new weapons and computer software were eliminated with little discussion, Chief **Bill Lawrence** was reluctant to recommend a smaller force. To assist the council in its decisions, he prepared a cost comparison between a five-man force and a four-man force.

With the recent resignation of one officer, **Lawrence** is currently working with a four-man department. Although **Lawrence** acknowledged that he could operate with a four-man force, he cautioned that the result would be added overtime costs and increased stress for remaining officers. "I'm not sure the savings is worth going without that fifth man," **Lawrence** said. With a four-person department, the town would save \$20,800 in personnel costs. But **Lawrence** estimated that overtime costs for a smaller department would increase \$20,950. The total personnel costs for five people would be \$171,360, compared to \$163,788 for four people.

"It appears we'll get more service with a five-man department and not as much overtime cost. It's more than double in overtime costs with four men. For the extra \$7,572, we're better off with the fifth man," said Councilor Everett Connors.

Councilors discussed various options that could be pursued with a four-person police department, including the elimination of some shifts, using reserve officers for weekend work only, and limiting the amount of overtime one officer could work. Currently, the union contract requires that any open shift be offered to full-time officers, thereby increasing overtime expenses. To limit the overtime or add more work for reserve officers would require renegotiation of the union contract.

Officer Chris Tremblay said he worked 50 hours in overtime last week. "I turned down two shifts, and I'm still feeling tired. If that went on year-round, you'd take as much (overtime) as you could get, but burnout is another factor."

Tremblay also cited the experience of Chief **Lawrence** as an investigator. With the five-person force, he said, **Lawrence** would be free to follow up on investigations rather than working a patrol shift. The fifth person, **Lawrence** said, also would provide more training opportunities for the officers. "It works real smooth with five men," Tremblay said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William R. Lawrence
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"This town likes the 24-hour service and the fact that someone is available to answer their calls," **Lawrence** said. "If you're suggesting the State Police or the Sheriff's Department could handle some shifts, they're already stretching their limits. There's no guarantee they could respond."

In the capital budget, the council trimmed \$10,000 from the highway department reserve account. The account may be increased by the same amount next year. For additional savings, the councilors once again opted to forego the \$300 annual stipend for each councilor for a total of \$2,100. Councilors will receive \$1 a year. Councilors favored an expense account capped at \$300 for councilors to use at their discretion.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough & Winona Saunders
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 11

Christopher J. Russo

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

**Christopher J. Russo
17150 N. Bay Road #2703
Sunny Isles Beach, Florida 33160**

January 18, 2025

VIA E-MAIL

Re: Town Manager of Juno Beach, Florida

Dear Mr. Baenziger:

This letter and attached resume, is in response to your recruitment for the above-referenced position. The Town Manager of Juno Beach shares many of the same opportunities and challenges I have been involved with while serving as City Manager of Sunny Isles Beach, Florida (2000-2005/2012-2021), Town Administrator of Southwest Ranches, Florida (2007-2008), and Village Manager of Port Chester, New York (2008-2012). This was also true of my previous positions as the first Administrator of Rye Brook, New York (1987-2000) and Assistant to the Manager in Scarsdale, New York (1980-1986). Each of these communities share with the Town of Juno Beach an educated aware and involved electorate.

As with other communities I served, it appears you are looking for a Town Manager who is an inclusive and process-oriented leader, one who will assure that all voices are heard in decision-making and who will execute the policies, goals and objectives of the Town Council in a timely manner.

I believe four key traits are critical to the success of the Town Manager: technical knowledge, pertinent experience, highly developed communication and listening skills, and an open-minded attitude toward problem solving. Time and again, I have found that sophisticated governing bodies and citizens require a broad and inclusive participatory process. This openness provides everyone with the opportunity to be heard. And when combined with an open-minded attitude in accepting possible alternatives, it generally results in solutions that are both focused on the need at hand and willingly embraced by the community.

My role is to help the Town Council and team to articulate, prioritize and accomplish their goals in a fiscally responsible way while at the same time creating positive and responsive interactions with sophisticated and occasionally demanding citizens. I succeed by fostering a strong work ethic among staff, by securing the best talent in the community to help unlock a municipality's unique internal resources, and by keeping the municipality first and foremost a service entity, and always managed in a totally fiscally responsible way.

I learned the fundamentals of government management while on-the-job in Scarsdale, NY, which is recognized as one of the best-managed municipalities in the nation. I took this valuable knowledge and made a significant difference during my tenure in the Village of Rye Brook. I am also extremely proud of the achievements in Sunny Isles Beach over a total of 15 years. And I look forward to the opportunity to serve such a highly regarded Town as Juno Beach.

I believe I possess the integrity, vision, skills, experience and attention to detail to meet the challenges and opportunities that go along with the position of Town Manager. I have a long history in public service, with an established and verifiable record of professional values and ethics. I hope I have the opportunity to serve the Town of Juno Beach as the next Town Manager.

Very truly yours,

Christopher J. Russa

Christopher J. Russo

17150 N. Bay Road, Unit 2703
 Sunny Isles Beach, FL. 33160
 cjrsix@gmail.com
 786-202-1131

Summary: 30 + years of experience managing all aspects of municipal government operations. Skilled in fiscal planning and budgeting, alternate service delivery, zoning & planning procedures, collective bargaining, consensus building and leadership through adversity, turnaround and rapid growth situations. *Significant consulting experience in both the public and private sectors.* Proven capability to deliver high-quality, cost-effective services in affluent and working-class communities in suburban, urban, and waterfront locations.

City Manager, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL 2012 to 2021

A diverse, waterfront community incorporated in 1997 with approximately 300 F/T employees, an estimated assessed value of over \$12 billion in 2021. The FY 2021-2022 Adopted Budget is 131.8M including CIP of 28.5M. Was requested by the Commission to come back to Sunny Isles Beach after the city experienced turnover of five City Managers in my absence from 2005-2012.

Major Achievements

- Oversaw \$35 million project to underground FPL and other overhead utility lines and install decorative street lighting throughout the city.
- Oversaw design and construction of two pedestrian bridges:
 - 174th Street Pedestrian Bridge built across a major canal.
 - 163rd Street Pedestrian Overpass across six lanes of a major State Road.
- Oversaw design and construction of the city's premier, five acre Gateway Park.
- Succession Planning.
- Significantly improved relations with members of the Police Union and Non-union Employees.
- Oversaw implementation of Smart City efforts including installation of free WiFi in public parks and the beach, real-time mobile application for the city's free bus service, solar charging benches in city parks and SIBAlert, a voluntary alert program that sends emergency alerts and notifications to residents.

Chris Russo & Associates (CRA), Sunny Isles Beach, FL 2005 to 2012

I took an opportunity in the private sector to establish CRA, utilizing my municipal management experience to provide municipalities in FL and NY and significant private sector property owners with specialized management services in the areas of planning, zoning, and the full-range of municipal government operations.

Village Manager, Village of Port Chester, NY 2008 to 2012

Located on Long Island Sound, the Village Port Chester (VPC) is a diverse, urban/suburban community with a large immigrant and low-income population. Key issues are taxes, cost control, housing and property maintenance. VPC was also struggling to comply with Dept. of Justice action concerning voter representation.

Major Achievements

- Restructured organization to better focus resources on high priority tasks.
- Reversed long period of inaction by setting key priorities for Board and plans for staff.

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- Developed long neglected plan for Code Enforcement.
- Addressed long dormant personnel issues such as discipline and evaluation procedures.
- Initiated effort to balance large-scale redevelopment with restoration of the historic aspects of the 'Main Street' business district.

Town Administrator Southwest Ranches, FL 2007 to 2008

Incorporated in 2000, Southwest Ranches provides all municipal services via contracts with private firms and public agencies. As Town Administrator, I was responsible for restructuring and bolstering professionalism of the entire government organization and re-establishing positive working relationships with government agencies and other business entities.

Major Achievements

- Reversed several years of negative financial audits, corrected bidding procedures.
- Rebuilt financial reporting systems to conform to government accounting rules, established the first line-item budget.
- Developed specifications, negotiated contracts for all services, including sanitation, fire and police.

City Manager, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL. 2000 to 2005

A diverse, waterfront community incorporated in 1997 with an estimated assessed value of \$6 billion in 2005. SIB experienced the fastest increase in residential property value in South Florida in 2002. Served as **Chief Administrative and Budget Officer**. Directed all operating departments and responsible for the appointment, supervision and performance of all city employees.

Major Achievements

- Planned and implemented a public/private partnership to spur development of the Government Center.
- Led the effort to work cooperatively with the FDOT to cleanup and beautify the State roads in the city. Those agreements are still in place.
- Implemented the City's first Disaster & Emergency Response Plan.
- Initiated a Master Plan for the Police Dept. and supervised its development.
- Developed the first five year Capital Improvement Plan.

Village Administrator, Village of Rye Brook, NY 1987 to 2000

An affluent community in Westchester County, NY with estimated assessed value of \$3 billion in 2000. Profiled in the New York Times (May, 1992 and March, 1994) as a progressive local government. Served as the municipality's first senior manager, supervising all government services including: budgeting, personnel, police, fire, public works, parks and recreation. Responsible for village elections and records management; acquisition of public lands; contract negotiation and dispute resolution; and planning process and economic development.

Major Achievements

- Utilized master planning techniques for Police, Fire, and Finance, resulting in a surplus despite tight economic times.
- Streamlined sanitation and recycling programs resulting in a savings of more than \$2 million while maintaining high quality services.

Christopher J. Russo

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- Planned and led construction of a new Village Hall/Police HQ and the first Fire Dept. and station.
- Computerized village operations and developed the first disaster emergency plan.

Assistant to the Village Manager, Village of Scarsdale, NY **1980 to 1987**

A high-profile affluent community in suburban NY. Estimated assessed value of \$7 billion. Involved in all aspects of village government including contract negotiations with six unions.

Major Achievements

- Headed lead agency program in the Building Dept. to streamline permitting process.
- Contact person for the downtown redevelopment consulting team, working with civic, citizen advisory and business groups.
- Supported the Police Dept. accreditation program by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement.

Consulting Experience **1980 to 2012**

Assisted local governments in NY, NJ and MD with: development of strategic plans; executive search for administrator/manager and dept. head positions; and labor contract negotiations and dispute resolution. Also assessed viability of consolidating local government operations in NY and NJ and served as an invited speaker at more than 30 conferences on topics such as “Innovations in Local Government,” “Public/Private Partnerships,” “Economic Development Incentives,” and “Leadership in Adversity.”

Professional Organizations

- Member, Miami-Dade City/County Management Association (2000 to present)
Treasurer in 2021/2022
- Member, FL City and County Management Association (2000 to present)
- Executive Board Member, NY Conference of Mayors (1994/1995)
- Chairman, Point Source Subcommittee, L.I. Sound Task Force to eliminate nitrogen and other pollutants (1993)
- Member, International City/County Management Association (1980 to present)
- Former President, NY Municipal Management Association (1990-1991)
- Former President, A.S.P.A., Lower Hudson Valley Chapter (1985-1986)

Education

M.P.A. Degree with Distinction, Public Administration, Pace University, White Plains, NY 1984
B.A. Degree with Honors, Public Administration, Pace University, Pleasantville, NY 1980
Graduated Salesian High School, New Rochelle, NY 1976

To: recruit28@cb-asso.com

I was out of office as City Manager in December 2021, by a Mayor who was only in office for one year. My wife had launched a company for women's apparel, including tracksuits, and handbags just prior to my termination. I have helped her launch her new brand, she is the boss. I've been handling the business and financial side of the company and will continue until I get back to being a Town Manager. She has done well and has traveled for fashion shows in Las Vegas, France, New Jersey, Miami Art Basel, and Twice in New York City. Once I get back to being a Government Manager, I'll be out of the fashion business.

As I started to apply for various positions, within six months, approximately April 2022, I was offered a position approximately two hours North of Sunny Isles Beach. The community was affluent, but we decided we did not want to move there, or to a number of other positions.

From December 2022 into 2023 I was consulting for the Village of Bal Harbour, FL. Bal Harbour is planning to build a new Village Hall. I've had quite a bit of experience in this and was asked by the Village Manager, Jorge Gonzalez to help.

I was currently the Vice President of the Miami Dade City County Managers Association (MDCCMA) 2023-24. I started as Treasurer for the 2021-22 year then Secretary from 2022-23. and currently the Vice President until October 2024. I'm still here in Miami- Dade County.

Best Regards,
Chris Russo

Candidate Introduction

Section 11**CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO**

EDUCATION

M.P.A. Degree with Distinction, Public Administration, Pace University, White Plains, NY 1984
 B.A. Degree with Honors, Public Administration, Pace University, Pleasantville, NY 1980
 Graduated Salesian High School, New Rochelle, NY 1976

EXPERIENCE

Management Consulting	2022 – Present
City Manager of Sunny Isles Beach, FL	2012 – 2021
Chris Russo & Associates (CRA)	2005 – 2012
City Manager of Sunny Isles Beach, FL	2000 – 2005
Village Administrator of Rye Brook, NY	1987 – 2000
Assistant to the Village Manager, Scarsdale NY	1980 – 1987

BACKGROUND

I have most recently been the City Manager of Sunny Isles Beach Florida for a total of 15 years. It is located along the North East corner of Miami Dade County, along the Atlantic Ocean, which is total beach and the famous Newport Fishing Pier. The city has been incorporated for 25 years, and has redeveloped most of the rundown oceanfront motels into luxury condominiums and hotels. The city is approximately 2.4 square miles, with a population of approximately 23,000 people. There is approximately 1.5 square miles of Upland.

The City of Sunny Isles Beach has a total of 281 employees, about 40 of them are part-time or seasonal. As Manager, I had eight direct reports whom I supervised.

The city is in excellent financial shape. My last Budget was for fiscal year 2021- 2022, the total budget was \$131,767,716. The General Fund was \$87,212,386. The rest of the budget includes the following; Capital Budget of \$26,010,329. Stormwater Fund \$2,416,038. Special Revenue Funds totaling \$16,128,963 broken down as follows by Fund; Street Construction and Maintenance \$3,110,530. Building Fund of \$11,394,591. Lastly, Public Art Trust Fund of \$1,623,842.

The three most important issues facing the City of Sunny Isles Beach;

1. Continued improvements to eliminate neighborhood flooding and significant upgrading of our storm water system, which includes additional smaller underground storm water pumping stations in parts of the city.

Section 11**CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO**

2. The undergrounding of all overhead utilities along the major roads of our city is underway, especially Collins Avenue, SR A1A. This is an undertaking that, when completed, will have cost approximately \$50,000,000. Not only this will be a significant aesthetic improvement, it will result in safety by no longer having to worry about live wires exposed on the streets or sidewalks after a rain storm or hurricane.
3. The concerns of the residents about over development, especially in Town Center and the West side of the city is a very important issue. This is also connected to the issue of affordability. As our new Mayor has said, that we need to look at affordability for young people, seniors, and others.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I have traveled through the Juno Beach area for many decades to visit family, friends and meetings with FPL in that area. This town has always reminded me the many small fishing towns I grew up close to along the coast of New York and Connecticut on Long Island sound. I've actually taken my children to visit the Loggerhead Marine Life Center and have thought that Juno Beach would be the type of town I would want to complete my career in and live out my life, professionally and personally.

The management style I learned and have employed most of my career is MBO- Management by Objective. It's successful and involves a very straightforward process of setting goals and objectives for my employees, and working together to make them happen. I would describe my management style as thoughtful, inclusive, and experienced. I am aware and on top of everything at all times- so much so my staff would tell you they think I have "ADD"- attention deficit disorder. I would be doing so many things at once and would often joke with them that they have my "complete divided attention".

In other words, I'm pretty much on top of every department all the time. I do delegate, but I still want to know what is going on. If you asked the elected officials for whom I have worked, they would say that I'm responsive, I'm open minded, and can be flexible. I always work to try to meet the desires and expectations of my elected officials.

I believe that my strengths are my experience, knowledge, open mindedness, flexibility and creativity. Also, once you've got my attention, I listen well. As for my weaknesses, I've already admitted that getting my attention, on some occasions, can be hard. Because I am very easy-going, and I do give too many chances to individuals- perhaps more than I should.

As manager, I use a fairly standard performance evaluation process. The system ensures that everyone is focused on the areas which support our goals in each department. I encourage active participation in the process for any improvements that are recommended. Compensation of

Section 11**CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO**

individuals is based on performance, and their contribution to the city. It is very much a traditional long-standing performance evaluation program.

My biggest success in this business my entire career has been being the Administrator and Manager for two brand new municipal incorporations. The Village of Rye Brook in New York was a new incorporation for which I became the first Village Administrator. Fourteen years later I became the City Manager of Sunny Isles Beach Florida, working for the City Commission, where we developed a small seaside town into a fully functional city that provides excellent services for its residents. These start- up governments, staffing them up, the improvement of aging infrastructure, and the planning and construction of the Government Centers, Community Centers, and Parks for both communities have been the highlight of my career.

Within these overall successes, there were also some failures. In the mid-1990s Rye Brook had been contracting with the neighboring village for fire protection. By this time Rye Brook was paying a significant portion of the cost of this fire service, not having any of the fire service stationed within our village. We were paying a significant portion of the cost without having a comparable amount of the fire protection. Rye Brook made a decision to contract with a private provider of fire service. This was a company called Rural Metro out of Scottsdale Arizona. They started out with a good service stationed within our village. They operated with full-time paid firefighters and temporary auxiliary Reserve Firefighters, who are called in on demand when necessary. In the beginning everything was working fine. However, after about a year the number of auxiliary firefighters was dwindling. They were dwindling because they were threatened at their full-time jobs not to do part-time work for Rye Brook. The threats came from the fire union. Eventually, the unions approach worked. At one point we had a house fire but not enough reserves. Thankfully no one was injured. After this incident, we terminated the private fire company. I lead a committee of volunteers and professional Firefighters from both communities to work out a plan that would be equitable and improve the fire coverage to Rye Brook. Although this was a failure, the end result was putting two communities together so something like this would never happen again. To this day, the new system between the two communities has worked very well.

Like most municipal managers, I have had to terminate about 12 to 15 people over about 30 years as a Manager. I believe I have handled these terminations properly and calmly, explaining to them some of their deficiencies for the position. I have never had any negative incidents, though, of course, I've never felt good about this part of my job.

In my opinion, Juno Beach's challenges will include future requested development. I believe that the Town has, and should maintain, the existing land-use and zoning regulations with perhaps some minor changes, from time to time. The Town of Juno Beach is one of those diamonds in the rough. The hometown restaurants, fishing holes, relaxation areas and Parks along the water, are disappearing in much of the State of Florida. You will want to retain the character of the area- the local retail, commercial, restaurants and special places- which are disappearing throughout the State. There are many creative planning and place-making mechanisms that can

Section 11**CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO**

address that. Maintaining and upgrading necessary infrastructure will continuously be an issue. However, from what I see, the Town has done a good job in finding the funds and improving the stormwater system and other infrastructure. Realizing that the community is just about built-out, the future may see more proposed redevelopment projects. Succession planning is also an important challenge.

Should you choose me as your manager, my plan will begin and end with my listening and learning to all stakeholders in the Town from the Council to department heads and employees, and finally the various shareholders in the Town. This will occur during the first six months and probably beyond. I view this process as a mutual one, my getting to know you and you're getting to know me and my management style. Also, in any municipality I'll begin with understanding the finances of the Town. In today's world I think it's also important to understand the challenges faced by the Police Department, especially during the pandemic and now. Finally, and important, I will spend time getting familiar with the staff. This is critical to begin to foster a culture of respect and high morale. Included in this item, I will also want to spend some time with the Town Attorney so I am familiar with any of the issues with which the attorney may be dealing with. At the end of this six months, I'm still going to be learning. I expect to be circling back to the Council members from time to time, in order to bring them up to speed by letting them know what I am learning. I don't expect during this time to be making major decisions or making corrections or changes, unless there is an obvious need for action, such as an emergency, personnel claim, or a legal action.

With regard to the media, I have always had a good relationship. I have never had an embarrassing situation regarding the media. The other type of media, social media is a valuable tool to engage with residents, and to help foster a sense of community. In this role I would utilize social media to share relevant and engaging information on activities, events, projects, and initiatives. Sharing information in this way is an important tool for keeping the community informed, as well as keeping a pulse on the interest and concerns of the community. I have utilized social media in my profession, including during my time in the city of Sunny Isles Beach, where we launched a re-branding campaign. We used social media to share information on the progress of the project, as well as to collect valuable input from the community on the development of the new brand. This allowed us to engage a larger percentage of the community, to be a part of the process and as such, created a brand that the community understood, valued, and supported.

I have no hesitation when it becomes known in the community that I am a finalist in Juno Beach. We have plenty of community activist, however it is unlikely but possible that they try to throw dirt on me.

My leisure time is filled up mostly with my children- I have two toddlers as well as two grown-up children. The very little leisure time that's available other than the children, is my classic car.

Section 11**CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO**

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Experienced
- Detail-oriented
- Critical thinker
- Friendly/Open
- Caring/Responsible
- Capable

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

Our mayor resigned during the fall of 2021 from a five member Commission. The Vice Mayor ran against another seated Commissioner, leaving two open seats. The Commissioner who won to complete the remaining year of the Mayor's term, then *appointed* two commissioners to fill the vacant seats. With those appointments, she had secured enough votes to terminate me. The Police Chief resigned, other positions were also eliminated, and the newly elected Mayor terminated with no reason given. Having no blemishes on my record, I decided "valor was the better part of discretion" and I left.

MOST RECENT SALARY

My most recent salary was \$260,000.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
CHRISTOPHER "CHRIS" JOHN RUSSO**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Miami Dade County, FL	November 2022 – Failed to stop at Red Light Disposition: January 2023 – Dismissed Officer Request
Westchester County, NY	Not Available*
State	
Florida	No Records Found
New York	Not Available*

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Miami Dade County, FL	No Records Found
Westchester County, NY	Not Available*
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
New York	Not Available*

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

* Records are only available in this state for the past seven years and the candidate worked there prior to that period.

**Background Check Summary for
CHRISTOPHER “CHRIS” JOHN RUSSO**

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
CHRISTOPHER "CHRIS" JOHN RUSSO
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Christopher J. Russo

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.

- Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
- Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
- Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
- Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
- Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
- Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?
Yes No
- Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
- Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
- 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
- Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant. *None*

Attested to: Christopher J. Russo
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to monique@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM MST 10/28/2024.
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

Property of Colin Baenziger & Associates

**Background Check Summary for
CHRISTOPHER “CHRIS” JOHN RUSSO
Personal Disclosure**

ATTACHMENT FOR NUMBER 8 OF THE PERSONAL DISCLOSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/christopher.russo.397>

INSTAGRAM

@cjrsix

LINKEDIN

[linkedin.com/in/christopher-russo-02027719](https://www.linkedin.com/in/christopher-russo-02027719)

TWITTER

@Russo954

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

Norman Edelcup – Former Mayor, Sunny Isles Beach, FL 305-944-1618 786-202-1119

Mr. Edelcup has known Mr. Russo since 2002. The City had just incorporated, and Mr. Russo was already in place, having been hired by the previous Mayor. They worked together until 2005 when Mr. Russo resigned to do contract work. Mr. Edelcup was disappointed to see Mr. Russo leave, but it was his choice, and they have stayed in touch.

In 2012 Sunny Isles Beach had been through three managers since Mr. Russo left in 2005 and the position was open again. Mr. Edelcup asked Mr. Russo if he was interested in coming back. Mr. Edelcup was very happy to learn that Mr. Russo was interested. They worked together until 2014 when Mr. Edelcup reached his term limit as Mayor. Mr. Edelcup stayed involved in the community. Mr. Russo continued to do well until his departure in 2021.

While the city did not have a residency requirement, Mr. Russo decided to live in Sunny Isles Beach. This action was significant because a manager who lives in the city has the perspective of both a manager and a resident. They appreciated his desire to live in their community. Mr. Russo was very detailed and involved. He was an excellent manager.

Sunny Isles Beach was a motel community before they incorporated. The city was completely built out. They had to tear down before they could build, but achieved their goal of becoming a high-rise community. Mr. Russo was responsible for creating parks and building schools for their new city. They had a goal of every resident being within 10 minutes walking distance of a park. He did well in all aspects.

While Mr. Russo was involved in the hiring process, he worked with the human resource department in hiring. His decisions both in hiring and in general were good. He showed innovation while keeping the organization running at a high-performance level. Operations ran smoothly through his leadership.

The city is about two miles long and half a mile wide. Mr. Russo walked the City with the Mayor once a week, when possible, but at least twice a month. These walks gave them an opportunity to look at the community and ensure that everything visually looked the way they wanted it to.

In general, the public loved Mr. Russo. He had a great personality and was very open. He made time for anyone who asked for an appointment. He lived in the community and interacted with residents. He never missed a community meeting.

To keep the Commission informed Mr. Russo provided a monthly written report, but elected officials could knock on his door at any time to talk to him. He was onsite at construction projects. When he did not have an answer, he knew who to ask and returned the information quickly. He was timely in completing assignments.

Working together they created a zoning ordinance with developmental rights. Residents could donate land to the city in exchange for billable rights to sell the land to developers. The city used

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

some of the donated land to build parks. The ordinance also allowed developers to increase the size and scope of their projects. Mr. Russo coordinated with elected officials and staff in creating the ordinance, which was extremely successful. The ordinance brought in \$100 million dollars to develop land into parks and increased their tax base on construction. Prior to this ordinance they had a \$1 billion-dollar tax base, now they have an \$18 billion dollar tax base primarily due to high rise construction on the ocean. However, they also created safeguards like having viewing corridors and made sure buildings were tall and skinny, rather than wide and squatty. This ordinance was a major determinant in how their city developed over time. While Mr. Edelcup came up with the concept of this ordinance, Mr. Russo understood its complex structure and provided the expertise on how to put it all together.

During disagreements, particularly with developers, Mr. Russo tightened up in the latter stages of negotiations at times, particularly when the other party wanted more than the City was willing to give. His negotiating skills are good.

Nothing in Mr. Russo’s background or conduct would concern an employer. He left Sunny Isles Beach after a heated and contested election resulted in a change in administration.

Mr. Edelcup would hire Mr. Russo immediately.

Words or phrases used to describe Christopher Russo:

- Dedicated,
- Loyal,
- Good decision maker,
- Good evaluator of people,
- Good with elected officials, staff, and residents, and
- Very personable.

Strengths: Good personality, understands complicated issues to break them down to simple solutions, very focused on projects and likes to get into the details, very deliberate, good personality with employees, has a good perspective, worked well with the elected officials and their various personalities.

Weaknesses: He liked to study situations and problems in depth. At times he had to be encouraged to make a decision. Mr. Edelcup reminded him that they can always correct mistakes. However, this is common in government when trying to keep continuity throughout the various terms of the elected officials.

Reference Notes Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

George “Bud” Scholl – Former Mayor, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL 954-557-4325

Mr. Scholl has known Mr. Russo since 2002. He served as a commissioner and as mayor for 15 years while Mr. Russo was the City Manager in Sunny Isles Beach. Of the eight different city managers Mr. Scholl has worked with during his 25 years in city government, Mr. Russo was the best.

Mr. Russo has a great deal of experience in city management, which allows him to effectively prioritize his time and efforts. He knows when to propose changes and when to maintain procedures that work. He is not afraid to innovate and manages changes well.

Mr. Russo has a talent for hiring intelligent and effective workers. He builds a team and then relies on them to perform. He has an active leadership style, working alongside his staff to execute the Commission’s vision for the City. When the Commission approved the installation of underground power lines, Mr. Russo oversaw the project. He assembled a team of municipal employees and consultants. They worked with the contractor and developed a plan for rerouting traffic and working during the night to minimize disruptions.

Mr. Russo is fiscally responsible. He oversees the process of creating a budget and then follows it, managing capital projects with skill. He helped the City of Sunny Isles Beach build reserves.

When dealing with elected officials, Mr. Russo communicates frequently about all aspects of city management. Mr. Scholl felt he sometimes communicated too much information for his liking. However, he acknowledges that many mayors would appreciate receiving that level of information.

Mr. Russo is dedicated to his community. He lives in the area, so he understands residents’ wants and needs. He works evenings and weekends and attends community meetings. If a condominium association has a problem, he attends their meeting to offer help and guidance. When residents call him with problems, he responds promptly. He is comfortable talking to the public individually as well as presenting to a group.

Mr. Russo performs well during a crisis. When a hurricane forced the City to shut down, he organized and coordinated the effort to clean up and reestablish city services. He helped mobilize municipal employees and the police force. He directed communications with the public. His leadership helped the City reopen in just 36 hours, long before neighboring cities.

Mr. Russo effectively manages the stress of the City Manager position. He remains calm while dealing with time constraints and satisfying the demands of elected officials. Sometimes Mr. Russo could demonstrate a greater sense of urgency in some situations, but overall, his ability to handle stress is an asset.

Mr. Scholl knows of nothing in Mr. Russo’s background or conduct that would concern an employee or citizen. On one occasion, an employee raised an investigation about his

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

management style, but the Commission found no evidence of inappropriate behavior or wrongdoing from Mr. Russo. They quickly dismissed the charges.

Mr. Russo left his position as City Manager for Sunny Isles Beach in 2021. When Mr. Scholl stepped down as Mayor, the new Mayor only saw Mr. Russo as belonging to an administration she disliked. She had someone else in mind for the position, so she asked him to resign.

Mr. Scholl thinks highly of Mr. Russo and would recommend him for a position in city or county government.

Words or phrases used to describe Christopher Russo:

- Competent,
- Responsive,
- Professional,
- Experienced,
- Motivational, and
- Smart.

Strengths: Hard worker, takes his job seriously, has wisdom and experience.

Weaknesses: Micromanages his employees at times. Sometimes it is better to dismiss an employee than micromanage them.

Danny Iglesias – Former Commissioner, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL 305-505-9809

Mr. Iglesias has known Mr. Russo since he applied for the position of City Manager for the City of Sunny Isles Beach in 2000. Mr. Iglesias was serving as a City Commissioner at the time. Mr. Russo was the best Manager the City had during its 25 years of existence. Mr. Russo is a respected, intelligent, active manager with a great deal of experience in local government.

Mr. Russo has participated in many innovative efforts to develop and improve the City of Sunny Isles Beach. Because every road leading into the City of Sunny Isles Beach is a state road under the management of the Florida Board of Transportation, Mr. Russo worked closely with them on several road maintenance and improvement projects. When jaywalking became a problem as the City grew, Mr. Russo approached the Board with a proposal to install landscaping and fencing in the medians to deter illegal crossings. As an engineer for the Board of Transportation, Mr. Iglesias collaborated closely with Mr. Russo throughout the project.

Mr. Russo helped create city codes requiring developers to set aside land for beach access walkways. Through these efforts, the City increased the number of beach access points from six

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

to thirty. Mr. Russo came up with recommendations to combine projects to more efficiently use leftover land to create miniature parks along the beach access walkways.

Mr. Russo does not impose his will upon elected officials but cooperates with their vision. When the City Commission proposes an idea, he gives an informative report on how to accomplish their plans. He keeps them well-informed on the progress of City projects and any obstacles his staff has encountered.

When the City Commission asks Mr. Russo to lead a project, he excels in assembling a capable team to complete it. He hires personnel with the knowledge and skills they need. He is willing to take suggestions and recommendations from his colleagues when hiring, but only after thoroughly researching the candidate. Many of the staff members he hired still work for the City after many years.

Management is one of Mr. Russo’s greatest strengths. He leads his team effectively by making sure all his staff are well-informed. He educates himself about projects he leads so he can educate his team and offer suggestions and assistance when needed. He takes the time to make sure new employees are well-trained.

Mr. Russo has excellent financial skills. He participated with the Commission in the creation of the City budget every year. The Commissioners appreciated his helpful suggestions on how to use funds efficiently and adopted many of his ideas.

Mr. Russo accomplishes tasks in a timely manner. He stays calm under the pressure of meeting deadlines. Mr. Iglesias has never seen him show stress. Mr. Russo lives in the City of Sunny Isles Beach and stays involved in the community. He participates in local events with his family as well as in his official capacity as City Manager.

The City Manager position occasionally requires the making of unpopular decisions. One controversial situation in Sunny Isles Beach involved a gay bar. This establishment housed exotic dancers, which would require the business to be classified as a cabaret instead of a bar. Because of this violation of city code, Mr. Russo and his team closed the bar. Residents protested the decision, calling Mr. Russo and other city officials anti-gay. However, Mr. Iglesias maintains that they were simply enforcing regulations and the decision was in no way influenced by homophobic sentiments. Mr. Iglesias knows of nothing else in Mr. Russo’s conduct or background that would concern an employer or citizen.

Mr. Russo resigned from his position as City Manager in 2021. When the mayor he had previously worked with resigned, the City held a special election to elect a new mayor. Mr. Russo had supported the opponent of the candidate who won the election. When she took office, he decided to leave the tense political atmosphere and make a new start somewhere else.

Mr. Iglesias was disappointed when Mr. Russo resigned. Mr. Iglesias would hire Mr. Russo again without hesitation. Whoever hires him will not regret their decision.

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

Words or phrases used to describe Christopher Russo:

- Hard worker,
- Diligent,
- Hands-on,
- Experienced,
- Knowledgeable, and
- Always available.

Strengths: Knowledgeable manager, offers suggestions and assistance to his employees.

Weaknesses: Micromanages a little, especially new employees.

Bob Welsh – Community Activist, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL 305-607-5706

Mr. Welsh has known Mr. Russo since 2000 when he accepted the position of City Manager for Sunny Isles Beach. Mr. Welsh served on the committee appointed to gather information on the legal aspects of making Sunny Isles Beach a new city, and he has been a community leader ever since. When he created a nonprofit organization to earn money for the local school, Mr. Russo introduced him to businessmen who could contribute money to the cause. Mr. Welsh appreciates Mr. Russo as a problem-solver with a unique approach to public relations.

Mr. Russo has an innate ability to go beyond the requirements of the position to help the residents he serves. He listens to their concerns and works to resolve complaints. He also empowers citizens to come up with their own solutions. On one occasion, he gathered a small group of residents with similar complaints and asked them to work together on a possible solution and helped them reach out to the state with their idea.

Being a good listener is one of Mr. Russo’s greatest strengths. His talent for networking helps him gather information to make good decisions. He spends time in the community talking to people, learning their needs and wants, and navigating conflicting points of view. During conversations, he waits for people to finish talking. He examines and absorbs their perspectives so he can offer an intelligent, well-thought plan as a response. He does not automatically say yes to requests from the public, but he works to find solutions that will satisfy them.

Mr. Russo appreciates innovation, but he does not make changes hastily. He gathers input from as many colleagues as possible, including the City Attorney, the Mayor, and the Commissioners. He ensures that any changes comply with State and County regulations.

Mr. Russo performs well in a crisis. When a hurricane caused much destruction, City Hall was closed by order of the State. Mr. Russo personally called every city employee and offered them

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

double salary to work overtime and help with the cleanup and recovery efforts. Their efforts helped Sunny Isles Beach reopen before any other city in Dade County.

Mr. Russo is an effective manager. He sets goals for his staff and follows up on their progress. He assigns tasks to the people most qualified and willing to accomplish them. He offers help and advice when needed. He dedicates time to training his employees well. Each time he hired an Assistant City Manager, he dedicated an hour or two each day to training them. He showed them what it means to be a City Manager, which enabled them to take over for him when needed. Each assistant moved on to become the city manager of a neighboring city.

Mr. Welsh knows of nothing in Mr. Russo’s past or conduct that would concern a reasonable person. He would seek out Mr. Russo for any job. He highly recommends him for a position in government.

Words or phrases used to describe Christopher Russo:

- Big planner,
- Likes to establish objectives,
- Delegates tasks effectively,
- Follows up with assignments,
- Good sense of humor, and
- Well-liked.

Strengths: Good listener, helps people compromise and find solutions.

Weaknesses: Takes a long time to make decisions because he gathers input from so many people. Inflexible once he has arrived at a decision.

Derrick Arias – Chief Information Officer, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL 786-202-1127

Mr. Arias has known Mr. Russo since 2002 when Mr. Russo hired him as the Chief Information Officer for the City of Sunny Isles Beach. When Mr. Russo returned to the City in 2012, he invited Mr. Arias to work with him again. They worked together on several technology-savvy projects, such as implementing free public wi-fi on the beach and installing outdoor kiosks and smart benches in parks.

Mr. Russo has excellent financial skills. He manages resources wisely and effectively oversees capital projects. He helped create a Transfer of Development Rights program, which brought over 20 million dollars of revenue to the City. He then reinvested the money into the community, adding new facilities and services. He helped establish the Cultural and Community Services department, which organizes family events monthly and offers after school classes and childcare options.

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

Mr. Russo is a strong and involved manager. He likes to interact with his employees. He takes pride in interviewing every municipal employee hired in Sunny Isles Beach. He plans team building events to motivate and educate his staff. He rallies his team around realizing the Commissioners’ vision for the City.

On one occasion, he worked with his staff and Mr. Arias to address security concerns in a government building. Mr. Russo assembled a team of employees, police officers, and representatives from the public works department to brainstorm solutions. They installed a secure gate at the parking garage and stationed professional security guards at the front desk.

During stressful situations, Mr. Russo remains calm and works through problems logically. He does not allow stress from his personal life affect his performance at work. He does not become flustered.

When a new mayor took office, she wished to change the entire administration, including the City Manager. She asked him to step down, so Mr. Russo resigned. His job performance was not a factor in her decision.

Mr. Arias is not aware of anything in Mr. Russo’s background or conduct that would prevent him from honorable service in the public sector. Mr. Arias recommends Mr. Russo for the position.

Words or phrases used to describe Christopher Russo:

- Knowledgeable,
- Respectful,
- Professional,
- Friendly,
- Innovative, and
- High level of integrity.

Strengths: Experienced in public works and capital projects.

Weaknesses: Not strong in technical knowledge. Relies heavily on his Chief Information Officer.

Jeanette Gatto – Former Commissioner, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL 305-409-2577

Ms. Gatto was serving as a commissioner when Mr. Russo began his second term as City Manager in 2012. He is the poster-boy of city managers. She knows of nobody else with more knowledge and experience in running a city. He possesses a broad understanding of all aspects of city management, from public works to cultural appreciation. He has excellent financial skills and strives to accomplish tasks in a timely manner.

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

Mr. Russo helped the City of Sunny Isles Beach mature in a relatively short period of time. When he began his first term as City Manager in 2000, Sunny Isles Beach was only three years old and little more than a sleepy tourist town. The City has an area of only 1.78 square miles, which poses a unique challenge for development. Mr. Russo and other city officials met the challenge by promoting the use of tall, narrow buildings. During the installation of luxury high rise buildings along the waterfront, he recruited intelligent people to the building department with expertise in working with developers and contractors. He demonstrated active leadership during the project, working alongside his staff in the field. Developments such as these have attracted a great number of people to the area. The City now has a population of over 22,000.

Mr. Russo has proposed other innovative solutions to ease the City’s growing pains. When traffic became a problem due to the increased population, Mr. Russo worked with the Mayor to install pedestrian bridges leading to the beach. He negotiated with the Florida Department of Transportation for a grant which helped fund the project.

Mr. Russo demonstrates skill in hiring. In addition to staffing the building department, he hired and trained an exceptional deputy city manager who later left his position but returned to the City because the new Mayor valued his expertise.

Mr. Russo adapts quickly to unfamiliar situations. When members of the City’s police force desired to join the Florida Police Benevolent Association, he negotiated a contract to facilitate the process. He rapidly learned how to effectively manage a police force that is part of an association. On two other occasions, he helped the City recover from hurricane damage, working day and night to assist citizens and restore city services.

Mr. Russo skillfully works with elected officials of a variety of personalities and leadership styles. He can work behind the scenes in an administration that is very involved, but he can also take a more active leadership role when the need arises. He is patient when the Commission takes a long time in making decisions, but he puts himself in a position to move things forward. He keeps elected officials informed through monthly planning meetings as a group and makes himself available to meet with them individually to discuss ideas.

Mr. Russo stays involved in his community. He attends police events and meetings. He frequents Aventura Marketing Council meetings in Sunny Isles Beach’s neighboring city. He is an active member of the League of Cities, a statewide association that assists municipalities with legal matters and obtaining resources. Residents of the City know him by his first name and feel comfortable going to him for help. After one of the hurricanes, he personally assisted an elderly woman in need.

Mr. Russo was involved in one situation that some people might consider controversial. When an employee was accused of harassment, Mr. Russo dismissed him but did not record the harassment as the reason. The man had recently suffered a personal loss and Mr. Russo wished to make it easier for him to find employment in the future. Ms. Gatto feels he should have adhered to procedure.

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

Ms. Gatto knows of nothing else in Mr. Russo’s conduct or background that would cause concern to an employer or citizen. She highly recommends him for a position in government.

Words or phrases used to describe Christopher J. Russo:

- Knowledgeable,
- Anticipates problems,
- Easy to work with,
- Prompt,
- Ambitious, and
- Well-rounded.

Strengths: Broad knowledge, good financial skills, a people person.

Weaknesses: Dislikes firing employees. He has given second chances to employees when he probably should have dismissed them.

Esmond Scott – Village Manager, Miami Shores Village, FL 305-924-3113

Mr. Scott has known Mr. Russo personally since he began his second term as City Manager for Sunny Isles Beach in 2012, but he learned of his reputation even earlier. Mr. Scott is the Manager for the neighboring Miami Shores Village. He values Mr. Russo’s help and advice as a fellow city manager. He hears nothing but positive comments about Mr. Russo’s accomplishments and management style.

Mr. Russo reaches out to his fellow city managers for their opinions and offers his assistance in return. He sat on a panel to hire a new police chief for Miami Shores Village. When Mr. Scott was the Manager of North Miami Beach, Mr. Russo worked with him to negotiate terms for Sunny Isles Beach to use their drinking water. Mr. Russo serves as the Treasurer for the executive board for the Miami-Dade City and County Management Association. He is also involved in a subgroup for coastal city managers and helps schedule their meetings. During these meetings, he freely shares information and ideas.

Mr. Russo has a talent for hiring skilled employees. When he resigned from his position in Sunny Isles Beach, Mr. Scott hastened to hire his former City Planner. He knew Mr. Russo had trained her and that she had accomplished great things as part of his team. Mr. Russo leads his team with a personal touch, establishing a relationship with each employee. One project he worked on with his team was planning and building a center for multi-use, which has been a great success.

Mr. Russo manages the stress of his position well. He remains calm while navigating the many conflicting opinions of the Commissioners and the public. Though he has dealt with

Reference Notes Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

controversial situations as a City Manager, he handles each matter legally and ethically. Mr. Scott knows of nothing in his background or conduct that would concern an employer or cause concern to a citizen.

Mr. Scott would hire Mr. Russo without hesitation if he could afford him. Mr. Russo is highly regarded and respected in Dade County.

Words or phrases used to describe Christopher Russo:

- Engaging,
- Present,
- Innovative,
- Approachable,
- Team-oriented, and
- Fiscally responsible.

Strengths: Good communicator, has a good relationship with his council, well-respected.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Arie Steiger – Community Activist, City of Sunny Isles Beach, FL 305-710-1230

Mr. Steiger has known Mr. Russo since 2000, when Mr. Russo took the position of City Manager in Sunny Isles Beach. They worked together during Mr. Steiger’s service on various city committees, including the historic board, the city advisory committee, and the traffic committee.

Mr. Russo has demonstrated the ability to adapt to conditions under two very different administrations. During his first term as City Manager, he served under a strong mayor and Commission. He worked behind the scenes to implement this administration’s vision for the City. For the second term, he took a more active leadership role. He essentially performed the role of Mayor while Mayor Scholl and his commission took a more passive approach to government and only worked at the city part-time.

Mr. Russo is a good listener. He listens to concerns from members of the public and takes input from his colleagues. He regularly attends meetings for the City’s various boards and committees. He recognizes good ideas and has approved and implemented many of their recommendations.

Mr. Russo is a problem-solver. When the police chief announced his retirement, the City Commissioners advocated for bringing in an outside candidate to fill the position. This idea was unpopular among residents, who felt a local candidate would better serve the community. Mr. Russo resolved the conflict by persuading the police chief to remain in his position for another four years. He managed the stress of this contentious issue very well.

Reference Notes

Christopher “Chris” J. Russo

Mr. Russo has excellent financial skills. During his time in Sunny Isles Beach, he oversaw the city budget. He kept track of expenses to ensure proper management of taxpayers’ money.

Mr. Russo stepped down as City Manager when a new Mayor took office in 2021. Mayor Goldman disliked Mayor Scholl and his administration, including Mr. Russo. Mr. Steiger wishes Mr. Russo was still managing Sunny Isles Beach. Under his direction, the City ran like a well-oiled machine. Without him, the new administration has begun to overspend and mismanage the budget.

Mr. Steiger knows of no major controversies during Mr. Russo’s time in Sunny Isles Beach. He does not believe there is anything in Mr. Russo’s conduct or background that would hinder his ability to serve in local government. Mr. Steiger would hire him any time he needed a City Manager. Mr. Steiger recommends Mr. Russo for a position in government.

Words or phrases used to describe Christopher Russo:

- Capable,
- Good manager,
- Good at budgeting, and
- Good at crisis management.

Strengths: A good financial manager, adaptable, and a leader.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Claire Argyle and Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.biscaynetimes.com/boulevard-living/new-sunny-isles-6-million-community-center/>
Sep. 02, 2022

New Sunny Isles \$6 Million Community Center

by Josie Gulliksen

Transforming the street level of a boxy parking garage into an inviting community space for Sunny Isles Beach residents was the vision of City Manager **Christopher Russo** and several city commissioners. “Every day we work to fulfill our mission to keep Sunny Isles Beach a world-class city that offers the highest quality of life for our residents. The completion of the Gateway Center is just the latest extension of our promise,” said **Russo**. “When the privatization of the space for a market and restaurant fell through, we realized there was a greater need to utilize the building as a recreation facility for residents.”

The ballroom features a series of pull-down screens, ideal for video presentations, and floor-to-ceiling windows providing a wraparound view showcasing the outdoor courtyard and waterfall. Tasked with bringing the project to life was Elina Cardet, lead architect of Perkins & Will’s Miami studio interior design practice. The surrounding neighborhood was her design inspiration. “Our design concept focused on how to transform the ‘concrete box’ of an existing city garage to create a welcoming community space by inserting a luminous wood box to house the different functions and activities,” said Cardet. “We used the area’s natural context – the coral bedrock of the barrier island, the water and the changing sky for material and lighting inspiration.”

The result is a 17,000-square-foot multipurpose community center that serves all age groups. Sunny Isles Beach residents and visitors can convene here to socialize, take classes, attend events and enjoy the welcoming nature of a neighborhood gathering place. The ballroom features a series of pull-down screens, ideal for video presentations, and floor-to-ceiling windows providing a wraparound view showcasing the outdoor courtyard and waterfall. Utilizing community input during the design process was key, and ensured that the space would be welcomed by residents. “I am thrilled to see how the inclusion goals established during the early stages of the design process paid off,” said Cardet. “Through detailed surveys and a series of public hearing presentations, we gathered feedback from residents to help create a welcoming space for this diverse community.”

Clean design lines, light wood and floor-to-ceiling windows create a warm, inviting aesthetic throughout the space. “Providing a calm, relaxing and safe space for residents to enjoy was critical during the design phase,” said **Russo**.

Aside from hosting cooking classes, chef demonstrations and wine tasting events, the catering kitchen is also used by students from St. Thomas University’s Hospitality School. The center’s program areas include a 3,600-square-foot ballroom, the so-called “Social Alley” with seating and game tables, fitness rooms, large and small classrooms, a catering kitchen with camera system, a hearing loop system, a high-end audio/visual system and free Wi-Fi. The ballroom features a series of pull-down screens, ideal for video presentations, and large windows

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

providing a wraparound view showcasing the outdoor courtyard and waterfall. The fitness rooms also feature screens, wood floors and mirrors throughout. Classes include yoga and chair yoga, barre, Zumba aerobics, Pilates, ballroom dancing and strength training for youth and seniors.

Multipurpose classrooms are for language, music and software classes, as well as community meetings and presentations. The catering and teaching kitchen within the rental space has a unique feature: a camera system “where you can see the cooks preparing the food,” said Colin Summers, assistant director of Cultural and Community Services for the city of Sunny Isles Beach.

Aside from hosting cooking classes, chef demonstrations and wine tasting events, the catering kitchen is also used by students from St. Thomas University’s Hospitality School. “It is also rewarding to see how the flexibility and versatility built into the design can empower a city team to continue offering innovative programming, creative activities and celebrate life’s events,” said Cardet.

The activity areas all face a light-filled corridor along the existing south loggia of the building known as the aforementioned Social Alley. This corridor is activated by a series of built-in nooks for enjoying a cup of complimentary coffee or tea and doing some light reading. “We layered materials, sequentially, as a gradation of color, to help define the spaces experientially and intuitively,” said Cardet. “Inspired by the beautiful sunrises and sunsets of Sunny Isles Beach, we set out to create an inclusive and equitable public space for the entire community; essential, timeless, edited forms were designed to evoke a unique and serene experience for users of all ages.”

“The Gateway Center is an elite facility for residents to learn new skills by sampling a selection of diverse programs, for teens to meet in a safe setting without their parents and for seniors to gather for social activities,” said **Russo**.

The Gateway Center is located at 151 Sunny Isles Blvd. in Sunny Isles Beach. Visit SIBFL.net to view a list of events and classes and to take a virtual tour of the center.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

https://sibfl.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=378&meta_id=29480

December 3, 2021

CONSULTANT AGREEMENT

THIS CONSULTANT AGREEMENT, made this 3 day of December, 2021 by and between **CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO** (hereinafter "Consultant") and the **CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH** (hereinafter "City"):

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Consultant has been employed by City for the last nine (9) years and has held the position of City Manager; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, Consultant has gained extensive knowledge of the City's administrative operations and current capital improvement projects; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to retain Consultant's services on an as needed basis throughout the term of this Consultant Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements as hereinafter set forth, Consultant and City agree as follows:

1. **Services:** Consultant shall advise the City on as needed basis with capital projects that were commenced during his tenure as the City Manager.
2. **Term:** The Agreement is effective December 1, 2021, and shall expire on May 31, 2022. At the conclusion of the term, the Agreement shall automatically terminate unless this Agreement is terminated pursuant to Section 4 below.
3. **Compensation:** Consultant shall be paid in the manner set forth in the General Acknowledgement, Waiver and Release Agreement incorporated herein by reference. All payments to the Consultant shall be made through the City's payroll system.
4. **Termination:** This Consultant Agreement may be terminated by either party upon fifteen (15) days written notice to the other party. Upon termination of the Consultant Agreement, Consultant will be paid consistent with General Acknowledgement, Waiver and Release Agreement including but not limited all benefits set forth therein. In the event of termination, all remaining payments due to the Consultant shall be accelerated and due and payable in thirty (30) days of the notice of termination, but in no event shall payment be issued prior to January 1, 2022.
5. **Entire Understanding.** The parties acknowledge that this Consultant Agreement, together with the General Acknowledgement, Waiver and Release, contains the entire understanding of the parties and that it may not be modified without the express written consent of both parties hereto.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Consultant Agreement to be signed as of the first date written above.

For the City:

CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH, FLORIDA
A municipal corporation of the State of Florida

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

THIS GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, WAIVER, AND RELEASE AGREEMENT made this 3rd day of December 2021, by and between **CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO** (hereinafter referred to as “Employee”), and the **CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH**, including its respective current and former city commissioners, employees, attorneys, agents, representatives, and officials (all in their official and individual capacities), as well as their heirs, executors, administrators, predecessors, successors (hereinafter referred as to the “City”), is attached to and made a part of the Consultant Agreement between the parties.

WHEREAS, Employee is employed by the City as the City Manager on a contractual basis as evidenced by Employee’s contract dated July 19, 2012; and

WHEREAS, Employee was terminated effective December 1, 2021, and the parties to this Agreement desire to enter into an agreement in order to settle all issues including benefits to Employee as a result of his separation from employment with the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, for good and valuable consideration, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the City and Employee agree as follows:

1. Termination from Employment. Effective on December 1, 2021, Employee’s employment with the City is terminated.
2. Consideration. In consideration for Employee’s waiver and release of all claims against the City, the City understands and agrees that Employee shall remain as a Consultant for the City until May 31, 2022, pursuant to the Consultant Agreement incorporated herein by reference,

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.sibfl.net/reflecting-on-25-years-of-progress-and-looking-toward-the-future/>

City of Sunny Isles Beach
September 1, 2021

Reflecting on 25 Years of Progress and Looking Toward the Future
Author: **Christopher J. Russo**

Many of our residents have lived in Sunny Isles Beach before it was officially incorporated in 1997. To say that our city looks nothing like it did nearly 25 years ago would be an understatement.

The first time I visited SIB was when I interviewed for City Manager back in 1997. I still remember the run-down one and two-story motels, garbage littering the streets, and rampant crime. There were no city parks, not even a blade of grass. There were street crimes, drugs, and prostitution as the City did not have its own police department yet. I was offered the position, but not able to come to terms with then-Mayor Samson; I did not accept the position of City Manager until 2000. But the City's leaders at the time, mostly retirees, made the best decision for the city: turning what was essentially a disjointed strip of land with businesses and condos into a community with prosperous services, utilities, parks, and programs.

In just 20 years, we transformed Sunny Isles Beach from a notorious, dilapidated location, into a desirable, family-friendly residential destination. And we did it on our own the old-fashioned way, through hard work. The Commission allowed total redevelopment on the east side of Collins Avenue, which brought in additional revenue, increasing our tax base while lowering the millage rate.

You may know that I left Sunny Isles Beach in 2005 and returned in 2012. In the nine years since I've been back, we were able to invest \$130 million in capital improvements such as infrastructure and parks, without borrowing a nickel. This is unheard of for a local government. Our TDRs (Transferable Development Rights) and zoning along the east side of Collins provided us not only with the funds to expand our services, utilities and amenities for residents, but also led to interesting, world-renowned architecture.

Some residents criticize the high-rises and development along the beach and around the city, ultimately longing for the 'good ol' days.' But this development, and the height that came with it, is the reason why our city is so successful and the run-down motels and rampant crime are long forgotten. We cultivated a responsive local government, built 11 city parks and two community centers that offer diverse programming and free events for all ages, established an award-winning police department, and helped develop an A-rated school with a \$14 million donation. We are in the middle of a \$30 million utility undergrounding project along Collins Avenue (and getting ready to commence undergrounding in the Golden Shores area), which is moving all power lines underground, enhancing the streetlights and electrical equipment, and redoing all sidewalks. This is the most sophisticated and involved project our City will ever do.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Without the rapid growth we saw over the last 24 years, a city our size would not typically have the means to provide the quality and quantity of services that we do.

We recently completed our citywide rebranding project, which provided us with a new logo and tagline, among many other tangibles. This project involved significant resident, business and community stakeholder participation and we are happy with the results. Our new logo, pictured here, and tagline, The Height of Living, boldly encompass what is considered an enduring attraction of our city, a rich quality of life, while also obliquely referencing the landscape of the high-rises that define our skyline.

I ask residents to think about our city and everything it offers to the community. Our height has provided us unprecedented opportunities for growth, prosperity, and a bright future. I am proud of the City and hope you are too.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Media Network (FL)
March 24, 2021

After Fatal Pedestrian Crash, Sunny Isles Beach Residents Demand Change

Author: Aaliyah Pasols

On a Wednesday evening in Sunny Isles Beach last month, 11-year-old Anthony Reznik was with his stepfather and sister. As they waited at the pedestrian crosswalk on the 300 block of Sunny Isles Beach Boulevard, the light signaled that they were okay to cross. According to Miami-Dade police, a distracted driver then came barreling toward the intersection, running the red light and hitting the child. The Norman S. Edelcup sixth-grader was in the hospital in critical condition for nearly two weeks but was eventually pronounced brain dead.

The Feb. 10 incident was not an isolated one, but the most recent addition in a series of pedestrian and cyclist injuries and deaths that Sunny Isles residents say have become all too common. The tragic death of Anthony was felt heavily throughout the community, prompting residents to fight harder for safer streets. The Sunny Isles Beach Commission has heard the voices of the residents and is working toward making much-needed improvements to the city.

In a bicycle and pedestrian safety study conducted by the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization, the number of bicycle and pedestrian incidents from 2008 to 2013 was shown on maps of Miami-Dade County. In the maps depicting pedestrian and bicycle crashes, Sunny Isles Beach is jam-packed with dots, each representing a crash. Many residents weren't aware that this was an issue until 2018, when another high-profile fatal crash shook the community.

On July 1, a family of four was walking on the sidewalk near 174th Street and Collins Avenue. They were on their way to a park when a driver lost control of his vehicle and plummeted into the family. The father, 34-year-old real estate lawyer Amir Pelleg, was pronounced dead at the scene, while his wife, Zulma Guillot Pelleg, suffered a traumatic brain injury and fell into a coma. Their two young daughters, ages 3 and 7 at the time, endured severe injuries. Johana Rabinovich, 37, remembers Pelleg's death clearly. She has been a Sunny Isles resident for over 10 years now and has two children, ages 4 and 6. She says that after Pelleg died she realized that she needed to speak up. Through her Facebook group, Sunny Isles Beach Moms, she connected with other concerned mothers. Soon enough, a group of about 15 Sunny Isles women had come together to bring their pleas to city hall. At the next commission meeting following the accident, Rabinovich presented a petition to the commission members, which had garnered almost 2,500 signatures. The petition asked the city to take action toward making Sunny Isles Beach safer for pedestrians. Sadly, Rabinovich says, nothing has really changed. "Our government officials' stance has been sad," Rabinovich said. "It's always been, 'Well, accidents happen, you know?' And yes, accidents happen but what are you going to do to make it somewhat safer? We need to invest into the future of what we want this city to become; we can't just be a city of billionaires with high-end high-rises where you can't walk a block because it's so unsafe."

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Several more accidents occurred after 2018, with some resulting in fatalities. Just last April, a 17-year-old boy was killed. Sholem Benchimol, a soccer player at Scheck Hillel Community School, was riding his bike at the intersection of Collins Avenue and 172nd Street when a car rammed into him. Benchimol was the son of Jose Benchimol, a well-known rabbi at Beit Rambam Congregation. Last month's tragedy seemed to be the last straw for many residents, who feel as if these crashes have become normal. This sentiment echoes through the Facebook group Sunny Isles Beach Insider, which is also run by Rabinovich. "I'm outraged!" one member, Inna Shef, commented on a Facebook post in the group. "We've talked about this again and again. [I] spoke to the Vice Mayor this time last year. She said she'll talk to the Chief of Police about the issue of road safety... and nothing!"

A community memorial, which doubled as a "stand for traffic and pedestrian safety," was held on March 7 in Anthony's honor. The event was organized by a group of residents and was approved by Anthony's family. The attendees hoped that it would bring awareness to the ongoing pedestrian safety problem. "Hopefully with his name, a lot of fixing will happen in the city where we live, because the city where we live has a lot of families, little kids," Inna Trakhtenburg, Anthony's mother, said to WSVN following his death. A petition was also created to change the name of Sunny Isles Beach Boulevard to Anthony Reznik Boulevard. It has already received over 3,500 signatures.

The residents in the Facebook group have not been shy about expressing their own ideas to improve pedestrian safety. Increasing police presence has been a popular suggestion. Other ideas include brighter street lights, wider sidewalks, bollards, protected bike lanes, speed bumps and red-light cameras. The city commission has inquired about what can be done at the state level. The day after Anthony was hit, they contacted the Florida Department of Transportation to review the pedestrian walkway at Sunny Isles Beach Boulevard and State Road 826. James Wolfe, District Six Secretary of FDOT, responded to the city's request via email. Wolfe declined an interview request, but his office provided his response to the commission inquiry. "It is particularly tragic that the collision should have been easily avoided," he wrote in the email. "The pedestrian signal was working as intended. The crash was caused by a driver that ran the red light." Wolfe also listed several projects that FDOT will take on to better pedestrian safety, including: additional streetlights at the crosswalk, adding "PED XING AHEAD" pavement markings, and teaming up with the city's police department to implement an education and enforcement campaign.

As for solutions at the city level, Vice Mayor Larissa Svechin said that most of it is out of their control. However, there are some changes that are being carried out. Starting Feb. 26 and lasting until May 14, there will be "high visibility enforcement" conducted by Sunny Isles Beach police on Collins Avenue. They will also increase their enforcement citywide. Additionally, the city is undertaking the construction of two pedestrian bridges. One, called the Government Center Pedestrian Bridge, will be built at 180th Street and Collins Avenue. The second, the 174th Street Pedestrian Bridge, will be sprung up at 174th Street and Collins Avenue.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City Manager **Chris Russo** says that the 180th Street bridge has 90% of its plans complete, with construction possibly beginning by the end of this year. The 174th Street bridge will require some more time, however, as it is a much larger project. It will aim to mimic Manhattan’s High Line, functioning as a bridge and park for residents to enjoy. The cost is an estimated \$13 million, according to **Russo**.

Some residents such as Tony Schneider are welcoming the idea. “It would be amazing. Less accidents, no waiting for the traffic signal, great... exercise, less traffic jams [and a] good looking structure,” he wrote on the Sunny Isles Beach Insider group. Others are not as convinced. Rabinovich argues that the budget for the expensive bridges should go toward more ambitious efforts. “The answer is not bridges,” she said. “I wish that we would [instead] invest the multimillion dollars in creating safer streets from north to south. If you’re [building] these bridges to make it safer for pedestrians, how is that safe for the person that lives on 190th Street that still has to walk south to get to one of the bridges?”

Svechin is aware of residents’ frustrations and has acknowledged their ideas as “good suggestions.” She hopes to mobilize some of these proposals as the city moves forward in building a safer, pedestrian-friendly community. “We are actively working on improving the safety of our roads for our pedestrians,” she said. “Because that’s our goal, we want people to be walking around, we want to alleviate traffic... It has to be a combination of road design and educating the residents, drivers and legislators so they understand what we’re dealing with... There’s a lot of variables here but it doesn’t mean that we’re going to stop.”

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City of Sunny Isles Beach (FL)
December 29, 2020

Speed Limit on Collins Avenue
Author: **Christopher Russo**

There has been a lot of discussion among the community regarding the speed limit on State Road A1A/Collins Avenue within our city limits. We have listened to the residents who brought their concerns to us that the current speed limit of 35 miles per hour is too high due to the density of vehicles and pedestrians on the road. Since Collins Avenue is a State-owned road, we as a local government do not control the speed limit and do not have the authority to change it. What you might not know is that we have petitioned the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) three times before in 2002, 2009, and 2016 to reduce the speed limit. However, we reached out to FDOT again to see if our residents' request of reducing the speed limit from 35 mph to 30 mph, similar to one of our neighboring communities, could be possible. To determine if the current posted speed limit of 35 mph was reasonable and a safe maximum speed for all vehicles to travel on, FDOT completed a traffic engineering study. The purpose of the speed zone study was to evaluate the existing traffic safety and operations along the study corridor. This was accomplished by performing qualitative field observations, spot speed studies, crash summaries and collision diagrams, and assessing geometric conditions. Here is how FDOT conducts the study. They use the '85th percentile' method of determining appropriate and safe posted speed limits along with the maximum statute-based speeds. The 85th percentile is the speed that 85% of the observed free-flowing vehicles are traveling. This method is based on extensive nationally accepted studies and observations. In our case, it is clear that most of our severe traffic accidents have been caused by driver distraction. The study concluded that the posted speed limit of 35 mph is appropriate for our stretch of Collins Avenue.

We appreciate the concern our residents share for the safety of our community. As administrators of Sunny Isles Beach, it is our responsibility to uphold the highest level of safety in our city and we want nothing more than for our residents to feel safe whether they are driving to work, walking their children to school, or going for a bike ride. It is important that everyone follows the rules of the road. In addition to following the speed limit when driving, eliminate distractions and always keep an eye out for pedestrians. And if you are a pedestrian or cyclist, there are rules you must follow too. We have 16 signalized intersections and three signalized pedestrian midblock crosswalks. Use them. Look both ways before crossing the street or driveway. A widespread misconception is that cyclists do not have to follow traffic signals when riding their bicycle on the road. That is false. Bicycles are considered vehicles when on the street and must also follow the same rules as cars. In addition to our safety campaigns and expanded visible police presence, we are in the process of building two pedestrian overpasses along Collins Avenue at 174 Street and 180 Street at the SIB Government Center as many of you may know. Having two additional overpasses provides the added value of allowing pedestrians to avoid crossing Collins Avenue altogether at two major crosswalks. The speed limit is staying the same at this time, but our attitudes and actions can certainly change. If we stay alert and aware while on the street, we can avoid accidents, injuries and fatalities. Let's stay safe this New Year.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

City of Sunny Isles Beach (FL)

November 30, 2020

Meet Our Condominium OmbudsmanAuthor: **Christopher Russo**

As I discussed last month, the City is helping facilitate resident access to the State of Florida Condominium Ombudsman. Every other Monday, the Ombudsman is working out of the SIB Government Center and is available to meet with condominium unit owners, board members, and associations.

I want to introduce you to the State of Florida's Condominium Ombudsman. Spencer Hennings was appointed as the Condominium Ombudsman in July 2020 by the Governor. Originally from Florida, Spencer grew up in the South Florida area and his experience with transactional real estate law provides a strong foundation for his work. As a new Ombudsman, Spencer is eager for this unique opportunity to help individuals throughout the entire state of Florida with stimulating and rewarding work.

Spencer's role as Ombudsman consists of four main tasks: election monitoring, education, facilitating effective communication, and making recommendations for new condominium laws. He functions as an external liaison and neutral third party for the state of Florida with the primary purpose of resolving issues before they become official complaints with the State, arbitration or litigation.

One of the best resources the Office of the Condominium Ombudsman can offer is election monitoring. In condominiums, unit owners have no rights to run the association or property beyond voting for the board. This makes elections of the utmost importance. If a condo creates a petition and obtains 15% of the unit owners' signatures, the Ombudsman will appoint an election monitor who is trained and independent. This individual will conduct the election to ensure there is no ballot tampering or misconduct.

Another way the Ombudsman can help is through education. By virtue of education about rights and responsibilities, unit owners and associations can cut an arising issue at its roots. Condominium laws are changing nearly every year; between the special interest groups that lobby for unit owners, associations or attorneys, the laws are constantly evolving. The Ombudsman will not interpret the law for residents nor tell you what will likely happen in court, but he can tell you what the law says about your issues and let you know what the possible options are for your situation.

So why would someone in Sunny Isles Beach need to meet with a Condominium Ombudsman? We all know there can be three sides to every story and Spencer says that can be the most challenging part of condominium disputes. But by facilitating what he describes as a 'meeting of the minds' with all affected parties, they can move closer to resolving the issue with effective communication. He states that the cause of these disputes and issues is primarily a lack of

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transparency and communication. If a unit owner and a condo association are involved in a conflict, the Ombudsman can help navigate the issue in order to resolve it before it escalates. This could include disputes over records requests, disagreements about opening public spaces during the pandemic, or unwarranted application denials.

In a mutual agreement between the State and Sunny Isles Beach, Spencer will be working out of our Government Center twice a month to be more accessible to our residents and also our neighboring communities. The main office of the Condominium Ombudsman is located in Fort Lauderdale, with another office in Tallahassee. But now, anyone in Miami-Dade County is welcome to make an appointment and meet with Spencer in Sunny Isles Beach or call to utilize his expertise.

I want to again thank Spencer's colleagues from the DBPR, Director of the Division of Florida Condominiums, Boyd McAdams; Deputy Secretary of Business Regulation, Michael B. Johnston; and Secretary Halsey Beshears who all helped make this arrangement possible. You can make an appointment with the Condominium Ombudsman by calling my office at 305.792.1909. More information about the Condominium Ombudsman is available at sibfl.net/ombudsman.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

City of Sunny Isles Beach (FL)

August 31, 2020

Update on Gateway CenterAuthor: **Christopher Russo**

Every day we work to fulfill our mission to keep Sunny Isles Beach a world class city that offers the highest quality of life for our residents. The completion of the Gateway Center is just the latest extension of our promise. When the privatization of the space for a market and restaurant fell through, we realized there was a greater need to utilize the building as a recreation facility for residents. The buildout of the Gateway Center is anticipated to be completed by the end of September 2020.

The Gateway Center optimizes 15,000 square feet of interior space at Gateway Park for the usage and enjoyment of residents. When you enter the facility, you will be greeted at the serene reception area. Past the lobby, the facility guides you down a social hallway with seating and game tables. This is a space for socialization, engagement and leisure. Those with a valid City-issued SIB Resident ID Card have access to the facility to utilize the social hallway, hang out, and mingle with friends. Further in is a fitness room with oak wood floors and mirrored walls, large and small classrooms, and a full-fledged catering kitchen. One notable feature of the catering kitchen is a camera system designed to follow chefs cooking in the kitchen with the intention to air the video feed in a classroom or play back at a later date. The kitchen is an added opportunity to expand our program and rental offerings.

Elevating the Gateway Center even further is a 3,600 square foot banquet space, which can accommodate 240 seated at round tables. Equipped with top-of-the-line technology, the ballroom will be available to rent for presentations, receptions, weddings, and various special events. Throughout the Center you will be privy to our audio/visual equipment, which connects sound and music throughout the facility in the hallways, rooms, and in the exterior surrounding the banquet space. Unlike any other facility in the City, a Hearing Loop system is built into the floor of the banquet space and fitness room. While invisible to the eye, this high-tech solution delivers sound from the AV system directly to hearing aids and cochlear implants with telecoils, strengthening the sound of the presenter for those who have difficulty hearing. As in every aspect of our work, we strive to provide accessible services for all residents.

The aesthetic of the Gateway Center is emblematic of our oceanfront location with blue, green and coral colors dispersed throughout. Providing a calm, relaxing and safe space for residents to enjoy was critical during the design phase. The Center will also have a satellite visitor center, an addition to the original one in the Government Center. Promotional merchandise will be on sale such as shirts, cups, and key chains, as well as light food and beverage items including coffee, sodas and snacks.

Barring any unexpected delays, staff will be able to move in beginning this October. As you might have guessed, COVID-19 restrictions have delayed a grand opening event for the Gateway

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Center. In the meantime, our team is diligently preparing programming and events for when it is safe to open and we can share this new space with all of our residents. We are also drawing up a facility rental package for the banquet space with the hopes of accepting rental applications for 2021, providing that it is safe to do so.

It is bittersweet to celebrate the completion of our brand-new facility that was championed by former Sunny Isles Beach Commissioner Roslyn Brezin, who passed away in February 2019. It was her staunch determination and vision that served as the impetus for the buildout of the Gateway Center. As we prepare to open the facility, we remember her leadership and advocacy for residents, and seniors in particular, in Sunny Isles Beach. When it is safe to open, the Gateway Center will be an elite facility for residents to learn new skills by sampling a selection of diverse programs, for teens to meet in a safe setting without their parents, and for seniors to gather for social activities. We are excited for the opportunities the Gateway Center will provide all residents of Sunny Isles Beach.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City of Sunny Isles Beach (FL)
July 30, 2020

Message from the City Manager: Update on Town Center North Overlay
Author: **Christopher Russo**

We are moving forward in determining the future of the Town Center North Overlay (TCNO). However, due to delays from COVID-19, the City Commission is in the process of extending the moratorium through March 2021 to allow for ample time to complete the public outreach process and provide final recommendations to proceed. Our consultant team from Calvin, Giordano & Associates (CGA) has facilitated the outreach process, and on June 4, they presented their initial findings and recommendations to the City Commission.

The outreach process consisted of stakeholder meetings with residents, landowners, developers, and elected officials; gathering and analyzing information about present conditions; public outreach through pop-up activities, an open-house workshop and online survey; and synthesizing all the community input. Throughout this outreach process it was important for us to educate the public about the TCNO before gaining feedback. The CGA team found that while there were strong opinions regarding the TCNO, many did not fully understand the complexity of the area. Education was a key component at each outreach activity. Staff explained the history and composition of the TCNO, which is three distinct areas, including the Collins commercial corridor, the midsection and the bayfront.

Typically, a “town center” is a central, walkable place that people can easily access for a variety of purposes: to shop, dine, work, exercise, enjoy a movie or concert, or just congregate as a community in a social public place. According to this description, the current Town Center District seems to be deficient, and our residents know this. The purpose of the public engagement is to determine what our citizens want to see there.

What did we learn?

Through a combination of face-to-face interactions and online engagement, we were able to gain a wealth of public input about the current view of the TCNO and its future. We reached over 500 points of direct public engagement, with several hundred more estimated from interaction with the website, social media posts, and emails. We found that most participants would rather see a moderate skyline here, favoring the current districtwide mix of heights. Participants would like to see a better selection, both in quantity and quality, of shopping, dining and entertainment options. They prioritized broader quality of life issues such as walkability, connectivity, multimodality, pedestrian safety, green space, and infrastructure capacity over regulatory issues. Residents desire for the TCNO to remain unique when compared to development on the east side of Collins Avenue, placing importance on the need for a sense of retreat.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Possible Paths

The CGA team developed four possible paths for the City to take. The Commission must now prioritize what they want to achieve in terms of policy goals and how to achieve those goals with regulatory implementation.

Let it be

Keeps the TCNO in the Comprehensive Plan as is. Involves adding density and intensity measures that are currently absent to comply with Florida law. Requires amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code.

A New Vision

An overhaul of the current TCNO and would implement new land use designation. Involves a depth of analyses to document the new district and re-designation of land. Requires amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, and Zoning Map and Code.

Toss it away

Eliminates the TCNO in the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map, leaving the existing underlying land use districts to guide future redevelopment. Requires amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, and Zoning Map and Code.

A narrower focus

Subdivides the TCNO to reflect the distinct character subareas of the overall district. Resizes the footprint so the overlay applies only to the present commercial or residential area. Adjusts guidelines to promote a higher caliber of future redevelopment for this area. Requires amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, Zoning Map and Code.

Where do we go from here?

As we pursue the path of extending the moratorium for an additional six months, we will continue engaging with the community to receive your feedback. The City Commission will then deliberate at a formal public meeting and may select one of the four options to move forward with, ask for a variation of the paths or revisions, or provide direction to staff regarding other options. Once they provide feedback, staff will prepare the policy and regulatory amendments necessary to implement their decision.

This may seem like a long and arduous process, but it is necessary to gain public input before moving forward. In the weeks to come, we will announce additional opportunities for public engagement as well as the date for another virtual public workshop.

I encourage you to learn more about the Town Center District, the public engagement project report, and the steps the City is taking to create a better future for Sunny Isles Beach by visiting sibfl.net/towncenternorth. I invite you to share your comments online or by calling 305.792.1740.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)
April 7, 2020

Miami-Dade Lets Construction Go on Amid COVID-19. Some Cities are Banning it Anyway

Author: Aaron Leibowitz, Martin Vassolo and Joey Flechas

Since the town of Surfside issued a ban last month on all construction except for emergency repairs, some of the feedback has been harsh. About 10 homeowners have asked for permission to continue with ongoing work, saying it can be done without risking the spread of COVID-19. But so far, despite state and county leaders giving builders the green light to forge ahead with projects, the little oceanfront community of Surfside hasn't budged. "I care about our families and our neighbors more than I care about construction projects," Eliana Salzhauer, a recently elected Surfside town commissioner, said during a virtual meeting March 31.

Other municipalities in North Dade — including Golden Beach and Sunny Isles Beach to the north of Surfside and Key Biscayne to its south — have also taken measures to try to limit or ban construction in recent weeks. Larger cities like Miami and Miami Beach have let it continue mostly unabated while trying to enforce social distancing rules at work sites. But momentum may be building in the other direction. Miami Mayor Francis Suarez said he's heard from many residents who want construction sites closed. He said city administrators are considering a shutdown, but are still seeking clarity on a statewide stay-at-home order that "supersedes" local authorities.

Gov. Ron DeSantis later said cities could enact stricter measures, confusing local officials. On Monday, Suarez was leaning toward a closure with exceptions for emergencies. "It's hard to argue that they're essential," Suarez said. "Obviously, it's a big industry in our community, but every single industry in our community has been impacted." Miami Beach officials have also discussed the possibility of putting a hold on all non-essential construction, Mayor Dan Gelber said, though they haven't acted on it yet. "There have been some discussions about limiting the ones that are going on," he said.

A spokeswoman said the city has ordered two sites to temporarily stop work due to a "lack of social distancing," and shut down eight others for working without permits. "New interior construction permits are not being issued and we are continuously performing social distancing checks on active construction sites," the spokeswoman said. Gelber said city officials have done 250 site inspections based on complaints they've received, calling the city's response "aggressive." Construction sites have far fewer workers today than before the coronavirus pandemic began in order to maintain social distancing. But cities that have gone a step further and shut down construction sites have met backlash from builders and the residents who rely on their work.

The president of The Shul in Surfside, Steve Dunn, asked town officials during the March 31 commission meeting to consider letting his synagogue continue with a major expansion. Dunn

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

said he was working on a plan to enforce social distancing at the site, provide protective gear to workers, and keep workers out of commercial areas. "The Shul has a very substantial commercial project that has been interrupted," Dunn said. "What I would ask is, if a case-by-case scenario is going to be considered for the residential properties, that likewise our case be considered."

But the commission wasn't moved by his case, nor by the pleas of homeowners. There are over 2,300 active building permits in Surfside, according to town officials, and for now, Salzhauer said, they should all be put on hold except for emergency repairs. "Everyone has an equal right and an equal hardship here," she said. "We've only been doing this for two weeks. People in other countries have been doing this for months. Suck it up for a month, then we can revisit this."

MH Tipline CTA embed

Only one other municipality in Miami-Dade County has issued a blanket ban on construction akin to Surfside's: Golden Beach, an affluent community at the northern tip of A1A that has banned almost all visitors from entering in response to the novel coronavirus. The town consists entirely of single-family homes, meaning it doesn't rely on the construction industry as much as Miami or Miami Beach. Still, Mayor Glenn Singer said he has heard many complaints about the move. "I've had numerous contractors contact me, homeowners contact me saying, 'I've got to get my job done,'" Singer told the Herald. "It's not about my job or this job, it's about the community as a whole."

Golden Beach announced March 16 that construction sites must be closed, and even revoked all active building permits so that it is now illegal to be present at a site. "The frustrating thing is that the other cities are now starting to see the light," Singer said, referring to those that have restricted construction more recently. "This could have been done three weeks ago and it seems like Dade County is behind the ball." On Friday, the island village of Key Biscayne — which, like Golden Beach, has moved to restrict visitor access — ordered all construction at multi-family buildings to stop by Monday at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Mike Davey said he wasn't aware of any major ongoing projects, but that he got calls from condo managers who were "feeling inundated with construction workers." If you have a broken pipe in your apartment, Davey said, fix it. But "this isn't the time to remodel your kitchen," Davey said. "Now is the time to sit tight." Other cities like Sunny Isles Beach, which is brimming with oceanfront condo towers along Collins Avenue, have treaded more lightly while still trying to discourage construction. A construction worker pauses at The Estates at Acqualina construction site in Sunny Isles Beach under a sign ordering social distancing.

Last Wednesday, city officials sent an email to condo managers and boards "strongly urging" them to limit projects at multi-family buildings to essential work only. Officials said they had heard from many residents about non-essential work taking place at condos. "While we are not ordering construction to cease, we urge condominiums to limit the work to only what needs to be completed for the safety of residents," the email said.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City Manager **Christopher Russo** told the Herald on Monday that he expects the city to issue a new emergency order this week to formally limit construction in occupied residential buildings. He said his administration, much like Miami's, is still seeking more guidance from DeSantis on whether the city is authorized to shut down projects entirely and declare construction non-essential. Multiple major condo projects are ongoing in Sunny Isles, including at The Estates at Acqualina and the Turnberry Ocean Club. "We're still working on what we can do to limit or at least put in more safety measures on new construction," **Russo** said.

At the county level, Mayor Carlos Gimenez has resisted calls for a construction shutdown, even after work on two major projects — a \$300 million Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines headquarters building at the Port of Miami and a University of Miami UHealth Care center in North Miami — was delayed indefinitely due to uncertainty about COVID-19. One of Miami-Dade's leading builders, Sergio Pino, issued a public plea last Tuesday for the construction industry to shut down sites entirely and prevent an outbreak of coronavirus among their workers. But Gimenez said during a virtual press conference later that day that construction can still be done safely. It remains on his list of "essential" businesses exempt from a countywide stay-at-home order, he said, because of "the jobs that it's creating." "They're taking our warnings very seriously," Gimenez said, adding that Miami-Dade police have conducted hundreds of inspections to make sure workers are staying six feet apart and following county protocols. "If we see that there are problems with construction sites, we will shut them down individually."

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Media Network (FL)
December 6, 2019

\$1.8 Million Sand Renourishment Project to be Completed in Sunny Isles Beach Mid-January

Author: Anna Radinsky

Vacationers and snowbirds may need to avoid nearly a mile of the beach in Sunny Isles due to a multi-month sand renourishment project – though no one seems to know exactly when. The project was scheduled to run from mid-November to mid-January from approximately Terracina Avenue to 185th Street, about three-quarters of a mile. It has been delayed because contractors are working on getting permits to start the project, according to Kathryn Matos, the assistant city manager. She is unsure when work will begin. The Estates of Acqualina will pay around \$1.8 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to add 80,000 cubic yards of sand to the beach, according to Alexandra Wesley, the spokeswoman for Acqualina.

Sunny Isles Beach is not paying for the renourishment and only designates the location for the sand placement, which is decided by the city commission “based on the area of greatest need at the time the beach-fill project is being planned,” said City Manager **Christopher Russo**. “Developers on the east side of Collins Avenue are required by city ordinance to place whatever quantity of material is excavated from their project site, back on the beach in the form of beach quality sand, which goes through rigorous quality testing by the state and county before it is allowed to be placed,” said **Russo**. “They’re paying \$62 a cubic yard for sand. That’s the size of a filing cabinet. It’s expensive because they’re getting it from upland areas,” said Randall Parkinson, an associate professor for Florida International University’s Sea Level Solutions Center.

Parkinson was a chief scientist for the Sebastian Inlet Tax District Commission in Brevard County, where he designed and managed beach nourishment projects in the 1980s. The sand will be coming in from the Vulcan Materials Witherspoon Sand Mine, located in Moore Haven, southwest of Lake Okeechobee. It is a 100-mile trip from Sunny Isles Beach. “A typical dump truck can carry 10 cubic yards of sand. So, 14,000 dump trucks are going to be coming in and out of Sunny Isles, creating potholes, accidents, tip-overs, dust, dirt, air pollution and noise pollution,” said Parkinson.

In addition, the sand coming in does not match the sand that originally covered Sunny Isles. “If you stand barefoot on real sand, it’s not going to be hot even if it’s hot outside. Now if you stand on fake sand, or synthetic sand, then it would be hot, which it’s always hot in Miami Beach,” said Nicholas Machin, the Assistant Project Manager of Gonzalez & Sons Equipment, Inc. Engineering, contractors of the sand renourishment project. Machin does not think that sand will run out for renourishment projects. Parkinson disagrees. “Sand is not a renewable resource. You mine sand from deposits offshore or from inland mines but that’s not an infinite supply and it will run out,” said Parkinson.

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Coastal cities around the U.S. work on sand renourishment projects to combat sand erosion. “On average we lose approximately 15,000 cubic yards of sand per year, so the coordinated efforts between our city staff and government agencies have proven successful thus far at renourishing sand on our beach,” said Sunny Isles Beach Commissioner Alex Lama in a newsletter. Parkinson says that beach nourishment should be used as a transitional, not a permanent, strategy for sand erosion and the growing threat from sea-level rise. “Now that we know that climate change is real and happening now, these challenges to urbanizing coasts are only going to get more intense because we’re going to have more frequent and intense tropical storms and hurricanes and sea-level rise is accelerating,” said Parkinson. He said that cities need to prepare for managed withdrawals from cities. “We’re going to have to retreat from the coastline. That’s it. We do not have a choice.” The beach will remain open but a temporary construction fence will be set up in affected areas. Project hours will run from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekdays. Work on Saturdays will only take place if needed to catch up from delays. No work will take place on Sundays or on holidays.

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Christopher J. Russo
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City of Sunny Isles Beach (FL)
April 24, 2017

Neat Streets Miami Awards Street Tree Matching Grant to the City of Sunny Isles Beach
Author: Unknown

In an effort to expand Miami Dade County’s tree canopy by leveraging local resources, Neat Streets Miami awarded the City of Sunny Isles Beach a Street Tree Matching grant for its Central Island Tree Planting Project during the Biennial LEAF Summit which was held on March 23, 2017. In its second year, Neat Streets Miami’s street tree program awarded matching grants to 13 organizations to help advance the Million Trees Miami initiative, a community-wide effort to plant one million trees and achieve a 30 percent tree canopy cover by 2020.

Awardees were announced by Neat Streets Miami Chairman, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Dennis C. Moss, District 9, at the Biennial LEAF Summit, South Florida’s premier exchange on trees. Approximately 200 community leaders participated in the 2017 LEAF Summit to learn and apply best practices for getting more trees planted in Miami-Dade. “With the Street Tree Matching Grant program, the County is leveraging funds to get more ‘green’ on the streets,” said Commissioner Moss. “By matching resources for trees, we are creating more shade, beautifying corridors and gateways and encouraging more activity in communities throughout the County.”

“I want to sincerely thank Neat Streets Miami, the Board, and Chairman Moss for this award and for their encouragement to increase the City’s tree canopy. We are excited about this partnership and look forward to continuing to work together to beautify and green our community through planting trees,” said Sunny Isles Beach City Manager, **Christopher Russo**.

This year, Neat Streets Miami gave priority to applicants in neighborhoods with a low tree canopy and underserved populations, in an attempt to achieve at least a twenty percent tree canopy coverage (Miami-Dade County’s average) in all neighborhoods. As part of this project, the City of Sunny Isles Beach will plant approximately 60 canopy trees to provide shade and beautify the community. The trees will be planted along the sidewalks at the following locations: from North Bay Road from 174th Street to 178th Street, 178th Drive from North Bay Road to 178th Street, Church Street to Atlantic Boulevard; Atlantic Boulevard from 178th Street to 175th Terrace; and 175th Terrace from Atlantic Boulevard to Collins Avenue, for a total distance of 2.3 miles.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City of Sunny Isles Beach (FL)
March 31, 2017

Serving Sunny Isles Beach Seniors
Author: **Christopher J. Russo**

The City Commission, since incorporation has always had senior programs listed as a priority. What started simply as group tours to shows in the beginning, 20 years later has flourished into a wealth of opportunities for our seniors to participate regularly in programs that provide education, arts and culture, athletics and yes, even twice monthly bingo! There are AARP driving courses, medical and political lectures, daytime movie and pickle ball, as well as dinner dances, concerts and still twice monthly trips and tours.

Always searching to do more, in December, the City Commission approved a \$10,000 donation to Marian Towers, a not-for-profit HUD subsidized elderly housing apartment building located right in the center of Sunny Isles Beach. Mayor Scholl, Commissioners Gatto and Svechin and City Manager **Christopher Russo** were welcomed by Luis Herrera, Social Services Coordinator, and Ada Hernandez, the Marian Towers Property Manager, to a February resident party for the check presentation.

Sunny Isles Beach Mayor George “Bud” Scholl commented, “We are so pleased to see the support that Marian Towers extends to our senior residents. In turn, we are pleased to provide this donation on behalf of the City to assist with these important initiatives.” The City will be working with the property management to provide improved programming including computer training and other collaborations to benefit the more that 250 senior residents of our City. When asked how the donation will benefit the residents, Ada Hernandez and Juana D. Mejia, V.P. of Housing Development & Operations / Catholic Housing Management explained, “We are using the donation to purchase a projector for movie nights and to set up a computer in the common area, to enable residents who do not have online access to learn and have better communication with their relatives, the Social Security Administration and other entities.”

Ada emphasized that this donation does not merely benefit the residents of Marian Towers. Their friends, who are all neighbors and Sunny Isles Beach residents, are always welcome to join in their programs. Luis and Ada are very grateful for this donation which will directly benefit our residents. Recognizing that ‘seniors’ are an evolving demographic where younger, more active retirees’ are soon to be our new target audience in this programming block, the City will be looking at new and fresh opportunities to offer them.

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Christopher J. Russo
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City of Sunny Isles Beach (FL)
November 1, 2016

Evaluating Our Hurricane Preparation

Author: George “Bud” Scholl

We were very lucky to have such a powerful storm, in close proximity of our coast line, resulting with minimal issues. However, we were still very prepared. Even though Miami-Dade County never officially came under a Hurricane Warning (we were under a Tropical Storm Warning), given that the county line just above Golden Beach was the southern edge of the Hurricane Warning zone, we still needed to be vigilant. As an individual home owner, there is a lot to do to prepare for a hurricane. As a City, proper preparation is a very big challenge.

Our Building and Code Enforcement Departments need to ensure that all construction sites and single-family homes are secure. This includes mitigating the potential for flying debris, making sure cranes are properly cared for and fencing is secured. I am pleased to report that our Building Official, Clay Parker, his staff, and Code Enforcement did a great job in getting to these sites early to verify they would not create problems. Our Cultural & Community Services team has to deal with securing the parks and public spaces that we enjoy. This includes removing canopies, removing benches and securing equipment. Susan Simpson and her staff had everything taken care of in preparation for the storm. Our Public Works staff have to deal with securing equipment, ensuring our drainage systems are prepared for the onslaught of rain and dealing with securing our public buildings. Rob Williamson and the rest of our Public Works folks had everything prepared and protected.

During storm preparedness, especially when we face mandatory evacuations, law enforcement is a key component to keeping people safe. Our officers were out on extra shift duty before, during and after the storm. Fortunately, we had no material incidents, however the level of engagement and visibility that was demonstrated by Chief Maas and his team ensured we all remained safe and secure. Every preparedness planning effort needs a leader and in the case of our City, this is the City Manager, **Chris Russo**. He stayed in constant coordination with the various staff members throughout the event. On the day of the storm **Chris** and I rode throughout the City to check on everyone and determine any damage assessments. We have the added benefit of our City Manager living within our City, so **Chris** ensures that our collective home is well taken care of. Fortunately, Hurricane Matthew spared us. Due to a dedicated and proactive team of professionals, the City of Sunny Isles Beach hoped for the best, but was prepared for the worst!

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

City of Sunny Isles Beach (FL)
April 1, 2016

Utility Live Undergrounding Project to Commence in Sunny Isles Beach

Author: Unknown

Starting Sunday night, April 3, 2016, Sunny Isles Beach contractors will commence work to underground electric distribution and other utility lines along the City's major thoroughfare, State Road A1A, also known as Collins Avenue. This will require the closure of 2 southbound lanes of Collins Avenue, leaving one lane open, between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. between 159 Street and the southern border of the City at Haulover Park for the first week. The project will move north from there. Visit www.sibfl.net/alerts for weekly closure updates.

“We understand that this project is going to inconvenience our residents and visitors for the short term, but the long-term benefits will far exceed this temporary disruption,” said City Manager **Christopher Russo**. “We have been planning this for quite some time and have contracted with experienced and knowledgeable contractors to ensure that this project runs as smoothly as any project of this magnitude can,” **Russo** continues, “work will be performed at night to minimize the disruption to the daily lives of our residents as much as possible.”

Moving electrical and telecommunications lines from overhead to underground is a huge endeavor. It takes years of planning and cost millions of dollars. The benefit is a safer city. With power lines underground, they are not susceptible to damage from storms with high winds, car accidents, falling tree branches or other mishaps. Additionally, there is an aesthetic advantage of removing unnecessary poles and cables from city streets.

In Sunny Isles Beach this project has been in the design and permitting phase and is now breaking ground. During this phase, contractors will be closing lanes of traffic to dig trenches to lay the conduit (large pipes) under Collins Avenue / State Road A1A. This work will be performed at night between 9:00 p.m. and 6:30 a.m., 5 days a week, excluding Friday & Saturday. Both northbound and southbound traffic will be open but will be limited.

This phase of the project, scheduled to start in April, will last approximately one year. Work will start at the south end of the City and work north. This is the most disruptive phase of the project for the public. Residents and visitors are advised to plan their travels accordingly. Once this phase is complete, the actual power and communication lines will be pulled through the conduit and conversion to live service can be transferred to the underground utility lines. The final phase of the Collins Avenue portion will include the removal of all unnecessary overhead poles and wires and the installation of new decorative street lighting including provisions for seasonal banners. The final phase of this decade long project will be to underground the utilities in the Golden Shores neighborhood. This area is currently in the planning stages.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)
October 3, 2015

In Sunny Isles Beach Condo Blast, Cleanup Continues

Author: Michael Vasquez

Traffic is back to normal, all of the injured have been released from the hospital and the cleanup is underway. That was the update from Sunny Isles Beach Mayor George "Bud" Scholl on Saturday — a day after a blew out big chunks of the 34th floor at Château Beach Residences, a just-completed waterfront luxury condo tower. "The two burn victims were released this morning," Scholl said. "They had second-degree burns. It wasn't as bad as we originally thought it was." Miami-Dade Fire-Rescue has said a total of six people were injured in the blast, which is believed to have been caused by a gas explosion. They included construction workers, two county firefighters and, according to the mayor, a guest who was on the pool deck at the next-door Monaco Resort hotel.

Witness account of explosion at Sunny Isles Beach condo tower Aldo Mottolese, who lives next door to the Chateau Beach Residences in Sunny Isles Beach, describes the explosion. "The debris fell on the Monaco ... he got hit by debris," Scholl said. After being treated for minor injuries at the hospital, the man was released, city officials said. Still unclear: when the still-dangling slab of concrete hanging off of the Château tower will be removed. The slab has now been tied down with cables that are welded to the building, but it remains enough of a concern that the Monaco hotel remains evacuated for the foreseeable future. Initially, city officials and the construction firm, Coastal Construction, were discussing bringing in a temporary crane to remove the hanging slab, but that plan ran into a hiccup Saturday afternoon.

As Scholl was speaking with the Miami Herald, City Manager **Christopher Russo** walked over to inform him that engineers at Coastal's office are now saying a 500-ton crane won't be big enough. "They're proposing an 800-ton crane," **Russo** said. That would require bringing in the crane from out of state, and assembling it next to the condo tower, at a city park. "We're talking for, like, three weeks, or more," **Russo** said. **Russo** and the mayor were lukewarm to that idea. The solution to removing the hanging concrete, the city manager said, is "to be determined."

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tampa Bay Times (FL)
October 2, 2015

GUN RANGE PLAN UPSETS NEIGHBORS

Author/Byline: Barbara Behrendt

Christopher Russo is doing what any other businessman does. He has found a niche to fill, developed a business plan and, in the final analysis, hopes to serve the community and put food on his family's table. But **Russo's** plan is not going over well with his potential new neighbors near the gated Glen Lakes community, off U.S. 19 north of Weeki Wachee. "We are looking at opening a gun store and outdoor gun range," **Russo** said. "Our first and foremost goal and agenda is the safety of the community."

In August, **Russo** submitted his application to county planners to rezone a 3.75-acre parcel north of Long Lake Avenue, just south of Glen Lakes, from agricultural to planned development project recreational. As part of the process, he convened a community meeting last month to discuss his plan and answer questions. The session wasn't what **Russo** expected. "It was like a public lynching," he said.

Ever since word of the proposal got out, county commissioners have been inundated with letters from nearby residents voicing concerns that they and their children and pets would be in danger and that their peaceful way of life - without the constant sound of gunfire - would be destroyed.

"We purchased a 5-acre property in this peaceful and tranquil area to get away from the hectic, busy world," wrote Richard Todd Lazar and Melanie Cheri Lazar. "As an agricultural community, it was guaranteed that we would not have commercial and industrial impacts upon our residence. "Adding a noisy commercial gun range destroyed the exact reason why we chose to live here in Hernando County. That in turn impacts my ability to sell and the value of my property over all."

Diane Malone, a 24-year teacher, urged commissioners to vote no on **Russo's** proposal. "Children live in our neighborhood. They bicycle, fish, and the adults as well are outdoors walking their dogs past the proposed gun range," Malone wrote. "This is a huge concern for myself and our neighbors. It is not a neighborhood-friendly operation, and I plead with you to understand and stop this rezoning."

Jim Engelage, a retired military officer who is not opposed to guns, does object to having a gun range so close to Glen Lakes. "Apparently, the person proposing this outdoor gun range believes he has friends on the commission as he has already begun to construct a berm on the property," Engelage wrote. "A berm might be a physical barrier for some rounds, but it does not prevent the noise pollution that would certainly accompany even small arms fire."

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Oliver and Glenna Akers took a different approach. "My family does not criticize without offering a solution," they wrote. "Instead of permitting a shooting range in our back yard, which is one mile south of Glen Lakes, move it to one of your back yards."

Russo said he is following every rule presented to him by the county to ensure that the range is in complete compliance with zoning laws and codes. He noted that the people who came to his public meeting were all from areas outside the 250-foot radius around the project where the county requires an applicant to notify those affected. He said he believes the public has a right to protest, but "I'm going to defend my constitutional Second Amendment rights."

Regulating anything related to firearms at the local level has proven tricky because Florida Statutes reserve for the state Legislature all forms of regulation of firearms and ammunition. Any public official who knowingly and willfully violates that rule by enacting a local regulation faces a \$5,000 civil fine, which cannot be paid with public money, and the person could be removed from public office by the governor, according to state law.

In early 2012, the County Commission reluctantly granted a permit for a man to sell guns from his Spring Hill home after County Attorney Garth Collier strongly cautioned commissioners against denying the application. At the time, Collier told the commission the statute lacked any wiggle room. "Never have I seen a more crystal clear preemption in my life," Collier told commissioners. "It's crystal clear (state lawmakers) don't want any fingers in this subject."

County planners are still working on **Russo's** application, and no date has yet been set for a hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission. The County Commission will have the final say on the rezoning.

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<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/aventura/article29549260.html>

Miami Herald
July 30, 2015

Sunny Isles Beach commission proposes lowering city's tax rate again

Author: Kathleen DeVaney

For the fourth consecutive year, the city of Sunny Isles Beach is proposing to lower the property tax rate for the upcoming 2015-16 fiscal year.

THE PROPOSAL

The city commission has proposed lowering the tax rate to \$2.50 per \$1,000 of taxable property value.

IMPACT ON TAXPAYERS

Under the proposed rate, the owner of a median condo valued at about \$241,000 would pay about \$482 in property taxes, which is about \$14 less than last year. This assumes the owner qualified for the standard homestead exemption and the home's assessed value increased by 0.8 percent, the maximum allowed by law this year for an owner-occupied home. The city will likely not raise that rate any higher as the budget season goes on, but it can be lowered or remain the same. "I'm pretty confident that it [the tax rate] will stand as already decided by the commission," City Manager **Chris Russo** said.

IMPACT ON SERVICES

According to the city's administration, although the tax rate is being lowered again, the growth in the city's tax revenue is what will allow the same services to be provided. Additionally, the city won't have to tap into its reserve funds.

WHAT THE CITY MANAGER SAYS "We are steadily improving the quality of our services in addition to our facilities," **Russo** said, explaining that the city is in the process of completing capital projects over the next few years. Recently, the city completed the Intracoastal Park system along Collins Avenue and is also about to complete Gateway Park along Sunny Isles Beach Boulevard. Additionally, the city acquired property next to City Hall, which is planned to be a mixed-use building for the Norman S. Edelcup K-8 School, as well as the Sunny Isles Beach Civic and Senior Center.

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[CB&A Note: To view the entire case, please follow the link below.]
<https://www.leagle.com/decision/innyco20150429575>

<https://www.leagle.com/decision/innyco20150429575>

MATTER OF RYTELEWSKI v. RUSSO

2013-07469, Index No. 15899/10.

127 A.D.3d 1207 (2015)

9 N.Y.S.3d 85

2015 NY Slip Op 03543

In the Matter of STEPHEN RYTELEWSKI, Appellant, v. **CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO**, as Village Manager of the Village of Port Chester, New York, et al., Respondents.

Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York, Second Department.

Decided April 29, 2015.

In a proceeding pursuant to CPLR article 78 to review a determination of the Village Manager of the Village of Port Chester dated May 13, 2010, which denied the petitioner's administrative appeal and affirmed a decision, made after a hearing, finding the petitioner guilty of 16 charges of misconduct and imposing a penalty, the petitioner appeals from a judgment of the Supreme Court, Westchester County (Hubert, J.), dated June 13, 2013, which denied the petition and dismissed the proceeding.

[127 A.D.3d 1208]

Ordered that the appeal is dismissed, and the judgment is vacated; and it is further,

Adjudged that the determination dated May 13, 2010, is confirmed, the petition is denied, and the proceeding is dismissed on the merits; and it is further,

Ordered that one bill of costs is awarded to the respondents.

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Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)
September 25, 2014

Sunny Isles Beach Approves 2015 Budget

Author: Allison Horton

Sunny Isles Beach commissioners on Tuesday gave their final approval to a \$76 million city budget for the upcoming fiscal year that shifts away from capital projects to providing "world class services and maintenance" to its residents. The new 2015 budget is smaller than the current budget of \$93 million. The 2014 budget included at least \$40 million for the construction of major one-time projects such as Gateway Park at 18115 North Bay Road and two pedestrian bridges in the city. Gateway Park, which will include restaurants, a water feature and a theater stage, is expected to be complete in March 2015, and both bridges are expected to begin construction this year. The 2015 budget year starts Oct. 1. The new budget does include \$2 million of an estimated \$2.5 million for the redesign of the Gilbert Samson Oceanfront Park at 17425 Collins Ave. About \$500,000 was already earmarked in the 2014 budget.

The renovation of Samson Park includes expansion of bathrooms, creation of a new covered platform performance area and playground, and new electrical and sewer systems, **Russo** said. Construction is expected to begin in May and be completed at the end of 2015. As the capital projects are completed, the focus of Sunny Isles Beach will shift to providing "world class services and maintenance" for at least the next five years, **Russo** said. This goal resulted in a 9 percent increase in operating expenses to \$49.3 million compared to last year's \$42.9 million.

The 2015 budget also includes an increase in the city's reserves for emergencies and other contingencies to nearly \$19 million from this year's \$13 million, **Russo** said. About \$1 million of this year's reserves were used to repair an emergency seawall that collapsed in August behind the Intracoastal Park at 16100 Collins Ave, **Russo** said. "That has never happened in the history of the city," **Russo** said. "That is the first time the city manager had to spend that kind of money since the city was formed during the month the commission is on recess," said **Russo**, adding the commission ratified the expense after the session resumed. "This was an emergency repair that we had to initiate."

The commissioners also approved a tax rate of \$2.60 per \$1,000 in assessed home value, down slightly from this year's \$2.70. This is expected to generate almost \$19 million, compared to last year's \$17.7 million. The Miami-Dade County property appraiser assessed Sunny Isles Beach property values at \$7.679 billion compared to \$6.736 billion last year. However, the assessed value of an owner-occupied home or condominium can go up no more than 1.5 percent this year because of limits in the state constitution. The city's nearly 14 percent, or \$800 million, increase in assessed value is due mainly to increase in property value and not new construction, City Manager **Chris Russo** said. "That is pretty incredible [considering] we have 15 projects in some stage of development in the city," **Russo** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)
April 7, 2014

Sunny Isles May Sue Condo Over Land for Bridge

Author: Allison Horton

Sunny Isles Beach commissioners may sue to force the sale of a small piece of property needed for a bridge, unless officials can negotiate a deal first. The City Commission adopted a resolution last week authorizing eminent domain proceedings if negotiations break down with the Porto Bellagio condominium, 17100 North Bay Rd.

In 2001, the city approved Porto Bellagio with the condition that the condo give the city a 20-foot-wide easement along the entire property to accommodate a bridge. The bridge would carry North Bay Road across a canal that separates 74th Street from 172nd Street, said City Manager **Christopher Russo**. "The bridge will be primarily used for pedestrians and bicycles and in the event of an emergency it could be used for vehicles if there was a total blockage on Collins or emergency vehicles," **Russo** said.

Now the city is seeking an additional 72 square feet of land for the easement. That property wasn't called for in the original agreement. An easement remains the property of the owner but gives the city the right to travel upon it. The city says it needs the land so fire trucks will have enough room to turn around. The approved resolution authorizes the city to negotiate "voluntary acquisition" or initiate eminent domain proceedings to force the issue. The city also wants the removal of electric boxes constructed on the easement. "They should not have been put there in the beginning," **Russo** said.

At a previous commission meeting, on March 20, City Attorney Hans Ottinot said he'd made oral and email requests to the condo board about the easement agreement but had not received any response. The commissioners decided then to hold off authorizing a lawsuit after Tucker Gibbs, an attorney for the Porto Bellagio stated that his client was "mystified" about the city threatening to sue and the first time they heard of the city's request was in an email the preceding week.

Gibbs said at the March 20 meeting that the electrical boxes have been in place before the city acquired the easement and the city was aware of the boxes. He also stated the condo board needed an official letter seeking the movement of the boxes before the issue could be discussed amongst the condo board. Ottinot said at the March 20 meeting that it was the first time the condo had asked for a formal letter, which occurred after the property manager of the condo was shown the resolution seeking legal proceedings.

A formal letter has since been sent to the Porto Bellagio but the city hasn't received a response. The condo board is meeting this week to discuss only the movement of the electric boxes and will respond to the city after the meeting, Gibbs said. Although the city has dropped off documents about the additional "sliver" of land needed for the easement, Gibbs said there hasn't been a formal request asking for additional property.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
October 3, 2013

Sunny Isles Beach approves small tax cut

Author/Byline: Elizabeth de Armas

Sunny Isles Beach commissioners have unanimously agreed to cut the property tax rate by 10 cents. Residents will pay \$2.70 per \$1,000 of taxable value for the 2013-14 fiscal year, which begins Tuesday. This year, residents paid \$2.80 per \$1,000.

The longtime owner of a condo assessed at \$150,000 would pay about \$277, or \$3 less than this year. That assumes the homeowner qualifies for the standard \$50,000 homestead exemption and that the condo's assessed value increased by 1.7 percent - this year's state limit.

At the second budget hearing, which took place Sept. 26, commissioners also unanimously voted to adopt an operating and capital improvement budget for 2013-14.

Christopher Russo, the city manager, said there were no comments made by the public that would change the budget from the date it was tentatively adopted on Sept. 17.

Sunny Isles Mayor, Norman Edelcup, says he hopes the city will end the year with another surplus and continue lowering the tax rate on an annual basis, assuming the market value of properties continues increasing.

The next commission meeting will be held on Oct. 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sunny Isles Beach Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Christopher J. Russo** is listed below.]

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 2, 2013

PROPERTY TAXES - Miami-Dade tax roll up sharply - While most municipalities in Miami-Dade County posted growth in their property-tax rolls for 2013, a few areas are still struggling.

Author/Byline: Martha Brannigan

Miami-Dade County's property-tax base rose 3.39 percent for 2013, marking the second consecutive year of growth after the great real-estate crash that crippled the region's economy and forced many local governments into painful downsizing. But the recovery remained spotty across the sprawling and diverse county, with some municipalities posting big gains and others still seeing their tax base shrink.

Miami-Dade Property Appraiser Carlos Lopez-Cantera said Monday the overall taxable value of county real estate at the end of last year was \$197,133,835,984. That countywide taxable value turned out to be a bit better than a June 1 estimate from the property appraiser, which put growth at 3.1 percent.

The July 1 preliminary certification of taxable values enables cities and other taxing authorities such as the School Board and the Children's Trust to set their budgets for the 2013-14 year and to decide on proposed property tax rates. But they are sort of stale news for those interested in current market values. "These values are not the best to determine what your property is worth," said Lopez-Cantera, noting assessments are based on prior-year values. "Today's real estate activity won't be reflected until 2014."

Among other big winners was Sunny Isles Beach, where fancy high-rise condominiums dominate the skyline and taxable value jumped 10.32 percent year over year to \$6.90 billion for 2013, both from increasing values of existing properties and some new construction.

"We've got some of the finest, highest quality luxury condos going up in the country," **Christopher Russo**, Sunny Isles' city manager, said. "It's not a surprise. We are fortunate in where we are located."

Russo said staff is still working on the next fiscal year's budget, but some of the extra revenues would be used to finance existing capital improvement projects such as the Gateway Park, Intracoastal Park, an emergency pedestrian bridge running north-south between 174th and 172nd streets and upgrades for Samson Oceanfront Park. The bigger tax base will also be used to decrease the tax rate, he predicted.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Christopher J. Russo** is listed below.]

Miami's Community News (FL)
December 21, 2012

Holiday Cheer

Author: Bari Auerbach

‘CHEER FOR GREAT LEADERS’

City Manager **Christopher Russo** has also returned to his post (as of Oct. 15). **Russo** formerly served as City Manager from 2000-2005.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Port Chester Daily Voice (NY)
April 30, 2012

Port Chester Trustees Decrease Property Tax Levy

Author/Byline: Luke Lavoie

While some village governments fight to stay within the new 2 percent property tax levy cap, the Port Chester Village Board of Trustees adopted a budget that decreases the property tax levy for the second year in a row on Monday with a vote of 5-1, with Trustee Bart Didden as the dissenting vote. Trustee John Branca, who has been suffering from an illness for months, was absent. The board's adopted budget decreases the levy by 0.28 percent, bringing the total levy number down to \$21,896,467. The village's total operating budget for 2012-13 stands at \$36,219,672.

The original tentative budget filed by Village Manager **Chris Russo** in March called for a 2.4 percent increase in the property tax levy, the maximum allowable levy increase under the 2 percent tax cap. Going into a budget workshop last Thursday, the board, through weeks of work sessions, trimmed expenditures and decreased the levy by half to 1.20 percent. Included in both the tentative budget and the adopted budget is a new sewer rental system that is estimated to save the average homeowner \$105 in its first year.

The board ultimately passed 28 amendments to **Russo's** original tentative budget, including a \$134,750 reduction in the amount budgeted for November's elections. Also among the expenditure cuts was the elimination of a \$23,000 increase for the Port Chester-Rye Brook Library's operating budget. Many members of the library board and staff attended and asked the board to reconsider. "What we asked the village for is not what we want but we need," library Board member Lisa Simon said. "If we don't get an increase from Port Chester, we will have to make big cuts." In response, the board passed an amendment appropriating an additional \$60,000 into the contingency budget, which is used at the board's discretion and would consider giving some of that to the library.

Overall, the board passed 21 expenditure decreases, six expenditure increases, one revenue decrease and several revenue increases totaling \$62,200. The total decrease in expenditures from the tentative budget totaled \$527,228.

Trustee Sam Terenzi, an experienced municipal tax accountant, said he was proud of the board's ability to come up with, what he called, a tight budget. "I've done a lot of this over a long period of time," Terenzi said. "I would put this board up with any board in the county as it relates to the financial acumen we have. I'm proud of the guys here and I think we've done a good job." Terenzi also said the board has been able to reduce the village's long term debt from \$36 million to \$31 million. Mayor Dennis Pilla said he was proud of the board's ability to put aside partisanship and construct the best budget for the village. "This is an example of a board that's putting the village ahead of politics," Pilla said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Voice (NY)
April 19, 2012

A Plan to Spend \$40,000 to Hire a Third Judge was Debated as the Port Chester Board of Trustees Held a Budget Work Session Wednesday with the Village Justice Department
Author: Unknown

The Justice Department will need another judge to help process the anticipated increase in building code enforcement cases as the village brings its crumbling infrastructure up to code, Village Manager **Chris Russo** said. Village Justice Matthew Troy said the department does not need a third justice now but will soon. Does the work today require three judges? No, but there will come a time when that happens," Troy said. "We have to be prepared because it could explode overnight, and once the cycle gets going, it's like a snowball rolling down a hill."

The recommended budget proposes an increase of \$80,000 in personnel services for the Justice Department in 2012-13 and an overall increase of \$100,000. According to **Russo**, the addition of a third judge would account for about \$40,000 in spending, with another \$40,000 for part-time court clerks. The discussion centered on whether a justice could be added in a tight budget. Ultimately, the board did not reach a decision. It has until May 1 to decide on the position and all other matters pertaining to the 2012-13 budget.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Port Chester Patch (NY)
April 5, 2011

Sarcastic Salvos: Terenzi Returns to Old Form During Budget Meeting
Some trustees are falling back to familiar political territory after last month's mayoral election.

Author: Nik Bonopartis

After listening to almost an hour of talk about tax levies and fund balances, most of the dozen or so residents who turned out to Monday night's budget meeting sagged in their chairs or propped themselves on their elbows, waiting for their chance to speak. Some trustees even stared off into space as Village Manager **Christopher Russo** flipped through a presentation of graphs, pie charts and number-heavy lists. But Trustee Sam Terenzi, an accountant in his day job, was not put to sleep by the numbers. He listened attentively, until he heard **Russo** utter the words he'd been waiting for. "...fourteen percent tax rate increase..." "I don't think I heard you say that!" a delighted Terenzi said, interrupting **Russo**. "You started mumbling over that number a little bit." A handful of residents suddenly perked up, chuckling.

The proposed \$36 million budget -- a hike of more than \$1.2 million over this year's budget -- would result in a small tax levy increase, but an effective 14.7 percent tax rate increase. That was the point Terenzi kept driving home during the first budget meeting of a nearly month-long process. "You keep evading the issue, **Chris**," Terenzi said in a subsequent exchange. "It's the tax rate, not the tax levy." Despite the absence of Mayor Dennis Pilla, Terenzi's favorite sparring partner, Monday's meeting marked the first time in months that the Republican trustee launched into his trademark outbursts. "Over the last couple of months, I have toned down my style. I didn't want to interfere with the mayoral campaign," Terenzi explained this weekend in a comment on Port Chester Patch. "I wanted to make sure there was a level playing field and not distract from the issues that were being discussed during the campaign."

Since voters chose to give Pilla a third term in last month's mayoral election and most of the campaign signs have been plucked from village lawns, some board members have fallen back to the familiar political territory they occupied before the campaign. For Terenzi, that means often being the loudest -- and most sarcastic -- voice among the board's four-vote Republican-Conservative bloc. While other board members and a visiting county legislator were quick to blame New York State for Port Chester's cash woes, Terenzi instead elected to keep hammering **Russo**, who trails only Pilla as the target of Terenzi's sarcasm. Unlike Pilla, **Russo** rarely retorts; usually, he picks up where he left off, ignoring Terenzi's interruptions.

Later in the meeting, Terenzi asked **Russo** to talk him through an alternate plan that would avoid an immediate tax increase by shifting long-term debt. Terenzi cut in again, turning to the people in the small courtroom. "**Chris** went to the same creative accounting course that I went to in 1978," Terenzi said. "I don't think he passed, though." The last time Terenzi gave **Russo** an earful, it was after a series of meetings where he'd publicly berated other high-visibility employees, including former Recreation Superintendent Thomas Hroncich and Treasurer Leonie

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Douglas. In late August, barely two months into the new board's term, residents pushed back, describing the trustee's style as "disgusting" and "embarrassing."

This time around, there was no sign of that outrage: not only has it been months since the community has seen a Terenzian outburst, but the general tone of the residents indicated most agreed with the Republican trustee, even if they don't agree with his self-described "style." "The minimum this board needs to do is make sure that the average house does not have a \$216 increase," said Richard Abel, a resident and publisher of the Westmore News. "Whether or not you can get it down 14 percent, as John [Branca] said, might be a disservice to the community as a whole and might be a gutting of services." As **Russo** closed the last slide on his presentation Monday night, another trustee thanked the manager for his report, and Terenzi saw an opportunity for one last bit of sarcasm. "Thank you," Terenzi said, "for the 15 percent increase, Mr. **Russo**."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Port Chester Patch (NY)
March 17, 2011

Trustees Certify Mayoral Election, Quiz Manager on SUV Purchase
Tuesday night's election results were made official during a special meeting Thursday night.

Author: Nik Bonopartis

Port Chester's trustees certified this week's mayoral election without much discussion Thursday night. Blink and you could have missed it. "You've got me for another two years," Mayor Dennis Pilla said after apologizing for presiding over the meeting in what he called "casual attire" – a white dress shirt under a cream-colored jacket. Five of six trustees were present for the canvass of the vote, making Tuesday night's results official. Republican Joe Kenner was absent from the meeting. The only real discussion during the meeting was related to the single item on the agenda – approval for the purchase of a Ford Expedition, to be used by the DPW's acting general foreman.

Trustee Bart Didden questioned Village Manager **Christopher Russo** on why the village was purchasing the 2011 Expedition XL SSV from an East Hanover, NJ, company instead of from nearby Rye Ford, which employs several Port Chester residents. **Russo** told Didden that the New Jersey company, Warnock Fleet, currently has a contract with New York State. Since the company deals exclusively with municipalities, it's able to offer vehicles at a lower cost. The Expedition will cost the village \$26,620.85. It will be used to transport personnel and goods, and will be outfitted with a plow during the winter months. Didden voted against the resolution to approve the purchase; Pilla and trustees Sam Terenzi, John Branca, Daniel Brakewood and Luis Marino voted in favor of the purchase.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Port Chester Patch (NY)
October 5, 2010

Russo Has a Change of Heart, Announces He'll Stay as Port Chester's Manager
Village Manager Christopher Russo rescinded his September resignation on Monday, telling the mayor and trustees that he'll remain in the post through the end of this year.

Author: Nik Bonopartis

Port Chester won't have to look for a new village manager – at least until the end of the year. On a night when trustees were expected to hammer out the search for a new manager, Mayor Dennis Pilla announced **Christopher Russo** would remain in Port Chester's top non-elected post. "He advised the board today that he intends to rescind his letter of resignation, that is to say at least until year end," the mayor said. Next up? Renegotiations. The board will meet in executive session – which is closed to the public – on Oct. 12, when they'll talk to **Russo** about keeping his \$194,000-a-year job past the new year.

Russo's resignation in early September threw the board into upheaval, with a round of finger-pointing over who was to blame. **Russo** himself remained mostly mum, saying only that he was dissatisfied with the pace of progress in the village. Residents and former trustees blamed the board after **Russo** found himself on the receiving end of what observers called "childish" verbal abuse. Trustee Sam Terenzi was blamed for berating professional staff – including Recreation Superintendent Thomas Hroncich and Treasurer Leonie Douglas – at meetings, but four board members backed Terenzi and shifted the blame to Pilla.

That group of trustees – which includes Terenzi, Joseph Kenner, Bart Didden, John Branca and Luis Marino – was "looking forward to replacing Mr. **Russo** as soon as possible," according to a statement attributed to Didden. Now they'll have to live with him until at least 2011. With **Russo** back on board, Port Chester avoids a change in command and turbulence during already hectic times. Officials are trying to find millions to pay for a new sea wall to replace the crumbling bulkhead, and at least a million more for sewer repairs. In the meantime, police are investigating mass theft from the village's parking meters and allegations of bribery in the building department, and both department heads in those cases have resigned in disgrace.

Calling off the search for a new manager – at least in the short term – is one less thing Port Chester's elected officials have to worry about, and for that they seemed grateful. "I think what's in the best interest of the village at this point is stability," Trustee Daniel Brakewood said. "I want to appreciate you and say how much I'm glad you have agreed to stay on, at least through the year."

CORRECTION: Village Manager **Christopher Russo** will meet with the board on Oct. 12 to discuss his contract. An earlier version of this story incorrectly listed the wrong month.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Port Chester Patch (NY)

September 29, 2010

**Port Chester Spared Hearing, Legal Fees After DPW Chief's Resignation
Former DPW supervisor Gary Racaniello waived his right to a hearing – but not his civil service benefits – when he resigned last week.**

Author: Nik Bonopartis

The resignation of Port Chester's embattled former DPW chief last week saved the village a drawn-out hearing process – and potentially tens of thousands of dollars in fees for attorneys and mediators. Gary Racaniello, foreman of Port Chester's Department of Public Works, is the first public employee targeted thus far in a pair of investigations into systematic theft from Port Chester's parking meters. Racaniello was suspended without pay on Sept. 14 and faced 36 disciplinary charges, then resigned last week.

If Racaniello – who worked his way up to DPW supervisor after starting as a garbage man two decades ago – had chosen to fight the charges, the village would have been forced to hire a hearing officer and the process could have dragged on for months. Racaniello's resignation "saves us a lot of money in lawyers and hearing officers," said Village Manager **Christopher Russo**. Although it's impossible to say how long the hearings would have stretched, **Russo** said the process could have cost Port Chester as much as \$30,000 in legal fees.

The village collects about \$500,000 a year from its meters, and began quietly looking into the collection process in June after getting tipped off that employees from the Department of Public Works may have been pocketing the meter cash. Since then, Port Chester police and the Westchester County District Attorney's Office have been conducting a criminal investigation, while an administrative investigation was carried out by staff at village hall. As investigators comb receipts, bank deposits and other records, a private company, Central Parking Systems, has temporarily taken over meter collections with a four-month, \$45,000 contract from the village.

In early August, Port Chester released preliminary data showing a marked increase in over two weeks of supervised collections. The two-week sample size was reported and extrapolated in some media reports, with one estimate claiming the stolen money could amount to "millions." While there's little evidence behind those estimates, new data from the investigation shows that in June, July and August, Port Chester collected \$40,000 more than it had over the same three-month stretch last year. Officials don't believe all of that can be attributed to theft, since more than 100 of the village's 750 parking meters were broken or awaiting replacement until recently, but the numbers do give a clearer picture of how much money was pocketed.

If all metered parking spaces were occupied at every hour of the day, the village could potentially collect up to \$1.4 million in parking meter revenue. "Even at 50 percent usage, you're talking about a number of \$700,000," said Trustee Sam Terenzi. "Is it possible the village could be doing \$650,000 or \$700,000? Yeah." A larger data sample should paint a more accurate picture of the scale of the thefts, while correcting for seasonal aberrations, construction projects

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

that closed metered lots and other compounding factors. "As we go further on, the numbers'll really get solid, and you'll really be able to look, year over year, over all the seasons," Terenzi said. "It's still an evolving situation."

On Sept. 21, Terenzi met with officials from the district attorney's Public Integrity Bureau. Investigators asked Terenzi about the timing of a resolution to eliminate Lombardi's position. A story in Monday's Journal News notes Terenzi put forth the resolution "the day after Racaniello's suspension." But Terenzi said "one thing has nothing to do with the other." He said he had been in talks with other trustees to eliminate Lombardi's \$79,000 position as a cost-cutting measure, and decided to wait on the resolution because they didn't want to interrupt Lombardi's ongoing administrative investigation. The trustees pulled the resolution over unsettled legal questions about Lombardi's civil service status, he said.

Some village hall employees have anonymously floated the idea that Terenzi was trying to disrupt the investigation, and it's likely the district attorney's investigators heard the same allegations. Sounding exasperated, Terenzi said he doesn't know how the accusations could have merit when the police and prosecutors are conducting their own separate investigation. "The district attorney seems to be on the case and seems to be motivated to get to the bottom line, and that's their job," he said. "But that's not going to deter us from doing what we have to do with Lombardi or anyone else we feel is a luxury we can't afford right now

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Posted in Government & Politics, Port Chester, Rye Brook, Rye Town (NY)
September 2, 2010

Port Chester Village Manager Christopher Russo Resigns

Author: Leah Rae

Port Chester Village Manager **Christopher Russo** has announced his resignation, Mayor Dennis Pilla said this afternoon. **Russo** came to Port Chester two years ago under a three-year contract.

He has given advance notice beyond the 60 days called for under the contract, according to the mayor. “It’s unfortunate for Port Chester,” Pilla said. **Russo** was Rye Brook’s administrator in the 1990s. In 2000, he moved to Florida, where he was city manager for Sunny Isles Beach, outside Miami.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Sun Sentinel (FL)
June 15, 2008

Ranches, Pines Feud Over Roadways Is Resurfacing

Author: Joe Kollin

The wounds that were slowly healing may be starting to fester again. Southwest Ranches officials have asked Pembroke Pines to revise the December 2005 contract that ended their feud over road barricades. But angry Pembroke Pines commissioners refused to send a response. "They [Southwest Ranches] have not done much of anything they were supposed to do," Commissioner Iris Siple said. "Now they're asking us to do something with nothing coming back to us. It's still neighbor fighting neighbor." To head off a new battle, Pembroke Pines City Manager Charles F. Dodge and Southwest Ranches Town Administrator **Chris Russo** have been trying to arrange a meeting. In early 2005, Southwest Ranches erected barricades at its border on Southwest 199th, 202nd and 205th avenues as a way to protect its semi-rural neighborhoods from outside drivers trying to reach Griffin Road. After a nasty feud and under threat of a lawsuit, the town agreed to remove the barricades if Pembroke Pines helped pay to extend Southwest 54th Place from 205th to 210th Terrace, which would provide an alternate route to Griffin Road.

Southwest Ranches removed the barricades but did not build the extension. Now it's asking to build two blocks less than what the contract calls for. Instead of extending 54th Place west to 210th Terrace, it wants to go only to 208th Lane. "The original agreement made no sense," said **Russo**, who wasn't working for the town at the time. "With 208th going out to Griffin, there was no point building a [longer] road." Besides, he said, the land needed for the extension isn't as easily available as both municipalities had thought. The contract also called for Pembroke Pines to build a bridge linking new and old Sheridan streets at 136th Avenue. That's because in 2005, the town let its residents block worshipers from reaching Abundant Living Ministries on Southwest 142nd Avenue on Sunday mornings. Although the church is in Pembroke Pines, the only access is through Southwest Ranches. The agreement said Southwest Ranches would handle all issues involving wetlands that could be lost because of the bridge. Work on both projects was to be completed by May 1, 2007. However, none of it is done, and the deadline - extended twice - is up in the air.

Pembroke Pines says it can't do its part without a replacement wetlands site that Southwest Ranches was to provide. **Russo**, however, said Pembroke Pines didn't want the wetlands site near the church. Now, state regulators have said the replacement wetlands must be near the church. The two sides can't agree where. "We're in an abatement mode while we explore our options," Pembroke Pines City Attorney Sam Goren said. "There is no doubt from a legal standpoint that the agreement will have to be revised," Southwest Ranches Deputy Town Attorney Keith Poliakoff said. "It's readily apparent both sides are in violation, so it is vitally important to maintain a dialogue so [the agreement] can be amended to take into account the needs of both municipalities."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
May 8, 2008

Town ready to switch fire service to Sheriff's Office
Author/Byline: Sun-Sentinel and Forum Publishing Group

Southwest Ranches

The Broward Sheriff's Office may soon provide all fire-rescue services to the town. Town Administrator **Christopher Russo** is negotiating with the sheriff to take over all fire services, including the portion Davie provides. Currently, the sheriff's office handles fire services in all areas west of Southwest 172nd Avenue and Davie provides fire services to all areas east of it.

Davie notified the town that it can no longer provide these services at the same rate in its contract and the sheriff's office notified the town that Station 55, which is owned by Weston, will not be available to Southwest Ranches as of Oct. 1.

Russo reviewed preliminary proposals for fire services from both Davie and the sheriff and determined it was in the long-term best interest of Southwest Ranches to stick with the sheriff's office as the sole provider, according to a town memo.

The Town Council agreed and passed a resolution last week authorizing **Russo** to negotiate an agreement with the sheriff and bring it back to the council for approval. The town also is looking for a temporary home for its fire-rescue service.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

South Florida Sun Sentinel (FL)

February 17, 2008

Some Cities are Considering Increase in Tax Rate Amendment 1 Puts Governments in a Bind

Author: Juan Ortega Scott Wyman, Linda Trischitta, Jennifer Gollan, Robin Benedick, Lisa Huriash, Brittany Wallman; Staff Researcher William Lucey

It wasn't supposed to increase taxes. But two weeks after voters approved a statewide tax-relief plan, some Broward County cities officials say they may hike taxes and fees to make up for the money lost. Officials from Deerfield Beach, Lauderdale Lakes and Southwest Ranches say they haven't ruled out increases, one of several options to recover dollars taken away by Amendment 1, approved by voters Jan. 29.

Most other cities declined to discuss their plans, saying such decisions will come in August and September when elected officers vote to approve budgets for 2008-09. The new budget year starts Oct. 1 with tax bills coming out in November. "I will be considering all avenues prior to making my recommendation to the commission," said Deerfield Beach City Manager Michael Mahaney, adding that the commission ultimately decides whether to increase taxes. "On the revenue side, this will include raising the millage rate, fire assessment fees, etc."

Christopher Russo, Southwest Ranches town administrator, said he hasn't ruled out a tax increase but said much will depend on what the Town Council decides to do with spending for capital improvement projects, such as a new town hall, park improvements and bridge and road improvements. At a minimum, he said, the town needs to generate as much revenue for next year as it will do this year to pay for such work. "Certainly, we need to hold the tax rate at the very least," **Russo** said.

To offset money lost because of the amendment, Lauderdale Lakes would have to raise its taxes by about 40 cents on every \$1,000 of taxable value on a house - about \$75 on a \$200,000 house with a homestead exemption, estimated Larry Tibbs, the city's finance director. Amendment 1 attempts to cut taxes by doubling the homestead exemption on property values from \$25,000 to \$50,000 and placing a 10 percent annual cap on taxable value increases on nonhomesteaded properties. But nothing in the amendment stops cities from raising tax rates to make up such losses.

It wouldn't be the first-time cities don't fully comply with proposed tax cuts. State lawmakers tried to impose cuts during their June 2007 session, but seven Broward communities last year voted not to cut as much as the state wanted. They were Lazy Lake, Lauderdale Lakes, North Lauderdale, Pembroke Park, Pembroke Pines, Sea Ranch Lakes and Southwest Ranches. By raising taxes this year, local governments risk angering voters such as Josie Higgins, 58, of Lauderdale Lakes, who voted "yes" for Amendment 1. "Groceries are high, taxes are high and we need something back," Higgins said. Dominic Calabro, chief executive officer of Florida

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

TaxWatch, a nonpartisan government watchdog group, called any tax increase after Amendment 1 unfair, saying cities want to reel in money through "the good times and the bad times."

Lauderdale Lakes Commissioner Levoyd Williams said there is more pressure now for the city to abide by the tax-relief plan, since the amendment was approved by 64 percent of voters statewide and by 71 percent in Broward. "They spoke loudly. People are clearly saying that they are hurting for dollars," Williams said. But he said he couldn't guarantee that the city wouldn't raise taxes. "I'm trying to make sure we don't lose any jobs," Williams said. Also saying he's unsure about approving a tax increase is Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis, who as president of the Florida League of Cities opposed Amendment 1. "The people have spoken. Every precinct [in Pembroke Pines] voted for the amendment," Ortis said.

Meanwhile, among those saying they would not support tax increases are commissioners in Fort Lauderdale and Sunrise, the two Broward cities that last year cut more in taxes than the state wanted. "That is not an answer," Sunrise Commissioner Roger Wishner said. "We are better financially than I think we've been in a long time," Fort Lauderdale Commissioner Cindi Hutchinson said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Sun Sentinel (FL)
February 6, 2008

Ranches Tightens the Reins Town Adopts New Business Practices

Author: Robin Benedick

It's no longer business as usual in Southwest Ranches. After almost a year on the job, Town Administrator **Christopher Russo** is trying to instill professionalism in how the town operates. But not everyone is happy about it. **Russo's** predecessor, John Canada, doled out some work with a phone call to a neighbor or local company. Now, businesses are being asked to submit formal bids and post bonds to guarantee their prices. **Russo**, a former city manager of Sunny Isles Beach in Miami- Dade County, wants to consolidate town contracts, some of which have expired, for better coordination and oversight to save money.

Some longtime residents don't like the shift away from the small- town approach of keeping things simple and hiring people you know. "Our needs aren't Weston's needs, our needs aren't Sunny Isles' needs, our needs aren't Bal Harbour's needs," said Marygay Chaples, a 50-year resident of Southwest Ranches whose company does some mowing for the town as a subcontractor. Others say it's time for the town of 7,500 people, which contracts most of its services to private companies and nearby cities, to become more sophisticated. "The way we've been doing things in the past is a joke," said Councilman Don Maines.

A lot is at stake on Thursday, when the council considers awarding a contract worth about \$350,000 for landscape maintenance to one company, Luke's Landscaping of Hollywood, instead of spreading the work around as it does now to several companies with local ties. Whatever the council does will set the tone this year as other contracts come up. "We need to get away from doing so many things on hourly rates that are not based on a bid and negotiate the best deals for the town," **Russo** said. He replaced Canada, a longtime Southwest Ranches resident, who lost his job amid accusations of poor financial management, lack of communication and hiring his wife and daughter as town employees.

Though **Russo** has forged good relationships with council members, getting the landscaping contract approved is a big challenge. The council voted 3-2 in December to accept Luke's as the only legitimate bidder for the job and to authorize **Russo** to negotiate a better deal with the company. Two other companies lost out because they didn't meet the bond requirement of putting up a small percentage of the base contract cost or providing a \$15,000 check.

Now some residents are demanding that council members give the companies another shot. They also accuse **Russo** of favoring Luke's because it did work in Sunny Isles Beach when he worked there. "You have a terrible perceptual issue here," said Alyn Kay. "You could draw the conclusion that this bid was written for one vendor" because Luke's is the only company large enough to provide all of the services required. **Russo** denied he wrote the bid to favor Luke's and called the process fair and unbiased.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Resident Holly Hugdahl, a financial consultant for several South Florida municipalities, said she is concerned about the direction the council will take if Luke's bid is rejected. "Are they going to trust their manager who is a professional manager or are they going to let the committees continue to run this town?" Hugdahl said. "Why pay \$160,000 a year to a manager if you're not going to listen to him?" Some council members want to reject Luke's bid, scale back the proposal and put it out for bid again.

Mayor Mecca Fink, who voted against accepting Luke's bid in December, suggests the town relax the rules to encourage competition. Councilman Steve Breitkreuz, who voted to rank Luke's as the only bidder, said he's torn. "This contract is setting us in the right direction and it's making us more professional," he said. "But you're a small town and you know certain people and you know they are going to do a good job and you know they're active in the town and you hate to see them pushed out by a big guy from out of town because frankly, many times a local guy will take more pride in his work than a guy who has no stake in the town.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
September 23, 2007

GARBAGE, FIRE FEES LIKELY TO DOUBLE IN SOUTHWEST RANCHES

Author/Byline: Robin Benedick

Homeowners will pay double for garbage and fire protection under a proposed budget approved last week by Town Council members. The unanimous vote came after the first of two public hearings on the \$20.2 million spending plan for the 2007-08 fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. A final vote on the budget will be after a 6 p.m. public hearing Thursday at Town Hall, 6589 SW 160th Ave. (Dykes Road). Councilman Steve Breitreuz was not at the meeting but cast his vote by phone. Council members kept the property tax rate at \$3 for every \$1,000 of assessed value, but most residents will see their tax bills increase slightly because their property assessments went up. They'll also pay more for trash pickup and fire-rescue service. The garbage fee will double to \$562 per year as will the fire assessment, to \$296 per year. One resident spoke against the garbage fee increase, calling it unfair for owners to pay more for less service. The town is reducing bulk pickups from weekly to twice monthly and requiring residents to contain their trash piles to 6 cubic yards, about the size of a Volkswagen Beetle. "We're down to 6 cubic yards twice a month and I can't imagine why it's double," said resident Al Avello. "It shouldn't be that high." By voting unanimously at their final hearing, the town would avoid budget cuts Florida lawmakers have required municipalities to make, officials said.

Council members praised new Financial Administrator Jean Watson and Town Administrator **Christopher Russo** for preparing a budget - his first since being hired in February - that is easy to read and understand. **Russo** took over from John Canada, who lost his contract after an audit found sloppy recordkeeping for the town of 7,500 people. **Russo** is reorganizing the town's administration and consolidating some service contracts for better coordination and to save money. Many town contracts have expired or are expiring soon. They cover everything from law enforcement and fire service to engineering and landscaping. Though no major services or programs are being eliminated, some slight cuts may come after **Russo** puts back about \$540,000 he took in surplus money to balance the budget. Residents and town council members told **Russo** to leave the sum in the fund balance so money available for emergencies doesn't dwindle to about \$1 million.

"I am very concerned about appropriating our surplus," said resident Holly Hugdahl, a government consultant who specializes in public finance. "It is very, very low and we are looking at appropriating one-third of what we have left." Mayor Mecca Fink agreed. "We don't want to use our reserves unless we have to," she said. "We are in uncertain economic times so we have to tighten our belts." **Russo** said after the meeting that he will return the surplus money and make up for it by not funding every position in his office, including a new assistant town administrator. He also will return surplus money he used for capital projects. The council is planning a workshop soon to prioritize capital projects, including new parks, a town hall, drainage and road resurfacing, and will likely consider a bond issue to pay for them next fall.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)
March 11, 2007

Feisty Town Makes Change

Author: Jennifer Lebovich

A new town administrator took the reins last week in Southwest Ranches, a tiny town with a history of picking fights with neighbors. **Christopher Russo**, the new town administrator in Southwest Ranches, gets a car allowance as part of his salary package. But, in a potent symbol of the nature of his new job, one resident offered him a different way to go -- a horse. Dee Schroeder encouraged **Russo** to borrow her daughter's brown and white paint horse so he could appropriately mosey through the small West Broward town, which prides itself on its rural lifestyle.

Russo, 48, last week became only the second person to run the town's day-to-day operations. And getting to know the town's equestrian trails will likely be one of the lesser challenges he faces in the job he started Monday, under a \$166,000 annual contract. Southwest Ranches, which incorporated in 2000, has been known to pick fights with its neighbors, including Weston and Pembroke Pines. It will be **Russo's** job to settle those spats in a way that doesn't give town officials a black eye.

Last October, town officials fired former administrator John Canada, who had been criticized for sloppy bookkeeping, for hiring his wife to keep the town's books, and for once employing his daughter as town clerk. **Russo** will have to pick up where Canada left off, balancing the town's budget, which relies mostly on property tax revenue, while paying for police and fire service, a new Town Hall building and various park projects.

Russo's hiring may signal a shift away from the small-town approach of hiring neighbors to run things. Canada has lived in the town for more than 25 years, and the town's first attorney, Gary Poliakoff, also is a longtime resident. Poliakoff's son Keith Poliakoff -- a Hollywood resident -- handles most of the town's legal work these days. "We've gone through the infancy stages, and now we're ready to move on and be more of a mature town," said council member Don Maines, who credited Canada with helping to shepherd the town through its early years. "We're ready to move to the next step."

Russo got his start as the assistant to the manager more than 25 years ago in Scarsdale, N.Y., a mostly residential community not unlike Southwest Ranches. He then ran the government in Rye Brook, where he was tasked with building the Village Hall and a community center. Mayor Mecca Fink sees **Russo's** background in rural towns as the perfect preparation for running Southwest Ranches, with its mantra of "Preserving our Rural Lifestyle." "I certainly am looking forward to a new beginning," Fink said. Although there is a new administrator in town, most of the players on the Town Council remain the same. The five council members are a quirky and sometimes combative bunch whose town pride occasionally gets in the way of getting along with others.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Southwest Ranches settled its fight with neighboring Pembroke Pines over road closures on the border between the two municipalities more than a year ago. The town put up locked gates because residents complained about too much cut-through traffic. Southwest Ranches is planning to build a Town Hall near the intersection of Dykes and Griffin roads. The town has been managing its affairs out of series of modular buildings on leased land annexed into town. The town also quarreled with its landlord, the South Broward Drainage District, over the lease for the building where they hold their sometimes raucous meetings.

Russo is hoping to head off major problems with some friendly conversation and communication. Before he was even on the payroll, he had met with John Flint, Weston's city manager; Charlie Dodge, who runs Broward's second-largest city of Pembroke Pines; and Leo Schwartzberg, the head of the drainage district. "We may not always agree, but we're going to be able to talk," said **Russo**. "We know we have different constituencies, and we'll all do the best job for our elected bodies." The council chose **Russo** from a field of 29 candidates, citing his experience with municipal construction projects and strong financial management skills.

In 2000, **Russo** became city manager of Sunny Isles Beach, a beachfront community in Miami-Dade that boomed under his watch. He left that job more than a year ago to start his own consulting company. Clients ranged from governments to property owners looking to develop. **Russo** is eager to return to the day-to-day tasks involved in running a city. It's a 24-hour a day job. "My goal is very simple," **Russo** said. "Just to get them out of the newspapers for all the wrong reasons."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/fl-xpm-2007-01-11-0701101031-story.html>

South Florida Sun-Sentinel
January 10, 2007

Council picks Southwest Ranches administrator

Author: Buddy Nevins

The former city manager of Sunny Isles Beach in Miami-Dade County was chosen Wednesday as the new town administrator of Southwest Ranches. Town Council members said they chose **Christopher Russo** because of his lengthy experience, not only in Sunny Isles Beach from 2000 to 2005, but also as the village administrator of Rye Brook, N.Y., from 1987 to 2000.

They said **Russo's** background in a new and growing city -- Sunny Isles Beach was created three years before he became the manager -- gives him an understanding of the growing pains felt by Southwest Ranches, which was formed in 2000. He was praised for his knowledge of small town finances and his understanding of how to get government building projects completed.

"I have difficulty finding a weakness with regards to **Chris Russo**," said council member Jeff Nelson. The only weakness members cited, discovered during a public interview Tuesday and private one-on-one interviews Wednesday, was that **Russo**, who is in his late 40s, talked too much during questioning. Mayor Mecca Fink had a positive take on **Russo's** long-windedness: "It could be an asset against opponents [in negotiations]."

The Town Council must formally ratify **Russo's** hiring tonight and accept an employment contract sometime in February before he is officially hired. Council members hope he can start by March 1. The salary will be part of the contract negotiations. **Russo** was earning \$165,000 in Sunny Isles Beach before he quit to start a government consulting business.

He would replace John Canada, whose company had managed the town and hired its workers since January 2001, just months after Southwest Ranches was formed. The council voted 4-1 on Oct. 12 to fire Canada, who was criticized for poor communication, sloppy bookkeeping and hiring his wife and daughter to work for the town. About two dozen people applied for the job.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald (FL)
April 2, 2006

Sunny Isles Beach
Winning Soccer Team Kicks It Up a Notch
Author: Ben Torter

Even before Sunny Isles Beach Active Park opens, the city-run sports teams are experiencing some success. In its first year in a competitive soccer league, the boys 14 to 16-year-old Soccer Paradise B/Sunny Isles Beach, won their Greater Hollywood League championship March 16. The team had a season of 11 wins, 0 losses and 1 tie. With young families continuing to transform the once retirement community of Sunny Isles Beach into a modern and fast-paced city, the city's youth population is exploding. Today there are more than 1,500 children living in Sunny Isles Beach, up from about 300 when the city was incorporated in 1997.

To keep up with the changing demographic, the city is well on its way to having a K-8 public school. The city's recreational programs will have a permanent home when the Active Park, 18115 North Bay Rd., is completed in the spring of 2007. This will allow the Sunny Isles Beach teams to have home games against other cities, and create a broader range of programs. The park will include a baseball diamond, playground, 12,000-square-foot community center and 8,000-square-foot gymnasium. The city even expanded the Cultural and Human Services Department when it hired Matt High in December as the city's athletics program coordinator.

The department's crown jewel is the 14 to 16-year-old soccer team, sponsored by former city manager **Chris Russo**. Soccer began on an intramural level in Sunny Isles Beach in 2001, but this is the first year the city has had teams in a league outside of Sunny Isles Beach. Team captain Diego Echeverria said the city and **Russo**, who helped pay for transportation and uniforms, contributed to their winning season by bringing in better equipment, players and coaches.

Now they're getting ready for tougher competition in the Copa Coca-Cola Tournament, April 8 and 9 at Amelia Earhart Park in Hialeah. The winning team will get a bid to play at the Copa Coca-Cola in California, and the winner there will go on to Mexico. "It's going to be tough, but we are going to do our best," 15-year-old Echeverria said. The team will also compete in the Easterly Cup in Weston and the Disney Memorial Shootout in Orlando over Memorial Day weekend.

Team coach Sergio Vuguin, who played soccer in his native Argentina, said the winning is fantastic, but what gives him the most satisfaction is keeping the kids off the streets. "My goal is I don't want to see the kids running around on the street," Vuguin said in a telephone interview Wednesday. "[Soccer] keeps them out of trouble and away from drugs." Susan Simpson, director of Cultural and Human Services, said the city's children are demanding more and more activities and time, so a full-time position was created to meet their needs.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

High's background includes coaching track and field and physical education in colleges in Virginia, Tennessee, Texas and Connecticut. Besides the soccer program, High also oversees nine boys' and girls' basketball teams, with a total of about 140 kids and a waiting list for next season. The teams play against each other at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church, the temporary court while the park is under construction. They play other teams at North Miami's Ben Franklin, Keystone, and Cagni parks and North Miami Senior High. "Last year they scrambled against each other at the church and this is their first time in a competitive league," High said.

High has also started a Sunny Isles Beach girls' cheerleading squad. About 60 girls ages 5 to 14 participate. In February they were treated to a demonstration by members of the Miami Heat Dancers. High envisions implementing a track a field club, a traveling basketball team, flag football, and a traveling cheerleading team to name a few. For senior citizens he's thinking about tai chi, bowling and painting. "Hopefully when the Active park opens we can have adult league basketball and soccer as well," High said. For information on city-sponsored recreational programs, call the Sunny Isles Beach Cultural and Human Services Department at 305 792-1706.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Sun Post (FL)
November 12, 2005

Sunny Isles City Manager to Resign in October
Russo praised his bosses and touted the city's accomplishments of recent years.
Author: Randy Abraham

On Thursday, September 8 the Sunny Isles Beach City Commission will discuss how to recruit a new city manager. **Chris Russo**, Sunny Isles Beach's city manager for the last five years, submitted his resignation Thursday, August 25. It is effective October 31, which will allow him to work on finalizing the city's general and operating budgets for the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

Russo, 47, said he has decided to work as a consultant on governmental issues and land-use projects after being approached by area businesses. "In recent months I have entertained several offers to join the private sector. After carefully considering these offers, I have decided to work for myself and get involved with Governmental Consulting, Land Development, Project Management and Public Relations," **Russo** wrote in a memo to elected officials. "This, coupled with a desire to spend more time with my children, has led to this decision."

Russo has a son and daughter who live in New York, where he worked before accepting SIB's top administrative position in 2000. **Russo** praised his bosses and touted the city's accomplishments of recent years. "We have achieved a great deal on behalf of Sunny Isles Beach over the past five years, such as the new Government Center, installation of storm water drainage projects throughout the city, the upgraded and expanded parks, implementation of the streetscape and beautification programs, and the ongoing planning for a new school," **Russo** said. "All of this has been accomplished with our tax rate and burden remaining the envy of South Florida."

Russo, also a Sunny Isles resident, said he would be available to help with the transition after his replacement is hired. **Russo** joined the city in 2000 after working as city manager and clerk for the municipality of Rye Brook, N.Y. Before that he was assistant city manager for Scarsdale, N.Y., for six years. "It's been a goal of mine to leave governmental service after 25 years, and I now have the opportunity to work for myself," said **Russo**.

He said his proudest accomplishment in Sunny Isles was the construction of a \$4 to \$5 million storm water drainage system in the Golden Shores neighborhood of single-family homes, which was completed in early 2003. "That was the biggest project in the city's history, and that helped the most people. There was incredible flooding and damage in that area from years of neglect, and we had to create and engineer an entire system. We came up with the best, most innovative system, and it was written up in a number of water management journals," said **Russo**.

Another project he is proud of, but won't see through to completion, is a storm water management system for the city's central district. **Russo** said soon after he was hired, he convinced Sunny Isles leaders to scrap their original plans for the project. The new and improved central district project is scheduled to go out to bid next month, he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Currently, **Russo** is working on a draft for the city's 2005-2006 budget. The city's tax base increased about 21 percent over last year due to new construction and appreciation of existing properties, and he is working on a plan to cut the tax rate by about 13 percent. **Russo** said his most challenging moments as city manager came soon after he began his duties. The city, under its former manager, was developing a plan for a City Hall on Sunny Isles Beach Boulevard that was threatening to go way over budget. "I told them we had to scrap their plan for their monumental City Hall building and think about a more feasible building plan more centrally located in the city. The original plan would have cost \$30 million, and we were able to build the Government Center for \$23 million," said **Russo**.

Five years ago, **Russo** also recommended raising taxes slightly a year after the tax rate was reduced. He said he was prepared for a tense showdown with elected officials after he voiced his concerns about the City Hall plans and the tax rate. "I didn't think I would last a month," said **Russo**. **Russo** prevailed, and the city went on to develop parks, infrastructure, landscaping and other projects. "It's been a busy five years. We have one of the most aggressive capital improvement plans of any city this size that I've ever seen," said **Russo**.

It's the second time this year a city-chartered officer has resigned from Sunny Isles. Last spring it was City Attorney Lynn Dannheisser, who in 1997 was Sunny Isles's first employee, hired by a city charter committee soon after the area's incorporation. Dannheisser resigned to return to private practice as a land-use attorney in Broward County. Mayor Norman Edelcup said he will open a discussion on finding **Russo**'s replacement at the September 8 City Commission meeting. "I think we should probably attempt a national search, but there may be people in South Florida that are familiar with local municipal issues," he said. "But I don't want to rule anything out; it will be up to the full commission." Edelcup said he has mixed feelings about **Russo**'s resignation. "We are saddened by his departure, but we wish him well in his new venture. He did a lot to improve the quality of administration in the city."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 8, 2005

TAXPAYERS MAY GET A TAX BREAK

Author/Byline: Ben Torter

A tax break is up for discussion at the Sunny Isles Beach budget hearing tonight. Rapid development and double-digit increases in assessed property value are being touted by Mayor Norman Edelcup as the reason why tax relief is the "right thing to do." Even with a lower tax rate, rising property values mean property owners probably won't pay less taxes and the city will take in more money than last year. City officials say bigger coffers mean infrastructure upgrades and regular city services will not be cut back.

Over the past year the total assessed property value in Sunny Isles Beach increased from \$3.23 billion to \$3.9 billion. A 40-cent decrease in the tax rate is being proposed, meaning the amount a typical homeowner would pay per \$1,000 of assessed value would be lowered from \$3.35 to \$2.95. If the lower tax rate is adopted a resident with a homestead exempted home valued at \$200,000 would pay \$516.25 in property taxes to Sunny Isles Beach. Under the current tax rate the same home would be taxed \$586.25. Even if the tax rate is reduced, property owners may see higher taxes because of increases in property values. But the increases may be tempered - under state law, a property's taxable value can only go up by 3 percent over the previous year's value if the property was homesteaded before Jan. 1. Properties that were purchased or homesteaded this year are appraised at current market levels. Through the increased tax base from the higher assessments, the city will still have a growth in its tax base, which leaves money for infrastructure upgrades and regular services, according to City Manager **Christopher Russo**.

The city's operating budget will increase from \$17.9 million in 2004-05 to \$20 million. One of the budgeted city projects is the \$6 million central island drainage project. Officials said it is necessary to stop flooding in the area bounded by 183rd Street to the north, 174th Street to the south, Collins Avenue and the Intracoastal Waterway. The Active Park is set to begin construction during the 2005-06 budget year and should be open by spring 2007. Located at 18115 North Bay Rd., it will include a baseball diamond, playground, a 12,000-square-foot community center and an 8,000-square-foot gymnasium.

The city also will continue street beautification projects such as the undergrounding of utilities, decorative streetlighting, tree planting and purchasing new bus shelters. "It's something that's certainly doable with the amount of growth," **Russo** said. "If there was ever a year for a tax break this is it."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Community Newspapers (FL)
September 5, 2005

SIB will Miss City Manager Christopher Russo

Author: Bari Auerbach

After five years of dedicated service, Sunny Isles Beach City Manager **Christopher Russo** recently submitted a letter of resignation to the Mayor and City Commission, stating he intends to embark on a new career in the private sector and will be leaving his position as of Oct. 31, 2005. **Russo** relocated from Rye Brook, New York and officially took the helm as City Manager of Sunny Isles Beach on August 21, 2000. The late Mayor David Samson and members of the City Commission unanimously voted to hire **Russo** following the departure of the city's first manager Jim DiPietro.

Russo had originally been one of the primary choices for city manager back in 1997 when Sunny Isles Beach incorporated, but financial concerns at the time dissuaded the Commission from offering him the position. **Russo's** letter of resignation, dated August 24, 2005, provides the following explanation for his reasons to move on:

“This letter is to inform you of my resignation as City Manager of the City of Sunny Isles Beach effective October 31, 2005. “This is clearly a bittersweet moment for me. After 25 years in government, with the last five years as City Manager of Sunny Isles Beach, it is difficult to leave public service. In recent months I have entertained several offers to join the private sector. After carefully considering these offers, I have decided to work for myself and get involved with Governmental Consulting, Land Development, Project Management and Public Relations. This, coupled with the desire to spend more time with my children, has led to this decision.

“We have achieved a great deal on behalf of Sunny Isles Beach over the past five years, such as the new Government Center, installation of storm water drainage projects throughout the City (no small undertaking), the upgraded and expanded parks, implementation of all the streetscape and beautification programs, and the ongoing planning for a new school. All of this has been accomplished with our tax rate and burden remaining the envy of South Florida.

“I am exceedingly grateful to the citizens of Sunny Isles Beach for their support and cooperation and to our many elected and appointed officials and staff for their commitment and vision. With continued excellence in management, the City of Sunny Isles Beach is well positioned for the future and I am sure it will continue to be the Jewel of South Florida. “I hold fond memories of my five years of service to Sunny Isles Beach. And since I plan to remain and continue to live in Sunny Isles Beach as a private citizen, I also hope to continue my many valuable friendships for years to come. “Please be assured that I will assist and cooperate with you fully in every way possible as you transition to a new City Manager. “Thank you for the opportunity to serve the people of Sunny Isles Beach.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

‘Goals Achieved’

When **Russo** became City Manager in 2000, he outlined specific goals he intended to help Sunny Isles Beach achieve. Now five years later, these “proactive action items” plus many more have been accomplished:

- Restore a renewed sense of enthusiasm and confidence in city management;
- Gain an understanding of city finances and formulate an appropriate budget process;
- Identify and assess long-term financial needs;
- Create an on-going formal pending agenda of projects and capital budget plan;
- Ensure the completion of current projects including parks, drainage improvements, road resurfacing as well as supporting beach renourishment in cooperation with county and state agencies.
- Foster teamwork, a clearer sense of responsibility and structure at City Hall ‘Mayor’s Message’

“Along with fellow members of the Commission, I’m saddened by the news but want to wish **Chris Russo** well in his decision to leave government,” Mayor Norman Edelcup said. “After 25 years in government with the last five years as City Manager of Sunny Isles Beach, **Chris Russo** wishes to start a new career by working for himself and specializing in Government Consulting, Land Development, Project Management and Public Relations.”

Commending **Russo**’s performance, Edelcup noted he has “made the City’s administration stronger during his five-year service and that the City staff is in great condition to continue the strong growth and redevelopment of the City.” Edelcup also stated the Sept. 8 City Commission meeting would feature a discussion regarding the process of searching for a new City Manager so that the vacancy could be filled as quickly as possible. “In the interim, I feel confident our team of city staff personnel are well-qualified to take care of the day-to-day operations of the City,” Edelcup said. “On Monday, August 29, along with fellow Commission members, I met with city staff to assure them we’re here to help out in any way until such time as a new City Manager is appointed.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 3, 2005

CITY WINS BATTLE FOR COVETED LAND

Author/Byline: Carli Teproff

Sunny Isles Beach's two-year struggle to own an acre of property to the north of the government center came to an end Tuesday, when a Miami-Dade County Circuit Court judge ruled in its favor. "The city is very pleased with the judge's decision, in so far as the city needed this property for city operations," City Attorney Lynn Dannheisser said.

Judge Margarita Esquiroz ruled that RK Associates must sell the property at 18080 Collins Ave. to the city for \$2.25 million, Dannheisser said. The property will be turned into a storage facility to house city vehicles and equipment. The site is currently home to branches of Alamo and National car rental agencies and is owned by RK Associates. "We are a growing, new city that needs space for municipal services," City Manager **Christopher J. Russo**. "That land made the most sense because it is near our government center."

Raanan Katz, owner of RK Associates, said that "justice wasn't served," and that he was going to appeal the decision. "I was very disappointed in the decision," he said. "The city doesn't need the property; they are taking it out of greed."

The quest for the property began in early 2003 when the city made a purchase offer to then-owner Mitsubishi Motors. The offer was turned down and the city filed to take it through eminent domain. That's when city officials learned Mitsubishi Motors had sold the property to RK Associates, which owns about five million square feet of commercial space in New England and South Florida. The city began eminent domain proceedings against RK Associates.

In February 2004, rather than continue with eminent domain proceedings, the commission voted to allow Katz to donate the land to the city in exchange for transferable development rights. The city says that Katz could have gotten about \$7 million for the development rights. But, Katz says that is not true. "The document said that I had to turn the deed over to the city manager," he said. "The manager would control to whom I sell the [rights]."

If Katz had accepted the city's offer, the city would have been unable to build on the land because its development rights would have been severed. Instead the city went back to court. Eminent domain proceedings, which is a process by which a municipality can force a land owner to sell property to the municipality at fair market value if needed for public use, ended March 8. Under the rules of a quick take, the city immediately takes possession of the deed to the property. "Instead of working with the city, [RK Associates] worked against every step of the way," **Russo** said. "The unfortunate part is that it was totally unnecessary to go through this long condemnation process."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Miami Herald, The (FL)

August 5, 2004

TAX RATE UNCHANGED IN BUDGET

Author/Byline: Ben Torter

A tentative \$17.9 million preliminary budget for 2004-05 will allow the city of Sunny Isles Beach to keep up with its rapid growth by upgrading its police, building and parking departments, adding lifeguards and helping to pay for projects such as the new city hall, upgrades to Sunny Isles Boulevard and an improved central drainage system. In all, the preliminary budget calls for an increase in spending for the fiscal year 2004-05 of about \$2.7 million over the current year's budget of \$15.2 million, according to city manager **Christopher Russo**.

Even so, the city's tax rate will remain the same, at \$3.35 for every \$1,000 of assessed property value. But taxpayers will pay more because of rising property values. According to the Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser's Office, the average assessed value of property in Sunny Isles Beach rose from \$174,213 in 2003 to \$205,916 in 2004, an increase of about 18 percent. Under the proposed 2004-05 rate, a property assessed at \$205,916, taking the standard \$25,000 exemption, would pay \$606 in taxes to the city. That doesn't include school district taxes and other items that appear on the property owner's tax bill. Among highlights, the new budget includes an extra \$400,000 to increase staffing in the police department. "We've budgeted about five more police officers, added a captain to be second in command to the chief, upgraded corporals to sergeants, added a civilian management analyst position and full-time dispatchers," said **Russo**.

The building department continues to undergo a major overhaul in order to meet the demands of the many major high-rise development projects as well as making it easier for residents doing minor work to pull permits, **Russo** said. "We're trying to stay ahead of the curve," said **Russo**. With that in mind, **Russo** said the building department has doubled in size and gone through significant reorganization, including adding full-time chiefs in mechanical, plumbing, electrical, as well as a chief building inspector and full-time structural engineering plan review chief. "We went from having mostly part-time inspectors to full-time chiefs in each discipline," said **Russo**.

In all the building department's proposed budget for next year is just over \$2 million, an increase of about \$450,000. Also, the city has taken control of lifeguard services, so more money is budgeted for that. **Russo** said that in 2004-05 the city plans to purchase three new lifeguard stands and hire about seven full-time and up to five part-time intermittent lifeguards. Previously Sunny Isles Beach contracted lifeguard services from the Newport Beachside Hotel.

About \$2 million of the budget will go toward the new city hall, which should be completed by the end of 2004, according to **Russo**. Operating costs for the new city hall are estimated to be about \$430,000 a year. About half of that will be paid for by Tony Roma's, which will rent space in a building next to city hall. Under the terms of that rental agreement, the restaurant will pay

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the city \$240,000 a year or 8 percent of its profits, whichever is greater. Another \$1 million will go toward a project to upgrade the appearance of Sunny Isles Beach Boulevard, which officials view as the "entrance of the city." The project will cost about \$4 million, \$3 million of which will be coming from an FDOT state grant. "We will be adding date palms, new decorative street signs and increasing the width of the sidewalks from six to 14 feet," said **Russo**.

Also in the next fiscal year to fix a problem with "constant roadway flooding," **Russo** said the city will start a \$3.5 million dollar central drainage system upgrade between 174th and 183rd Streets west of Collins Avenue.

A budget workshop will be held at 9 a.m. Tuesday at City Hall, 17070 Collins Ave. Public hearings on the 2004-05 budget will be held at 7 p.m. Sept. 9 and 23.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 18, 2004

Letter to the Editor

Author/Byline: **Christopher Russo**

SUNNY ISLES BEACH

WE'RE WORKING TO FIX BEACH TRASH PROBLEM

Editor,

Recently, concerns have been aired about litter on Sunny Isles Beach in letters to local newspapers. As city manager of Sunny Isles Beach, I feel compelled to respond.

First, we certainly concur with her concerns over litter on the beach and the disrespect some people show toward this great natural resource - our ocean. However, our city, which has no jurisdiction over the beach other than where we have a city park, has probably more than 30 signs concerning litter, patrol the beach constantly seven days a week for about 12-15 hours a day, through the efforts of our police department, code enforcement officers and lifeguards.

Unfortunately, from my observations, Miami-Dade County cannot collect trash other than in the early morning due to the amount of people on the beach during the day (the county uses bulky, mechanical equipment). The only alternative would be to send manpower out on foot to empty the trash containers in the mid-afternoon each day. This would help, but may be cost-prohibitive.

In any event, we will brainstorm with our public works department and then speak with Miami-Dade County.

CHRISTOPHER J. RUSSO

City Manager,
Sunny Isles Beach

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 1, 2003

COMMISSION APPROVES CONTRACTS FOR STREET WORK

Author/Byline: Charles Urstadt

The city commission approved more than \$160,000 in contracts April 24 as it looks to further develop plans to improve the safety and appearance of the city's streets and sidewalks. In a meeting that lasted less than an hour, the commission moved through an agenda that focused on the city's main thoroughfares. The largest contract approved was for \$128,500 to Marlin Engineering to prepare a design to help "calm" the traffic on Sunny Isles Boulevard/State Road 826. A Florida Department of Transportation study of the road calls for reducing the traffic lanes from five to four and increasing the size of the sidewalk from five feet to 14 feet. The one-year contract with Marlin requires the firm to provide road design, lighting and landscaping plans, traffic signal analysis, and construction and utility coordination.

Referring to Marlin representatives who attended the meeting, Commissioner Danny Iglesias called the workers "pros." "They know what they are doing. We are in good hands," he said. During a discussion of the project, Iglesias suggested the firm consider the hanging "tear drop" street lighting instead of the "cobra head" lights that are common in the area. "They have a nice look," he said.

The commission also approved landscaping on Collins Avenue that will cost \$31,600. City Manager **Christopher Russo** said that despite his efforts to discourage jaywalking on Collins Avenue, plants in the median of Collins are being damaged by foot traffic and need to be replaced. In addition, the city must create a median and plant palm trees at the crosswalk recently built in front of the Pinnacle condominium at 175th Street and Collins Avenue. "We are continuing the jaywalking program and it is having an effect. It will take time though," **Russo** said.

As work progresses on the city's new park at 181st Street and North Bay Drive, the commission discussed the need for parking in the area for residents. Preliminary plans for 145 new on-street parking spaces were presented by **Russo** and his staff. City officials said they are working on a decal system to allow residents to use the new spaces once they are created.

The final item discussed was the need to comply with federal weight limits for the little stone bridge on Atlantic Isle. While cars and small trucks are safe to drive over the bridge, **Russo** said regulations prohibit large trucks on the structure. Rather than replacing the bridge, **Russo** said shrubbery would be placed at the sides of the bridge to narrow the roadway to 10 feet. He said that would allow smaller vehicles to pass over the bridge, but would prevent the larger vehicles from using it.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 16, 2002

PARK'S DESIGN RAISES QUESTIONS ON PARKING

Author/Byline: Michael Vasquez

The Sunny Isles Beach Commission last week moved forward with plans for the city's first "active park," despite complaints that parking for the two-acre parcel is woefully inadequate. Mayor David Samson suggested holding the May 7 special meeting so the commission could receive more feedback regarding the park's design. Residents spoke of a growing need for such a park in Sunny Isles Beach, a city that has long been known as a haven for retirees, but has recently seen an influx of younger families.

The commission unanimously approved the park's preliminary plans, which are still less than 50 percent complete. That decision allows Miller Legg and Associates, the company drawing up the plans, to continue its work and come up with a final park plan. City officials hope to have the park, east of North Bay Road between 181st Street and 182nd Drive, completed by spring 2003. But with only 14 planned parking spaces proposed for the park, some residents wondered if they would ever be able to use its youth baseball field, recreation center and other amenities. Public parking in the city is often scarce, with tourists and beachgoers snatching up many of the available spaces. Resident Lewis Thaler said the only people who would end up using the park would be those who lived close enough to walk to it. "I truly believe you're creating a park for three or four blocks," Thaler said to applause. "Not for the city of Sunny Isles Beach." Commission members suggested parkgoers could use the city's bus service to get to the park, thereby avoiding the need for parking. Pointing to her 6-year-old daughter Faith, resident Jacqueline Rosenfeld doubted that solution. "I don't know if I can send my little one in a bus," Rosenfeld said.

City Commissioner Gerry Goodman said the city's parking mess is largely the result of development decisions by county officials before the area incorporated. The city is basically out of land, he said, which makes it difficult to build additional parking lots. "With the bay on one side and the ocean on the other . . . where do you put cars?" Goodman asked. But Samson did propose one solution: He suggested the city consider purchasing 1 1/2 acres adjacent to the park that could be used to satisfy the public's demand for parking and could also accommodate tennis courts, a feature not included in the current park plans. However, 1 1/2 acres in Sunny Isles Beach - a city with soaring property values - will not come cheap. Samson warned expanding the park could cause an increase in taxes, which he said would infuriate many residents. "If we have to raise taxes, even minimally, the cry will be like we stabbed everybody," Samson said.

City Manager **Christopher J. Russo** said such a move might be unnecessary. He said the city is planning to add 23 parking spaces on Atlantic Boulevard, less than two blocks away. "Any able-bodied person who's watching their kids can certainly park on Atlantic Boulevard and walk to that park," **Russo** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Press of Atlantic City, The (NJ)
April 13, 2002

CUMBERLAND REGIONAL BOARD ACCUSED OF DISCRIMINATION

Author/Byline: Maricarmen Rivera

During a Cumberland Regional High School Board of Education meeting Thursday, the district's athletic trainer accused the board of racial discrimination and said he filed a charge with the New Jersey Division on Human Rights. John Bailey, who has been working with the district for 12 years, showed copies of discrimination charges filed against the school. Bailey's position was eliminated during a budget hearing last month. School administrators had said there was a need to reduce personnel and cut programs to deal with a budget crisis. Last month, the board approved a \$15 million budget that includes \$8.2 million in state aid. The district received a \$300,000 increase in state aid for the 2002-03 budget, but Business Administrator **Christopher Russo** said the additional money is already earmarked for school programs.

Russo said the district had to approve a 4.5-cent tax increase and abolish three positions in order to deal with budgetary problems. Besides the athletic trainer's position, the district abolished a language arts teacher's position and a history teacher's position. The district, **Russo** said, will contract a private company to provide athletic training for the district's students. The service, **Russo** said, would cost close to \$26,000 - a \$25,000 savings for the district. With benefits, Bailey's salary was around \$50,000, **Russo** said.

But according to Bailey, that is not the issue. During the public session of the meeting, he said the district has tried to terminate his contract several times. The charge of discrimination alleges he is being paid less than his counterparts and has been required to work more regular hours. During his 30-minute speech, Bailey said the board tried to terminate his position last year, but didn't because of an outpouring of support in his favor. He also criticized the board for terminating David Mendez, who is the current district's track coach. Mendez also filed discrimination charges. Administrators said Mendez was terminated because he is not a certified teacher. The district hired a certified teacher to fill Mendez's position.

Board Vice President William Whelan said the district could not afford keeping the three positions that were cut during the budget hearing. "I chair the Finance Committee," Whelan said. "This district spends 99.9 percent of its budget every year. We are confronted with a very difficult year. We cut three positions and being a responsible elected member, I didn't have a choice." During the meeting, some parents in the audience stood up and supported Bailey. Ken Wurtzel told the board how Bailey saved his son's life. His son, Wurtzel said, collapsed from heat exhaustion and it was Bailey who helped him stay alert until the ambulance arrived. Another parent, who did not give his name, said Bailey's termination is due to racial discrimination in the district. Superintendent Richard Bumpus said he has tried to deal with the racial problems in the district. "You know we want to make a difference," Bumpus said. "I don't believe there is another administrator who has taken the time to connect with minority communities."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 7, 2002

CITY HALL BUILDING CLOSER TO A REALITY

Author/Byline: Michael Vasquez

The Sunny Isles Beach City Commission concluded negotiations Thursday with a building contractor for construction of the city's long-awaited City Hall, which officials hope will be ready by December 2004. A final contract between the city and the West Palm Beach-based Weitz Co. will be presented to the commission at its next meeting April 18. The commission is expected to approve that contract. "This is a culmination of 25 years of work," Sunny Isles Beach Mayor David Samson said, referring to the city's long drive for incorporation that succeeded in 1997.

Sunny Isles Beach city government operates out of a small, second-story storefront located in a strip mall. The new City Hall will be a stand-alone structure at 18050 Collins Ave. on property it will share with Tony Roma's restaurant. The city settled on the Tony Roma's site after the Sunny Isles Beach Boulevard building first proposed in 1999 proved to be too expensive.

City Manager **Christopher J. Russo** described the old plans as "way over anything realistic." Weitz will join forces with Spillis Candela, the architectural firm that has been designing plans for the new headquarters. Spillis has been trying to salvage as much as possible from plans the city commissioned for the now-defunct Sunny Isles Beach Boulevard location. Weitz has worked on numerous other municipal projects, including the Port St. Lucie City Hall.

The exact cost of Sunny Isles Beach's new building has yet to be determined, as architectural plans are still being formulated. However, the contract language being hammered out between the city and the contractor deals with just about every other aspect of the project, such how the surplus will be divided if the building turns out to cost less than expected. In that scenario, the city would receive 65 percent of the surplus, with the rest going to the contractor.

The costs expectation will be based on what is called a Guaranteed Maximum Price - a sum of projected costs that Weitz will submit to the city before construction begins. Though no precise number is available, **Russo** used the ballpark figure of \$10 million in estimating what the GMP might be. Once Weitz comes up with a GMP, it will be responsible for any cost overruns that push the price higher.

Russo said the new facility will include a public library and extra space to accommodate government officials visiting Sunny Isles Beach from other areas. "It's going to function substantially better and provide many more services and features, the biggest of which will be the library," **Russo** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
February 17, 2002

TAX HIKE CONSIDERED FOR FIXING STREET

Author/Byline: Michael Vasquez

In a subtle, almost imperceptible fashion, the Sunny Isles Beach City Commission decided at its Feb. 5 meeting to change its strategy for funding infrastructure improvements on Collins Avenue. For several years, city officials have been exploring the creation of a special assessment district to fund improvements to the city's main thoroughfare, an option that would impose a one-time fee on Collins Avenue homeowners and businesses. The money collected would be spent on street landscaping, improved lighting and other improvements.

But Mayor David Samson criticized the special assessment technique as unfair because it singles out certain segments of the population. He said everybody who lives in the city drives on Collins Avenue, and everyone would benefit from improvements to the thoroughfare. During the meeting, Samson talked about how far Sunny Isles Beach has come in the few short years since incorporation, with several new parks created and an increased police presence. But the beautification efforts, he said, have lagged behind.

Samson asked the council for permission to instruct City Manager **Christopher J. Russo** to come up with a 20-year plan for improvements to Collins Avenue and other areas of the city. "Do I have the right to tell that to the man and suggest to him to figure this plan out and figure his budget for the future?" Samson asked his fellow commissioners. A vote was taken, with every commissioner responding yes. But before the voting was concluded, City Attorney Lynn Dannheisser interrupted to ask for clarification. "Are you suggesting now to forget the special assessment and raise the millage [the property tax rate]?" Dannheisser asked the mayor. "If that's it, we need to say that on the record."

At that point, the mayor conceded that the project, which the city manager has estimated would cost about \$20 million, would be funded by an increase in taxes. Addressing the commission, resident Rosyln Brezin said the people of Sunny Isles Beach were promised a beautiful city during the incorporation movement of the mid 1990s, but they were also promised something else: "We said that we were going to keep the taxes down," Brezin said. Sunny Isles Beach has one of the lowest property tax rates in the county, less than a quarter of the rate charged by the city of Miami. Samson insisted taxes would remain low. He said the increase would likely be \$50 per year - only a dollar a week. After the mayor's reassurances, Brezin felt relieved. "I walked away from the meeting with a very good feeling," she said.

Russo will now begin a months-long study on the potential costs of the improvement project, which will refurbish not only Collins Avenue but also the city's parks. **Russo**, who characterized the improvements as "long overdue," said any potential tax increase would likely be discussed during the annual budgetary process in October.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)
September 16, 2001

Commission OK's Budget, \$10,000 Raise for Manager

Author: Gariot Louisna

After a little more than a year on the job, Sunny Isles Beach City Manager **Christopher Russo** is getting a \$10,000 raise. His salary jumps from \$125,000 to \$135,000 in the 2001-2002 budget approved Thursday. **Russo** is one of a handful of employees scheduled for raises following the elimination of nine positions from the city budget in May to balance the books. **Russo** laid off four city employees and will not fill five other vacancies. The job cuts saved the city more than \$280,000, **Russo** said earlier this year.

Assistant City Manager James DeCocq, Planning Development and Community Director Marla S. Dumas and Parks and Recreation Director Ed Smith were terminated May 23. All three were employed by the city for close to two years. A receptionist also was terminated shortly before the upper-level positions were eliminated. But Mayor David Samson said **Russo** is entitled to the pay raise. "Remember, I gave the city \$40,000 dollars," he added, indicating that some of the money he donated from his leftover campaign contributions can support the manager's salary. "I want to see that in future there will be a more balanced view when it comes to pay raises," said newly elected Commissioner Norman Edelcup.

Commission Gerald "Gerry" Goodman declined to comment. Vice Mayor Lila Kauffman did not return calls, and Commissioner Danny Iglesias was out of town. The City Commission passed a resolution Thursday accepting the \$11.8 million budget for 2001-2002. Along with the increase in **Russo's** salary comes a 6 percent property tax increase. The tax rate goes from \$2.50 to \$2.65 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Samson said he wants to increase **Russo's** salary because the manager has done much in a short period to "clean up the mess his predecessors left behind." Sunny Isles Beach has been through three managers in four years.

The city's first manager was James DiPietro who was hired when the city incorporated in 1997 and resigned in September 1999 and received a \$55,000 severance package. Jack Neustadt became the interim city manager but was fired in May 2000 and received \$46,377 in severance pay. DeCocq held the post until **Russo** was hired in August 2000. **Russo** would not comment on his salary increase. But he said the city's operating departments went through a major reorganization. And for the first time in its four-year history, **Russo** said, the city will have a comprehensive compensation plan that will go in effect in January. **Russo** said he plans to outline a "logical, professional, and thought-out" system for pay increases. "The only areas where there is adjustment in salaries is the building department and the police department," **Russo** said. "For the first time ever we've set some parameters." In the building department, there are new salaries and new positions. In the police department, there is a new step system in place that regulates salary increases. "It's ridiculous how raises were given out in the past," **Russo** said, adding that some lower-ranking officers were getting paid more than their superiors.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 9, 2001

DEBT PAYMENTS FORCE CITY TO INCREASE PROPERTY TAXES

Author/Byline: Gariot Louisna

The Sunny Isles Beach City Commission passed on first reading Tuesday a proposed \$11.8 million budget for 2001-2002. Plans to increase the tax rate from \$2.50 to \$2.65 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation remain in place. Assuming a \$25,000 homestead exemption, a homeowner with property valued at \$122,000 - the city average, according to Miami-Dade County appraisers - will pay about \$257 in property taxes to the city, or \$35 more than this year, assuming an increase in property value of about 7 percent.

The single biggest increase in the budget is for payments on the city's \$10.5 million debt, City Manager **Christopher Russo** said. Most of that money was borrowed to pay for park acquisitions and a site for a proposed City Hall that was later abandoned and for a second site. **Russo** said the city is refinancing the loans and will pay \$800,000 in the coming fiscal year toward that debt.

A large chunk of the budget, about \$4.8 million, will go to the city's Police Department, **Russo** said. This amount includes salaries, administration and general upkeep of the department, said Jean Watson, director of finance. This year, the department's budget was \$5,034,938. The figure drops in the new budget because several positions were cut, **Russo** said.

City administration gets \$2.8 million in the new budget, and Zoning, Planning and Building gets \$1.2 million. City taxes account for 11 percent of the total property tax bill. Forty-three percent goes to the Miami-Dade School Board, and 29 percent goes to the county. The state gets 3 percent, and 14 percent goes to special taxing districts.

The second budget hearing is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Thursday in the commission chambers, 17070 Collins Ave., Suite 250.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 24, 2001

FUTURE CITY HALL: YOU WANT RIBS WITH THAT?

Author/Byline: Walter Pacheco

Sunny Isles Beach residents could soon be requesting public records and a side order of barbecued baby-back ribs when they visit City Hall. The City Commission on Tuesday unanimously approved the purchase of a site that will house a popular restaurant chain along with City Hall. However, some foresee the combo becoming a sticky situation. "I've lived over restaurants and I see the problems that can come from that," resident Phillip Chernoff told commissioners Tuesday after they voted to approve purchasing a three-acre site to build a city hall that will be bundled with a Tony Roma's restaurant. "You can have problems with rats and possibly even fires from the kitchen."

In August, a grease-trap fire in the kitchen of the Rascal House, a popular local eatery, caused more than \$5,000 in damages. No one was injured, but the restaurant remained closed for months pending repairs. The \$2.4 million site at 18050 Collins Ave. is owned by the estate of Fred Kassner, a New Jersey businessman who bought many of the South Florida Tony Roma's restaurants in 1986. Kassner bought the land for \$2 million in October 1982. The entire property includes a 1.1-acre vacant lot behind the adjacent two-acre site on which the Tony Roma's currently operates. Since Tony Roma's has a 12-year lease on the property, the city has negotiated a deal to lease space to the restaurant in the same building or adjacent to the future City Hall.

Mayor Dave Samson told residents the purchase would yield the city more money. "We will receive 8 percent of their gross receipts with a minimum of \$240,000 annual rent," Samson said. The city offered the seller a \$50,000 nonrefundable deposit toward the purchase of the property. Despite the ongoing negotiations with the restaurant, others still questioned the purchase. "I fail to see why we need another site for City Hall," resident Cecile Sippin asked Samson. "We don't expect to see any tax revenues until two or three years."

Last year, plans to build a city hall on a city-owned 1.5-acre site on Sunny Isles Boulevard were dropped after City Manager **Christopher Russo** said the city could not afford the \$23 million-plus government building. "With the redevelopment of Sunny Isles Boulevard, we will get our money out of that site," **Russo** said. But resident Don Stewart accused the manager of speaking with "a forked tongue." "You fired three employees to save money and now you want to make a \$2.5 million investment," Stewart said. Three city officials were laid off in May after **Russo** said staff cuts were a result of the city's financial crunch. ". . . the City Manager due to budgetary constraints has found it necessary to eliminate certain positions," the May separation contracts for Assistant Manager James DeCocq and Recreation Director Ed Smith stated.

Community Planning and Development Director Marla S. Dumas has not signed any separation agreement pending legal advice. The staff cuts allegedly saved the city \$300,000 but according

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

to the separation agreements, the former employees will still receive four months salary until Sept. 30. The city's cost will be more than \$40,000. **Russo** assured residents Tuesday that the city is not under any financial burden. "I can tell you this: The city is in good shape," **Russo** said. "Those were all projected financial problems so we don't get into a bad situation." **Russo** said the purchase will be a bonus for the city. "Here's a piece of land that could get sopped up by the developers," **Russo** said. "If we don't keep the property, we could lose it."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Press of Atlantic City, The (NJ)
March 12, 1998

CUMBERLAND REGIONAL BUDGET DOESN'T INCREASE TAX RATE

Author/Byline: Doug Bergen

The Cumberland Regional School District introduced a proposed budget without tax increases. The district's Cumberland Regional High School serves the seven townships surrounding Bridgeton.

For the regional school district portion of tax bills, the owner of a \$100,000 home will pay according to the following amounts.

- Deerfield Township: \$440
- Fairfield Township: \$480
- Greenwich Township: \$420
- Hopewell Township: \$450
- Shiloh Borough: \$370
- Stow Creek Township: \$460
- Upper Deerfield Township: \$360

The new tax rates are identical to those of the previous fiscal year in Hopewell, Stow Creek and Upper Deerfield townships and Shiloh Borough. New rates fall by 2 percent in Deerfield Township, 11 percent in Fairfield Township and 10.6 percent in Greenwich Township. The total budget climbs by 2.56 percent, but changes in state funding and revenue from the sending districts leave the amount to be raised by taxes less than \$44,000 more than last year.

Business Administrator **Christopher J. Russo** said the district can cut taxes and still raise the extra \$44,000, because the school and township tax cycles are different. Small increases may come with new tax cycles in six months. Although administrative costs climb by 29 percent, they remain the lowest in the state among regional school districts, according to **Russo**. One new hire, employee raises and a stipend for an alternative school program account for the new spending, **Russo** said.

Lower salaries and fewer employees, particularly the lack of middle management, allow the district to keep administrative costs down, **Russo** said. He said a state audit determined that Cumberland Regional School District is the most efficient regional district in the state.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The New York Times (NY)
March 28, 1994

Whirlwind of a Manager Runs a Village's Daily Operations

Author: Jacques Steinberg

RYE BROOK, N.Y. - **Christopher Russo** likes to say that he learned how to run a village government during an after-school job as a delivery boy at a produce market in Scarsdale. "They wanted the best quality," he said of his customers. "They wanted efficiency. They wanted the best price. Who does that sound like?" To Mr. **Russo**, it sounds a lot like the 7,800 residents of this Westchester community, whom he has served as village administrator since 1987 and who have been known to button-hole him with their concerns at any hour of the day or night. Sometimes, not even a Sunday morning is sacred. "It's like having a celebrity walk in the door," said Mr. **Russo's** wife, Josette, describing his arrival at their local church. "Everyone wants to get his ear and tell him what their situation is."

Number of Managers Grows

With the management of small communities becoming ever more complicated, the demands of local government are falling increasingly on the shoulders of people like Mr. **Russo**: professional managers who have inherited many of the tasks that used to be performed by part-time, largely untrained, elected officials.

While the concept of a village manager is far from new -- it dates back to the "good government" movement of the early 20th century -- experts have detected an increasing reliance on such officials in recent years. In 1993, the daily operations of 2,973 communities across the country were being overseen by professional managers, an increase of 12 percent since 1991 and 18 percent since 1984, according to the International City-County Management Association.

Spend a day or two with Mr. **Russo**, a 35-year-old whirlwind of a man who sometimes works from 7:30 in the morning until 11 at night, and it becomes readily apparent that running a village has become a lot like managing a small corporation; in the case of Rye Brook, a company with an operating budget of \$7.5 million last year.

Consider a two-hour stretch during a morning earlier this week:

There he is at 9 A.M., racing around the village with the recreation director, examining several ice-covered ball fields to determine whether softball season will start on time early next month. Forty-five minutes later he is poring over a map with the village public works director, readying a plan to repair a ruptured sewer line that was discovered over the weekend after part of a major roadway collapsed. Soon after that, joined by the chairwoman of the council for environmental conservation, he has put on knee-length black rubber boots, slung a camera over his shoulder and hiked out to examine a parcel of property that abuts a wetlands. And don't even ask him about an unrelated lawsuit against the village filed a day earlier by a disgruntled developer. "It's not like a company that has an assembly line running from 9 to 5," he said, catching his breath over a lunch

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

of Caesar salad at a local restaurant. "It's going constantly." "The water coming out of that sewer pipe," he added, "it was running 24 hours a day, believe me."

While often called on to act in emergencies, Mr. **Russo**, like any other village manager, must tread a fine line. He was appointed by the five-member board of trustees to oversee the village's day-to-day operations, but he was not elected by their constituents. As a result, many of his decisions must be approved by the board. Among other checks and balances, his contract, which pays him an annual salary of \$84,000, comes up for renewal once a year.

"The democracy lies in the people that hire me," Mr. **Russo** said. "If they really don't like something going on, they don't have to wait until the next election." **Quality but Low Costs** To the village's part-time mayor, Salvatore Cresenzi, 46, who was trained as an architect but runs a bird-importing business in the Bronx, Mr. **Russo** can devote hours to the village's problems that other officials cannot spare. Mr. **Russo** also brings to the government a set of management skills that he honed in a master's program in public administration at Pace University and during the six years he worked for the dean of Westchester village managers, Lowell Tooley, who has served in Scarsdale since 1956. "I'm trained in business but I'm not a trained municipal administrator," Mr. Cresenzi said. "You can't always run a government like a business."

Anthony Cupaiuolo, the director of the Michaelian Institute for Public Policy and Management at Pace, was among those who encouraged Rye Brook to add a professional administrator to its roster in 1987, five years after it incorporated itself as a village within the town of Rye. "There are pressures on the villages to maintain a high quality of services and at the same time keep costs down," Dr. Cupaiuolo said. "That's difficult to do for a part-time person who may be well-intentioned and well-committed but doesn't have the time, the expertise or the experience." Dr. Cupaiuolo said the strains on small communities have been aggravated by the Federal and state governments, which have ordered municipalities to meet a host of regulatory requirements -- to clean up the environment, for example, or improve access for the disabled -- but do not always provide the money to make those changes. The fines for failing to comply can be even more expensive.

It's no wonder then that Mr. **Russo** has shed 30 pounds since last fall, a loss that seems as attributable to stress as the new exercise regimen that he follows three days a week at a nearby gym. By some miracle, he has managed to maintain a thick head of dark, wavy hair, a virtually unlined face and a warm, if not always relaxed, disposition. Still, his wife and 2 1/2-year-old daughter, Tracy, are constantly clamoring that he spend more hours at home and less time grappling with the machinations of the village. "Out of 17 snowstorms, he's gone out and plowed with his staff 15 times," said Mrs. **Russo**, 31, who was laid off in October from her job as a human resources manager at an insurance company. "At the same time, **Chris** thrives on it," she added a moment later. "He likes being responsible and responsive."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Christopher J. Russo
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The New York Times (NY)
May 12, 1991

You're Thinking of Living in: Rye Brook

Author: Mary McAleer Vizard

The Village of Rye Brook is Westchester County's newest municipality, formed in 1982 from what had been the unincorporated section of the Town of Rye. Since its creation, it has worked hard to establish its own identity. "The first thing we did was put 'Welcome to Rye Brook' signs all over the place," said Jack L. Kabcenell, the village's first Mayor, until 1988. "But it took the state three years to get a sign up on the Hutchinson River Parkway."

Long before becoming a municipality, Rye Brook was an established residential community. Most homes there were built in the 50's and 60's and streets are landscaped and tree-lined. Before World War II, Rye Brook was farmland and estates, whose old manor homes are scattered throughout the village. One is a 13-bedroom Southern colonial mansion that sits incongruously amid a development of homes in newer styles. The village also has a sprinkling of farmhouses and Victorian-era structures. The history of Rye Brook before its incorporation was tied to the Town of Rye, which was settled in 1660 by a group from Greenwich, Conn. They negotiated a treaty with Shenarockwell, a Mohican chief, for all the land along Long Island Sound between the Mamaroneck and Byram Rivers. It is supposed that the town was named after Rye, in Sussex, England, the former home of some of the settlers.

Communities within the town eventually established themselves as separate municipalities. In 1865, the section called Rye Neck became part of the Village of Mamaroneck. Three years later, the Village of Port Chester was established. The Village of Rye was incorporated in 1904, only to secede in 1942 to become a city. This left Rye Brook as the town's only unincorporated section. "We represented only one-fifth of the town's voting block," Mr. Kabcenell said. "It became clear that the people who were being voted into office were not the ones we would have chosen. And they were making decisions on important issues like area zoning and development, things we were going to have to live with for a long time."

In 1980, a citizens' committee was formed to begin the work of turning Rye Brook into a village. "We had to create an entire administration, establish zoning and codify all the laws," said Mr. Kabcenell. Sandy Cortese and her husband, Joseph, watched the village take shape. They were living in Port Chester and commuting to Rye Brook to Mr. Cortese's accounting firm, where both work. "We watched Rye Brook grow and develop," Mrs. Cortese said, "so that by the time we moved here three years ago we knew what we were getting: a nice, clean, extraordinarily well-run village."

Christopher J. Russo, the village administrator, believes a lack of tradition helps streamline the village's operation. "Because we're so new, there's no historic way of doing things -- we just look for the most efficient way," he said. "We've formed consortiums with neighboring areas to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

provide ambulance service and fire protection. Being Westchester's newest municipality allows us to do this, because we have no history of antagonism with our neighbors."

All Town of Rye municipalities get their water from the New York American Water Company, a private firm. "We probably have the highest water rates in Westchester," Mr. **Russo** said. "But we also have among the lowest taxes." The village's tax base is bolstered by a mix of commercial and residential development. There are three condominium developments, with prices ranging from \$150,000 for a one-bedroom unit to \$350,000 for a three-bedroom town house with amenities.

More prevalent are ranches, newly built colonials and contemporaries. "Houses here start at \$225,000 and go all the way to \$850,000," said Jean Saffir Smith, an associate broker for Prudential Suburban Properties. "But most are in the \$300,000's." "There's also been steady growth in commercial and residential construction projects," Mr. **Russo** said. One new development, called Deer Run, has 17 contemporary homes. All are about 3,000 square feet with at least four bedrooms. Prices range from \$695,000 to \$800,000. Sixteen houses have already been built and all the lots have been sold.

Another ongoing construction project is the building of 138 town houses around a nine-hole golf course. The course, owned by Doral Hotels and Resorts, is being redesigned to accommodate the construction. Several other large parcels of open land are now on the market, including the 140-acre High Point Hospital and the 22.5-acre Red Roof farm, realtors say. "Rye Brook is definitely still growing," Ms. Smith said.

One reason for that growth is Rye Brook's proximity to the Westchester County Airport, part of which is in the village, and to several major highways, including Interstates 95, 287 and 684 and the Hutchinson River Parkway. This accessibility has led to a substantial corporate presence, including Philip Morris, I.B.M. and M.C.I. In addition, the village is home to two resorts, the 114-acre Arrowwood and the 40-acre Rye Town Hilton, both known primarily as corporate conference centers.

Unlike older municipalities, Rye Brook has no downtown district where shoppers can stroll. The village center consists of two shopping complexes, Rye Ridge and Washington Park Plaza, each with a supermarket anchor. Rye Ridge also has a two-screen movie theater. Residents can dine at Provare, a trattoria in Arrowwood, and Par's Restaurant for continental cuisine. More extensive shopping, dining and entertainment are a few minutes away in surrounding communities.

When Marsha Diamond and her husband, Jeff, were shopping for their first home, Rye Brook did not immediately come to mind. They looked "long and hard in Westchester," Mrs. Diamond said, before moving here in September. The couple had been renting an apartment in Mount Vernon. "We wanted a new house with property, a community with young families and a good school system," she said. "Everything we wanted was here. And although Rye Brook isn't inexpensive, I think you can get more for your money than in other communities." An added bonus, Mrs. Diamond added, is that her two children, aged 7 and 10, can walk to school.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Christopher J. Russo***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Most residents send their children to the Blind Brook School District. It includes the Ridge Street Elementary School and the Blind Brook Middle and High School (7-12). There are fewer than 1,000 students in the district, and class size is "usually under 20 students," said the Superintendent of Schools, Donald R. Kusel. "That allows us to give our students a lot of individual attention." The district offers a broad curriculum, including Latin in the fifth grade and advance placement courses in calculus, French and American history in the 11th and 12th grades. Mr. Kusel said "virtually 100 percent" of the graduating seniors last June went on to higher education.

A few residents live in the Port Chester/Rye Union Free School District, which has over 2,500 students, who attend four elementary schools and the Port Chester Middle and High Schools. The village Recreation Department runs 50 year-round programs for all ages. There are several parks, including the 35-acre Crawford Park and the 10-acre Rich Manor Park, a forest preserve. The village also has nine tennis courts, several ball fields and pockets of open space near most housing developments. "Over the years, developers had to agree to donate a parcel of open space to get their projects approved," Ms. Smith said. "Some of the land isn't very accessible now, but it's still nice to have." There is also the 18-hole Blind Brook Country Club, of which President Dwight D. Eisenhower was once a member.

Research Compiled by: Shannon Farr and Amanda Dillabough
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 12

W. Lee Smith

*Juno Beach Town Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

William Lee Smith, III
29 Lake Shore Blvd.
Port Wentworth, Georgia 31407
Phone: 912-328-9492
Email: wlsmanager@outlook.com

January 22, 2025

Town of Juno Beach
Mayor, Peggy Wheeler
340 Ocean Drive
Juno Beach, FL 33408

Re: Town of Juno Beach, Fl. Town Manager Position

Mayor Wheeler,

I am writing to express my interest in the Town of Juno Beach, Florida – Town Manager position as shown on the recruitment firms' website. My (35+) thirty-five plus years of solid experience in North Carolina and Georgia local governments, coupled with my passion for local government operations, clearly align with every aspect of Juno's services and operations. These services include finance, public works, emergency management, sanitation, recreation, community involvement, comprehensive planning, zoning, water, sewer, drainage, capital construction management, environmental reviews and public involvement.

As my resume demonstrates, I have been developing my skills as a local government manager over the past thirty-five years. My management and public skills are outstanding, as are my abilities to bring communities together. I have also demonstrated proficiency in Management, receiving my ICMA Credentialed Manager status years ago. I have developed and implemented 911/communication systems, major capital projects including but not limited to: roads, bridges, water, sewer, broadband, multi-purpose stadium, etc. All within or under budget. Have successfully developed a team concept for employees several times successfully. Have major experience managing emergency events such as major storms, fires and chemical spills with pre-planning and post event management. It would be my pleasure to contribute comparable results to the Town of Juno Beach.

Additionally, I was raised on the coast of North Carolina and have spent my career as manager of several coastal local governments in North Carolina and Georgia. Living and working on the coast, I am well versed in issues such as beach renourishment, storm readiness and operations, water resources, dune preservation, coastal traditions, history, wildlife protection, recreation, and preservation of the Atlantic Coast along with its beaches and communities.

I am very interested in joining the Juno Beach team and look forward to discussing the opportunities Juno has to offer. I would be honored to be considered as your next Town Manager and am prepared to meet with you and the board at your convenience.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Smith

William "Lee" Smith, III

WILLIAM "LEE" SMITH, III

29 Lake Shore Blvd., Port Wentworth GA 31407
912-328-9492 • wlsmanager@outlook.com

Career Statement

"I am an innovative leader with over 35 years of local government experience who enjoys creative problem solving while applying innovative management techniques to improve communities and their residents' quality of life while leaving a place much better than I found it."

EXPERIENCE

County Manager

May 2014 to September 2022
Chatham County, Savannah, GA

Served a nine-member elected board, in a coastal community of approximately 300,000 people and a region of over 500,000 people with an annual growth rate of 17%.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- 2,250+ employees and a budget of \$998 million.
- Developed of a "zero based" budget process,
- Recommended local policy and laws for the Board to consider and carried out and implemented these activities per the Board's priorities and direction.
- Developed a professional executive team to manage the day to day operations of public works, law enforcement, building/safety, code enforcement, police, emergency management, judiciary, finance, parks and recreation, utilities, etc.

Achievements

- Established a new county 130 officer police department with the mindset of "real" community policing within 6 months.
- Successfully consolidated communications/E-911 system that had operated individually under seven municipalities to one system.
- Managed several successful financial referendums for projects such as infrastructure, new trial courthouse, new state of the art emergency operations center and multiple major recreation facilities.
- Initiated a strategic planning process involving several thousand citizens which brought forth the "Chatham County Blueprint for the Future." The Blueprint has been adopted by all local governments in the area.
- Stabilized the finances of the County which lead to a higher bond rating reducing financing costs of major capital projects.
- Managed the development of the Chatham County SPLOST (Special Local Option Sales Tax) of \$400 million for roads, recreation, capital, and infrastructure. Several of the projects are now under construction or completed, such as the new County Court Building, Marine Science Center, 3000 person multipurpose stadium, beach renourishment and several coastal trails and walkways. All finished on time and under budget.
- major successful emergency pre and post hurricane and storm operations.

County Manager/Chief Executive Officer*December 2001 to February 2014*

Wayne County, Goldsboro, NC

Served a seven-member elected board, in a coastal plain community of approximately 130,000 people and a region consisting of a large military presence, agriculture and manufacturing.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- 1200 employees and a budget of \$175 million.
- Developed of a "zero based" budget process,
- Recommended local policy and laws for the Board to consider. Conducted and implemented these activities per the Board's priorities and direction.
- Developed a professional executive team to manage the day to day operations of public works, law enforcement, building/safety, code enforcement, police, emergency management, judiciary, finance, parks and recreation, water, sewer, utilities, etc.

Achievement

- Operations included: health and human services, finance, tax, emergency services, solid waste, sewer, law enforcement, etc.
- Construction and renovations of the county detention center and County Courthouse \$2.2 million.
- Developed the county's first 10 year capital improvement plan and budget.
- Creation of a public-private economic development agency recruiting over 2000 jobs in five years.
- Redevelopment of the county airport to an executive jetport, recruiting several corporate jets and new hangers with an increase in fuel sales of 86% and new tax base of \$367 million.
- Managed the development of a county-wide 800 MHz digital communication system including all county operations and law enforcement, EMS, Fire and all municipalities.
- Implemented a new county-wide emergency medical system, 24-hour paramedics from a volunteer system at a cost reduction to taxpayers including a state-of-the-art "Next Generation" E911 system. The new 911 system and EMS operational costs were reduced by \$1.2 million annually while maintaining a higher level of service.

County Manager*July 1993 to November 2001*

Washington County, Plymouth, NC

Served a five-member elected board along the Outer Banks community of approximately 12,000.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- 112+ employees and a budget of \$12 million.
- Developed a "zero based" budget process generating ability to fund reserves and reduce the tax rate 6% for citizens.
- Recommended local policy and laws for the Board to consider and carried out and implemented the activities, services and programs per the Board's priorities and direction.
- Managed the day to day operations of public works, law enforcement, building/safety, code enforcement, police, emergency management, judiciary, finance, parks and recreation, utilities, etc.

Achievements

- Restructured the county water system to become a self-supporting enterprise through the expansion of the system to 3 municipalities.
- Implementation of the first Comprehensive Land Use and Zoning Plan and Ordinance. Endorsed by the military, industry, citizens and the environmental community and organizations.
- Construction of a river walkway on the Roanoke River \$1.1 million (grants) and construction of a full scale of the Historic River Lighthouse \$2.6 million (grants).
- Served as County Manager/County Hospital Administrator due to hospital finance negligence. Within one year we were able to stabilize hospital costs, improve operations and made a profit for the first time in 10 years.
- Development of the first County shuttle service (State and Federal funded)

Executive Director

December 1990 to June 1993

Columbus County Economic Development Commission, Whiteville, NC

Served a 13 member board Commission consisting of local governments and private industry.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Development of Commission budget \$1.5 million.
- Monthly Board meetings, community presentations and client finance packages.
- Responsible for the recruitment and retention of all industry in the county as well as the development and oversight of an 1100-acre industrial park.
- Marketing for the county/city.
- Responsible for the development, maintenance, and marketing of the industrial park with all infrastructure including water, sewer, gas, rail, and interstate connection.

Achievements

- Created over 1,600 new jobs and over \$926 million in new tax base.
- Manage a water and sewer bond referendum (successful) and project implementation. \$15 million
- Member of the NC Commerce Department Recruitment Team, covering Europe and Canada.
- Created a 1,100 acre industrial park adjacent to a major industry and college.
- Several public and private grants totaling over \$41 million.

Planner/Emergency Manager/Deputy Manager

March 1986 to November 1990

Pamlico County, Bayboro, NC

Duties and Responsibilities

- This position was responsible for: all emergency response (fire and rescue), preparedness, developed and implemented the county's first 911 system, community development including federal housing programs, tourism, zoning, mapping, etc.

Achievements

- Developed first 911 system in Eastern North Carolina
- Digitally mapped the County as a partner of the State of NC
- Recruited 6 new industries and 1150 jobs.
- Certified as an Emergency Manager.
- Certified as an arson investigator.
- Eleven successful pre and post hurricane operations.

EDUCATION

University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, NC

1985 Bachelor of Science Business Administration (Cameron School of Business)

INTERESTS

- Transportation - Involved in the development of a Highway 70 Corridor Commission to oversee the strategic corridor interstate project involving all Eastern North Carolina including seven counties and 22 towns and cities. The \$1.2 billion project was completed in 2015.
- Infrastructure - Heavily involved in regional water and sewer projects (infrastructure Summit 2008), etc.
- Military - involved in the Military Affairs Commission and Seymour Support Council for Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.
- Affordable Housing – have volunteered and worked with Habitat for Humanity for over 20 years.
- Environment – My daughter and I volunteer with wildlife groups and have participated and volunteered in sea turtle preservation in North Carolina, Georgia, and Hawaii.
- Personal Time - The bulk of my time outside of the office is spent with my family and traveling. Recently completed my desire to visit, camp and hike all 50 states.

DISTINCTIONS

- County Manager of the Year for the Eastern Region in 2005
- Awarded Transportation Leadership Award in 2006.
- Certified/Accredited County Manager through ICMA since 2004.
- Chairperson and Board member of the Year in 2012 by the North Carolina Mental Health Council.
- Received 30-year recognition as a member of ICMA.
- Manager of the Year 1999 by the Eastern NC Regional Commission.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Developed the Chatham County "Calling All Manager's Group" including all local county city and county managers in the region of southeast Georgia and South Carolina.
- Previously an active member of the North Carolina City/County Manager's Association and ICMA and continue these activities in Georgia. Have served on several committees for the Georgia and North Carolina Association of County Commissioners including the NCPTS, Curriculum development and Productivity Awards Committee.

- Serve as the local Wayne County Development Alliance as Secretary/Treasurer, Wayne County Chamber Board of Directors, Downtown Goldsboro Development Commission, Wayne County Partnership for Children, Past Board of Director member of the Wayne County United Way. Chair of Eastpointe Mental Health MCO and Chairperson of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Mental Health Waiver Advisory Committee. Member/Secretary/Treasurer of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission. Have continued as a major advocate of mental health in the State of Georgia.

SALARY HISTORY

- Chatham County - \$253,500 plus \$1200 car allowance per month all insurances paid by the county including family benefits, 401k max contribution, life insurance, employment contract with one yr. severance & fully vested retirement 4%.
- Wayne County - \$215,500 plus \$1200 travel per month, individual/family insurance coverage, 401K, life insurance and employment contract.
- Washington County - \$95,000 plus \$500 travel per month and employment contract. Columbus County - \$43,000 plus \$500 travel per month

William “Lee” Smith, III**Overview and Summary of****Accomplishments from 1993 to 2023 by Lee Smith, Administrations and County Commission Boards. County Manager in Columbus Co. NC, Washington Co. NC, Wayne County Co. NC & Chatham County GA.**

Reserves - 3-month reserves established along with a board policy – aided in receiving higher bond ratings in two organizations from Baa to AA (2008) & Aaa to AAA (2016) status due to successful management of funds and financial planning as well as the reduction of short-term debt and supplied sufficient cash to pay advanced cost of 11 hurricanes with reimbursements from FEMA.

CIP - Capital Improvement Program reserve developed to pay for equipment and vehicles with cash eliminating need for short-term financing budgeted annual.

CCPD - Re-established the Chatham County Police Department in six months with \$2 million in expenditures less than was being paid to the City of Savannah annually.

Blueprint – Within 18 months of joining Chatham, a county-wide strategic plan was completed. Workforce, Quality of life, Education and health were the areas of concern by the community.

Industrial Park Project - developed 1100-acre industrial park. This industrial park included infrastructure including water, sewer, gas, rail, and interstate connection. The water and sewer connected two cities providing redundancy of these services for both as well as to the park. The availability from 1990 to 1993 created 1,600 new jobs and millions of dollars in new tax base. As of 2001, the park was fully occupied with 10 industries and 5,350 jobs. Property was purchased by the local County partnered development commission, water and sewer were funded the CDBG, city, and grant funds, the 22 mile natural gas line was funded by an appropriation by the General Assembly.

New payroll system – upon arrival in Chatham County in 2014, the payroll system was still being operated predominantly by paper. A new fully automated system was developed and implemented saving hours of work by every department and ultimately reducing cost of bi-weekly payroll.

New Budget and Finance automated system – the system allows for long term budget analysis, allows all departments to enter data in the same format and format that is better understood by Board members and the public. These formats remained the same annually allowing for better year to year detail comparisons.

New Tax System – a new tax system was installed connecting tax assessor, tax commissioner, board of equalization, Geographical Information Systems Department, and Building Safety (permits.) This allowed monthly updates use by all departments, realtors, law firms, the public and reporting to the Board periodically.

New Court System – new automated court record management system and jury system was implemented allowing connection of all courts as well as the detention center.

New Video Arraignment system – system was implemented allowing for video arraignment with inmates not having to be transferred reducing safety matters and reducing costs as well as making the court system more efficient.

Gracie – new Medical Information Exchange implementation (first County in Georgia) – over 40+ local medical facilities, hospitals and detention center are connected saving time when seeing patients in office, emergency rooms and detention center and the state correctional system. Booking and Health Assessment process time in the Detention Center was improved by implementation allowing for reduction of 65% in the time of processing. This system development and implementation allows medical personnel to treat patients faster by having all aspects of patient data including medications, medical history, etc.

New Building Safety system – allows for residents and contractors to purchase building permits, check updates online as well as pay for permits online reducing the need for visits to the office. System allows field permit officials to operate in real time when updating permits as projects are inspected allowing contractors to get “back to work” quicker.

Risk Management – Developed the County’s first Risk Management and Occupational Safety Department. This department has developed a culture of safety and has aided in reducing employee injuries allowing employees to get back to work quickly, trains ALL employees of the safety hazards in their line of work, developed certification programs such as driver safety. Ultimately, we were able to Self-fund and administer the Workers Compensation in-house. Reduced costs of this program by \$1.8 million the first year.

SPLOST 7 (sales tax equivalent of 1 cents)– Developed a long-term capital plan for recreation, roads, storm water drainage, economic development property and improvements, new Trial Courthouse (under construction) and Emergency Operations Center (final plans completed, construction to begin in 2023), etc. funded by the \$400 million in sales tax vs. property taxes. Over 47% of this sales tax is paid by tourist and visitors reducing the burden of the sale tax of Approximately \$188 million over five years. This tax is shared by the County and local cities.

CAD RMS – Replacing of the 20-year-old 911 system with a Next generation 911 centralized system with all municipalities participating. The \$10.5 million cost was covered by phone surcharges on land lines and cell phones. Also, our internal audit team preformed an analysis

and forensic audit of all telecom companies both landline and cell phone companies there were 117 companies with contracts with users based through out the United States. This process brought about an additional \$1.3 million in missing surcharge payments from telecom companies reducing the cost to local citizens and businesses.

Calling All Managers – Established a quarterly meeting of all county and city managers for the purpose of developing better relationships between local governments and administrations. Has been extremely helpful when needing to discuss county-wide participation. I personally expanded this effort to all surrounding counties and their cities to also develop relationships and ultimately producing regional roadway, water, sewer, fiber, and drainage projects. These efforts providing cost sharing and reduced impacts as example reducing the effects of storm water, increasing broadband expansion to rural areas and expansion of water and sewer to housing developments and more importantly for industry as needed by existing and new industries creating jobs.

Performance and merit overhaul – Updated the performance and merit pay plan with utilizing an appraisal process for all 2200 employees. This system provided an annual work plan for every individual providing a management tool by which supervisors and administration can measure successes and failures.

Living Wage – Even before Covid the County adopted and utilized the Living Wage to ensure all employees will always stay ahead of the national living wage hourly amount. This aids in retention and recruitment of employees.

3 major storms (example Chatham County) – Managed staff and County through 3 hurricanes including emergency planning & response, clean-up, and housing. Received over \$33 million in FEMA funds in Hurricane Matthew alone. The county was able to utilize the policy driven reserves to adequately fund the up-front costs of the hurricane damage while waiting for reimbursements from FEMA. By close management and overview of costs, the actual cost to the County was \$1.2 million.

Renovation of Unit 5 in the detention center – the renovation was completed in 2017 with the intent of housing inmates with substance abuse and mental health issues allowing for medical treatment and observation.

Resiliency Office – Implemented a resiliency office to address the impacts of sea level rise and climate change. Position is reviewing the policies of the county and all cities for the purpose of developing polices and building ordinances that take climate change into consideration to reduce property impacts in the future.

Animal Services, CNT, Marine Patrol, CEMA and 911 – the merger and take-over by the County of these services providing uniform services across the county.

Executive Team – Developed an executive team that rotates various department managers ensuring all managers have proper input in actions of upper management as well as execution of new policies.

County Employee Medical Clinic - The County is self-insured regarding health plan. A third party was hired to maintain an employee health clinic for employees and their families. This process has reduced costs of employees going to outside physicians, emergency room or urgent care avoiding use of the self-insured plan with outside costs at higher rates. This process has increased participation of the new county wellness plan bringing forth healthier employees. Both processes have reduced annual costs by nearly \$2+ million per year.

Financial Policies – Developed Financial Policies in all three past organizations discussed with the Board as to effects to budget, financial consistency (major area for Bond Rating agencies in consideration of rates), clear understanding by the Board as to effects and need for adherence to said polices. The administration proposed said polices, worked with the Board ensure these polices met the Board’s requirements and plans. The Board have final authorization. If changes are needed administration brought forth with Board review and consideration.

Library Systems – In Chatham and Wayne Counties developed a regional system Library system reducing the need of multiple library boards, provided for reduction of book and resource inventory by developing resource sharing with daily share services and shared personnel.

Department Measurements and Benchmarks – Over the last 25 years have developed internal strategic plans annually with 5-10 projections in every department for service demand, ways to provide better and more cost effective services to the public and reducing complaints. This process brought about departmental benchmarks and performance measurements providing for monthly adherence to standards. These results are reported to the Board quarterly for discussion, placed on social media platforms, reviewed in public townhall meetings (provided a platform for Board members and giving the public opportunity to provide input regarding services) county television by showing services provided by departments and demonstrating to the public the County’s commitment to excellence.

CHAIRMAN OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chester A. Ellis
Chairman



Chatham County Courthouse
Post Office Box 8161
Suite 210 - 124 Bull Street
Savannah, Georgia 31412

(912) 652-7950
(912) 652-7880 - fax
Chairman@chathamcounty.org

December 27, 2022

Re: Recommendation Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

As Chairman of the Chatham County Commission and individually, I submit this letter of support to Lee Smith, former manager of Chatham County. I have worked closely with Lee Smith and have found him to be attentive to details, a leader of staff, efficient, and effective in executing the task assigned to him.

In his duties as County Manager, Lee performed well and acted consistently in an ethical manner. I believe that any organization that employs him with his significant skills set would only be a better organization.

I hope this letter will be positively received by others in support of any endeavors Lee Smith does now or in the future.

Sincerely,

Chester A. Ellis, Chairman
Chatham County Commission

Candidate Introduction

Section 12**WILLIAM “LEE” SMITH, III**

EDUCATION

University of North Carolina – Wilmington – BS – Business Administration – Cameron School of Business

ICMA – Certified Accredited Manager – 25 years

University of NC Chapel Hill – Certified City/County Manager – Institute of Government - 1989

EXPERIENCE

Management Consultant	01/2023 – present
County Manager, Chatham County, Savannah, GA	2014 – 2023
County Manager, Wayne County, Goldsboro, NC	2001 – 2014
County Manager, Washington County, Plymouth, NC	1993 – 2001
Executive Director, Columbus Co. Econ. Dev. Comm., Whiteville, NC	1990 – 1993
County Emergency Mgmt. Dir./Deputy Mgr., Pamlico Co., Bayboro, NC	1986 – 1990

BACKGROUND

Chatham County has a population of 295,000. The County has 2,250 employees and I directly supervised 35 of them. The general fund budget was \$600M and the total budget was \$998M. The three most important issues facing Chatham County are:

1. Roadway & Bridges – due to the growth of the Savannah Georgia Ports along, Visitors and growing populations, traffic is increasing at rates over 18% a year with truck traffic being the greatest causing major damage to major highways, bridges, and secondary roads.
2. Workforce Development – with the new industries such Amazon, Hyundai, and many logistic centers, the need for skilled, pre-trained and educated individuals must be in place prior to new industry. At the present time, Chatham and surrounding counties are having to “catch-up” causing a strain the local technical and four year colleges.
3. Drainage – Chatham County averages 13 feet above sea level. The introduction of new industries, warehousing and new housing, the county drainage system is meeting capacity. Widening and deepening of canals, flood gates, and reservoirs are now required along with participation of developments to assist with reducing runoff and cost of improvements.

Section 12**WILLIAM “LEE” SMITH, III**

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE TEAM

The Town of Juno Beach, Manager position interests me based on my experience over many years. I am very interested in your efforts, principles, strategic planning, coastal living knowledge, and forward-thinking approach. Per your research of the Town, promoting and creating jobs is a high priority. Through most of my career, I have been responsible for and participated in the determination of the potential types of businesses matching the Town and community principles. Locating new businesses is important while first committing to and retaining local businesses.

My passion is “team” development and establishing a great work environment. Counties are a service industry and without a well-trained and focused team, success will be slow or not be achievable. Looks like the Town wants to adopt standards along with programs to achieve success and I look forward to being a part of these programs and planning if chosen.

Another item that attracted my interest is the Town’s commitment to fair and reasonable budgets that adhere to the Town’s financial Standards, keeping the Town in good standing according to governmental standards.

My management style is one of team building and involving all levels of employees to be assessed regularly and be a part of developing solutions for county issues. I would sum it up and say, my style involves participation and regular oversight of services and employees. It is further expected that management demonstrates to the team that they care, honor their commitments and “would never ask someone to do something they would not do themselves.”

Staff would say that I am fair, I keep to my word, open & honest, ethical and care about those I work with. Elected officials would say that I am honest, respectful, creative, a problem solver, good communicator, community oriented but not perfect.

In terms of strengths, I am a consensus builder, strong community partner, strong work ethics and team builder, 35 years of experience and good communicator. My weaknesses are that I can be impatient at times, can overload myself, sometimes not good at asking for assistance.

No one employee is the same; therefore, I have utilized a general appraisal methodology that measures effectiveness, attendance, work quality, etc. The key to success is the annual development of a work plan for every employee. Whereby, all supervisors and department managers meet with employees to jointly review what they do well and where improvements are needed.

At that point a jointly agreed upon plan is developed and understood so the employee comprehends the expectations and what is required to improve and must understand this plan must be adhered to. Last, employees should meet at least twice a year to discuss their successes and needed improvements. If we wait an entire year, we may set the employee up for failure of management does not recognize what is occurring until the issues are major.

Section 12**WILLIAM “LEE” SMITH, III**

My most recent achievement was the establishment of a new county police force in a six-month period of time. The County and City of Savannah decided to part ways regarding police and the Commissioners gave me a budget and timeline of which both were met with an approximate \$3M reduction in police service but with higher service levels such as response times averaging 7 minutes or less. Most importantly we established a real “community” police force that talks with the businesses and citizens, participates in community events even on their own time and are seen as allies not enemies.

My biggest failure was in Wayne County, NC. The County developed and initiated an automated payroll system. BETA testing had small glitches; however, when the system went “live” major errors occurred causing major overpayments to employees. We utilized a third party company to aid in the transition. I believe my failure was depending too much on the third party, not bringing my team together more closely and listening to their concerns. I have since dealing with projects of that magnitude, have utilized a project manager to keep the process moving and keeping me informed of issues and progress. That was a major learning experience. The issue was eventually resolved.

Unfortunately, I have fired a number of people during my career for various reasons including, but not limited to theft, disorderly conduct, inability to do the job properly, and bringing about an unsafe work environment. The firing of someone should be no surprise to them if management and supervisors have been paying attention to issues and counseling the employee. Unless the infraction was great enough to warrant immediate termination, then the process of adhering to HR policies of progressive must be adhered to. It is never easy to terminate someone, but I have always approached these issues with complete data and documentation. Terminations must be done face to face in a safe environment with witnesses. Last, I try to keep my emotions out of the process; however, that is nearly impossible. Though the individual indeed must be terminated, I can’t help but think of the impact to the individual and families as well as the department of which the individual worked.

My first six months hired by the Town of Juno Beach:

1. 30 days - get to know the management team as a group and as individuals, meet with board members to see as a board where my attention should place per their priorities. Also, meet with members to get a feel for processes, proper and preferred communication processes, and frequency. Budget review with team. Inspect and visit the Town with staff and Council.
2. 60 days - review strategic plans and ordinances, continue to inspect Town assets and familiarize myself with buildings, parks, problem areas, etc.
3. 90 days – continue to meet with community leaders to get a feel for what the concerns of community are to incorporate into my work plans approved by the Council while being sensitive to problematic issues.
4. 120 days – at this point I should have a sense of the culture of the community, regular community meetings should be scheduled and personally should be engrained in the

Section 12**WILLIAM “LEE” SMITH, III**

county, need for team sessions to see where the county stands with projects and general concerns. Have a mutually agreed upon work plan with recommendations, objectives, and priorities approved by the Town Council.

I have had excellent relationships with the media as I regularly communicate with them, am always honest and forthright (except in cases of litigation details, personnel, etc. where items may be private by law). I hold a couple of meetings with media annually so not be surprised by a matter and ensuring “facts” are reported. Also, there is nothing in my background that would embarrass the Town.

I have initiated utilization of social media platforms for public education, getting the facts out, notices, giving regular video updates and short sessions to stay ahead of community concerns. Also, there must be someone or a department that monitors all platforms to keep the Council and management informed of trends both positive and negative.

There are no community activists that will contact my next employer.

I enjoy spending time with my family, kayaking, concerts, festivals, travel and cooking (taught by some of the best southern cooks), and like to volunteer occasionally with Habitat for Humanity and Food Bank. Love traveling. Just completed 100 days of travel in all 50 states fishing, hiking, camping, sightseeing, and photographing memorable moments.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Results-oriented
- Engaged
- Ambitious
- Diligent
- Passionate
- Analytical

REASON FOR DEPARTING MOST RECENT JOB

Fairly new board that were seeking a different direction for the county. There were a couple of highly intense projects which caused rifts among members and ultimately communication broke down which impacted administration. We negotiated a severance agreement, and I resigned Jan. 3rd of 2023. I have no regrets or hard feelings towards the county. I consider many of my Team members as family. I was given a positive letter of reference and recommendation by Chatham County. Since that time, I have contracted with private and government entities for services such as strategic planning, development of bid documents and grant writing. Spent time traveling,

Section 12**WILLIAM “LEE” SMITH, III**

initiated a nationwide job search in early 2024 and was honored to return to North Carolina for quality time and care giver for my mother prior to her death.

SALARY HISTORY

Negotiable utilizing advertised salary range.

Chatham County - \$253,500 plus \$1200 car allowance per month all insurances paid by the county including family benefits, 401k max contribution, life insurance, employment contract with one yr. severance & fully vested retirement 4%.

Wayne County - \$215,500 plus \$1200 travel per month, individual/family insurance coverage, 401K, life insurance and employment contract.

Washington County - \$95,000 plus \$500 travel per month and employment contract. Columbus County - \$43,000 plus \$500 travel per month.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIAM LEE SMITH III**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Chatham County, GA	No Records Found
Wayne County, NC	No Records Found
State	
Georgia	No Records Found
North Carolina	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Chatham County, GA	No Records Found
Wayne County, NC	No Records Found
Federal	
Georgia	March 2019 – Lawsuit filed against Garden City including Mr. Smith in his Capacity as Chatham County Manager. May 2019 – Dismissed without prejudice. <i>*See Next Page for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>
North Carolina	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Georgia	No Records Found
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Credit

Very Good

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIAM LEE SMITH III**

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: **william smith** <wlsmanager@outlook.com>
Subject: Re: Background Check Records that Require an Explanation
To: Monique Rogers <monique@cb-asso.com>

The lawsuit was with Chatham County and the County Sheriff. I do not recall the case details. As County Manager, I would automatically receive the lawsuit and forward it to the County Attorney. Typical for most to be terminated from the case due to no connection to the case

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIAM LEE SMITH III
Personal Disclosure**

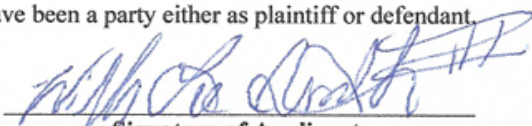
Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: William Lee Smith III

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~~ 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

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes William "Lee" Smith

Wilbur Andy Anderson – Former Commissioner, Wayne County, NC 919-344-1202

Mr. Anderson was elected to the County Commission in 1993. He met Mr. Smith in 2001 and they worked together until Mr. Anderson retired in 2012. His comments are based on Mr. Smith's job performance during the time that they worked together.

Mr. Smith was one of the best County Managers Mr. Anderson has ever known. Mr. Anderson was the odd man politically (meaning, the other Commissioners belonged to a different political party). Mr. Smith always made sure Mr. Anderson was aware of anything that happened, and he treated all the Commissioners equally. He was very honest and above board.

During the interview process the hiring panel stated that Mr. Smith was the best Manager they found. He did his homework and arrived at Wayne County extremely knowledgeable of their government. He worked well with others, worked overtime to complete projects, and brought several businesses to the community. He had a good knowledge of finance. Anyone creating a team always asked Mr. Smith to be part of the group because of his expertise.

Because Mr. Smith had a great deal of foresight on what was coming, he advised the Commission well on how to budget and manage their resources. He was active in securing funding from state agencies. The County owned a small airport. He wanted to show the public that the airport was something special. He formed a team to create a name and logo for the airport and was very proactive in advertising it. He successfully applied for grant monies to install a LED light system in the airport, they were one of only three airports at the time to have this ultra-modern lighting. The Wayne Executive Airport is one of the finest airports in North Carolina, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Smith.

Everyone hired by Mr. Smith was a good fit for the role and organization. He terminated the employment of individuals who were not meeting expectations. He is a go-getter and does not sit behind a desk. He is customer service oriented and stays on top of every issue. He advised the Commissioners well and they sought his recommendations on how to resolve issues. He generally completes assignments immediately, and he is always very timely.

Mr. Smith has not personally been involved in a controversial situation, but he was involved in controversial decisions made by the Commission. Nothing in his background would embarrass an employer. One of two of the new Commissioners at the time of his departure might disagree with this reference but they have a different management style and sought to make many changes within the organization.

Mr. Anderson was not on the Commission when Mr. Smith left and has no personal knowledge of what transpired. Due to an election the Commission went from having a majority of one political party to having a majority of the other political party. Mr. Anderson heard that the new Commissioners wanted a manager who belonged to their political party.

Reference Notes

William "Lee" Smith

Based on what Mr. Anderson knows, he would hire Mr. Smith and highly recommends him. He is a great municipal manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Knowledgeable,
- Go-getter,
- Motivated,
- Gets along with people,
- Helpful, and
- Manager and director.

Strengths: Finance, management, proactive, accomplishes tasks, visionary, manages staff well, keeps things moving.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Jack Best – Former Commissioner, Wayne County, NC 919-920-9988

Mr. Best has known Mr. Smith since 2001 and worked with him as a County Commissioner for eight years.

Mr. Smith rated 95 of 100 on his review. He took a County that was cash poor and brought it to a very comfortable position. The County now pays cash for items like cars, equipment, and computers. He improved their bond rating and did a wonderful job handling the finances. He is his own man and has his own ideas. He knows how to get the job done and does well.

The only thing Mr. Best expects is to not have any surprises. Mr. Smith kept the Commissioners very well informed. He was willing to talk through the issues. Mr. Best did not always agree with Mr. Smith, but he was frequently right. They talked two to three times a week and attended Commission meetings every other week. Their interactions were always very good.

Mr. Smith made excellent decisions when hiring personnel. He was hands-on and he delegated authority. He improved the community during his tenure. He was innovative and he kept the organization functioning at a high level. He was not perfect when dealing with the public, but he had a good rapport with community leaders.

Mr. Smith put a team together from the staff, the County Commissioners, and residents to build a nice civics center. Residents complained about the project until it was completed, and they realized how beneficial it is. He wanted to build an animal shelter, but some Commissioners felt the cost was too high. Mr. Smith turned to the community and gathered donations equaling 10-20% of the necessary funding.

Reference Notes

William "Lee" Smith

Mr. Smith is absolutely customer service oriented and a problem solver. He is very quick to complete tasks and he never procrastinates. He determines what needs to happen and does it.

The only controversy involving Mr. Smith occurred after an election. The new Board members were of a different political party than the Commissioners who had been on the Board for 100 years. The new Commissioners changed the entire focus of the organization. From day one they wanted to terminate Mr. Smith's employment and hire a manager from their own political party. They kept him in place for a year, so they did not have to pay severance, and then parted ways. These Board members are the only individuals who might disagree with this reference.

Mr. Best would hire Mr. Smith tomorrow if he had a job available. Mr. Best likes Mr. Smith as a person and feels he is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Very honest,
- Hardworking,
- Astute business person,
- Good financial manager,
- Manages employees well, and
- Did a wonderful job.

Strengths: Good financial manager, treats employees well and gets along with most of them, managed a large staff and a \$70 million dollar budget well, did an exceptional job.

Weaknesses: If he had any, it would be that he likes to do things his own way.

Dead Kicklighter – Commissioner, Chatham County, GA 912-507-1343

Mr. Kicklighter has worked with Mr. Smith since 2014. Mr. Smith was an excellent manager, and he did a great job for Chatham County. He was very intelligent, and he communicated well with staff and with the Commission. He made good decisions both when hiring and in general.

Mr. Smith was often out in the community. He was very personable, so he interacted well with residents. He provided the information they needed in a professional way. He kept the Board informed through phone calls and texts. When they requested information, he confirmed the request through email and then followed up with a hard copy of the data.

A previous Commission, prior to Mr. Kicklighter's tenure on the Board which began in 2001, allowed a developer to build infrastructure that did not meet County standards with the understanding that the Homeowner's Association (HOA) was to maintain the drainage system and the roads in certain areas. Decades later when the infrastructure started failing, the HOA

Reference Notes

William “Lee” Smith

could not afford to replace it and the developer was long gone. Mr. Smith held meetings with staff and the HOA. He developed a public/private partnership in which the HOA contributed a substantial amount of money to bring the system up to code, and the County took control of roads and drainage in the area. He involved employees from all pertinent departments and helped right a wrong in the community.

Customer service is important to Mr. Smith. He has good financial skills, and he is good about completing tasks within the timeframe given. He responds to stress as well as anyone.

Anyone leading a large government body faces controversial issues, and Mr. Smith was no exception. He handled each scenario with dignity, respect, and dedication to the County and its employees. His background is clear of anything that would concern an employer. He does have detractors in the community, which is common for those in his position, but Mr. Kicklighter did not name anyone specifically.

Mr. Kicklighter would hire Mr. Smith. He will do a great job for any community fortunate enough to hire him. They will be satisfied with his job performance.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Intelligent,
- Thorough,
- Hard working,
- Compassionate, and
- Kind.

Strengths: Brings solutions to the table when presenting issues, leads in a way that the staff knows he means business but still well liked by them.

Weaknesses: As long as the elected officials clearly communicate what they want from Mr. Smith, they will have no issues with him.

Michael Kaigler – Assistant County Manager, Chatham County, GA 912-657-7080

Mr. Kaigler has known Mr. Smith since 2014. Mr. Kaigler is currently serving as the Interim Manager. Mr. Smith did a good job for Chatham County. He served in several capacities in North Carolina and worked well with the former Chairman.

Chatham County has a hiring system with interview panels, though the final decisions are typically made by Mr. Smith and his assistants. His decisions both in hiring and in general were good. His strongest trait is innovation, though he was asked to be more of a change agent in

Reference Notes

William "Lee" Smith

Chatham County as the previous manager had been in the role for more than two decades and the organization was significantly behind the times.

While Mr. Smith did not attend all community meetings, he was always there when he was asked to be. He worked well with the public and many of the residents were sad to see him leave. He was good about keeping the leadership team informed and he involved them in the decision-making process.

Mr. Smith likes to be out front, rather than behind a desk. He walked through the departments and took random employees to lunch periodically to listen to their input. He coined the phrase they still use, which is "Team Chatham" and helped staff work cohesively as a team.

The County's payroll system was antiquated, and Mr. Smith led the team to install new software. Employees who had worked for the County for years resisted the change, but he led the way and eventually they realized it was a better way to work. He also developed a customer service system where residents can submit their request for service or file a complaint. He ensured that every entry was always given a response, even when the County was not able to fill their request.

One skill Mr. Smith prides himself on is keeping up to date on the financial documentation and budget. He will take the information home and pour over it in his downtime. He coped very well in stressful situations. He internalizes some things but handles stress well.

Mr. Smith has not been involved in anything controversial. The Board changed after an election and a minority of the Board wanted things that were either not possible or were questionable from an ethics standpoint. Mr. Smith stood up to them, which eventually led to his departure. Also, following a long-term manager can be difficult and some in the community wanted the same leadership they had before, Mr. Smith's style was different.

Mr. Kaigler would hire Mr. Smith as he is an excellent administrator. Employees who work for him have very positive things to say about him.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Caring,
- Outgoing,
- Sympathetic,
- Friendly,
- Decisive, and
- Outgoing.

Reference Notes

William "Lee" Smith

Strengths: Very personable, very organized, works well with others, developed the County's first strategic plan.

Weaknesses: Time management and perhaps his willingness to accommodate some elected officials.

Paula Krissler – Executive Director, Healthy Savannah, Savannah, GA 912-272-9494

Ms. Krissler met Mr. Smith shortly after he was hired in 2014 and she is honored to be one of his references. Healthy Savannah is entirely focused on policy and systems change which requires engagement with the City and County. They met on several occasions, and he attended their meetings. He did a great job. He was very supportive of their organization and accomplished amazing things for the County.

Decisions made by Mr. Smith are good. He was visible in the community. Their organization was known for handing out inexpensive plastic bicycle pins. Mr. Smith ensured that he always had one to show his engagement with the community. Healthy Savannah had over 200 public and private partners, and he engaged well with all of them.

Ms. Krissler was surprised the first time Mr. Smith called her personally, he is very responsive. He faced both sides of any aisle and kept them equally informed. He was also good about sharing information when she was trying to understand a situation. He has a good perspective.

The grants they received for the Trail plan involved SPLOST funds, and it languished for over a decade at the County waiting for the required plans to be developed before they could move forward. Mr. Smith was an integral part of the process to create the plans and secure the matching federal dollars. The project finally moved forward through his efforts. This project was somewhat controversial because it involved neighborhoods and communities, but he was levelheaded and listened to all sides while keeping the project moving forward.

Controversy existed but Ms. Krissler stayed out of it. She does feel that the Commission tended to be less progressive than Mr. Smith is. That said, she was still shocked when Mr. Smith was suspended and does not know the reason why. She has spoken with others in the community, and they were just as surprised as she was, they just did not see any negatives in him. He handled the stress of the situation well. She is not aware of anything in Mr. Smith's background that would be concerning to an employer.

Ms. Krissler would hire Mr. Smith, she felt he was a great manager for their community, and he was always very accessible.

Reference Notes William "Lee" Smith

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Strong,
- Smart,
- Engaging,
- Community minded, and
- Organized.

Strengths: Courage, charisma, dependability, integrity, respect for others, and flexibility.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Linda Cramer – Assistant County Manager, Chatham County, GA 912-433-7615

Ms. Cramer has known Mr. Smith since 2014. He led many different types of projects while working with elected officials on the Board as well as constitutional officers. Mr. Smith brought his experience from Wayne County to Chatham which was very helpful in resolving their issues. One of the first projects they worked together on was a strategic plan, which previous managers had avoided. He first met with constituents to learn of their vision for the community and then worked with staff and the elected officials to create a plan and move forward.

When hiring Mr. Smith made good decisions. He included department heads in the interview process and listened to their feedback but was responsible for the final hiring decision. His decisions in general were good. He was not afraid to implement change when it was needed if he could. Change is not always possible when working with constitutional officers. He really focused on the strategic plan and aligned the organization to develop processes around it. He was not afraid of confrontation; he handled it well while diffusing the situation.

Being out in the community was not Mr. Smith's main responsibility. He created a public information office to relay some information. During the pandemic he led meetings on zoom. He worked well with the public in Commission meetings. He kept everyone informed to the extent appropriate as some matters were confidential.

The County police force was combined with the City of Savannah. While being very costly, they also noticed that officers spent all their time in the city and not in the unincorporated areas of the County. They decided to reestablish their own police department and worked together on it. Mr. Smith hired the Police Chief, brought over some of the officers from Savannah, and contracted with the Sheriff until they were fully staffed.

When residents had a complaint, they previously had to call the office. Mr. Smith implemented a citizen records management system so anyone can go online and submit service requests. This system reduced call volume and improved their capacity to track and respond to issues.

Reference Notes

William “Lee” Smith

While Mr. Smith had good financial skills, that was not his focus. However, he worked for smaller counties where he wore many hats and so he understands the process. He met deadlines when it was possible, but at times they all ran into roadblocks. He could be firm, but he was not a yeller. During stressful situations he worked with his team to resolve the issue.

Some of their work was controversial, the police demerger is one example. They have a volunteer fire department that runs via subscriptions, but no one was paying them. The County is in the process of taking ownership and that has been controversial. Also, Mr. Smith was the final person for the grievance process on employees recommended for dismissal. Lastly, when they had to make a change in the courts, they received push back and he had to stand his ground. He handled these difficult situations well.

Mr. Smith left the County when a new Chairman came on board and wanted a change. They put Mr. Smith on investigation and promoted the Assistant Manager, who they knew, to the position. He had detractors in the community though this is common for someone in his position.

Ms. Cramer would hire Mr. Smith. He is a good manager though he needs a good admin to help him with scheduling. He is very talented, and he did well in Chatham County, but he may have even more success in a smaller municipality.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Talented,
- Approachable to the staff,
- Decisive,
- Experienced,
- Creative, and
- Networks to resolve issues.

Strengths: Experience, looks to connect and collaborate rather than recreating the wheel, strategic planning.

Weaknesses: A few times he got ahead of the Board, meaning he was going down a path and had not communicated to the Board members. Also, he looked for connections between agencies which was not a weakness, but it could slow progress. Lastly, he and his two assistant managers attended all the same meetings. It may have been more efficient to divide responsibilities between the three.

Will Peebles – Reporter, Savannah Morning News, Savannah, GA 706-699-4681

Mr. Peebles has lived in Chatham County since 2016. In 2022 Mr. Peebles took over the city beat, and his first assignment was to investigate Mr. Smith’s suspension. Mr. Peebles never got

Reference Notes William "Lee" Smith

an exact answer of what led to the suspension and the off the record comments seemed like it was primarily a disagreement with elected officials who had a different vision for the community. Mr. Smith is not a yes man and he is also realistic. He really liked his job and if he was given a blank slate to work, he would still be the manager in Chatham County. His tenures in Chatham and in his previous positions were far longer than average for the field.

Mr. Smith is not afraid to ask for help or guidance if he does not know an answer. He was very transparent and open with Mr. Peebles.

Mr. Smith ran Commission meetings and answered questions, without running over the elected officials. Nothing ever seemed to be off in Board meetings, he worked with difficult Commissions and was often the voice of reason.

The most common comment that Mr. Peebles heard after Mr. Smith was suspended was "What did Lee Smith do?" The community seemed very surprised by the suspension. Mr. Peebles personally feels that if Mr. Smith had done something worthy of a suspension that the Commission would have had no qualms in stating these actions publicly. It seemed like Mr. Smith told some Commissioners no a few more times than they would have liked him to. Mr. Smith knows government and he is smart.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Likes his work,
- Realistic,
- Transparent,
- Open, and
- Likeable.

Strengths: Capable of working with elected officials who are more politicians than civil servants, legal minded, very transparent, very open, likeable.

Weaknesses: In Mr. Smith's personnel file the one negative that Mr. Peebles remembers is communication, but he cannot remember the date and it seems like it was noted towards the beginning of Mr. Smith's tenure in Chatham County.

Borden Parker – County Attorney, Wayne County, NC 919-735-7275

Mr. Parker is a County employee but also works in a private law firm. He has known Mr. Smith since 2001. Mr. Smith did an extremely good job for Wayne County and was a very competent manager.

Reference Notes

William "Lee" Smith

Interactions between Mr. Parker and Mr. Smith are exceptionally good. Mr. Parker considers Mr. Smith a friend but acknowledges that they were not close enough to socialize outside of work.

Mr. Smith made good decisions when hiring personnel. His decisions in general were very good. He was an innovative manager who kept the organization running at a high-performance level. He was a leader who rallied the employees around the vision of the elected body.

Mr. Parker is an old country lawyer who prefers not to use email. They met in person three to four times a week. Mr. Smith was very good about keeping others informed. His work was completed on time.

The only complaints Mr. Parker heard about Mr. Smith were from individuals who wanted Mr. Smith to do something that he felt was not in the best interest of the County. He worked tremendously well with the public.

Mr. Smith managed the budgeting process very differently from the manager he replaced. He streamlined the process, added more accountability, and made it easier to understand. The Board trusted the budget was well done and overall, they did not feel the need to scrutinize it. Mr. Smith has excellent financial skills.

Mr. Smith and the Board decided it was time for Mr. Smith to resign. Some might consider the incident controversial, but Mr. Parker does not. Mr. Parker is not personally aware of anything in Mr. Smith's background that would embarrass an employer. Though Mr. Parker could not name anyone who would disagree with this reference, some in the community might say Mr. Smith was too controlling and wanted to do things his way rather than how the Commissioners wanted. Mr. Parker does not agree with this assessment.

Mr. Parker was on the hiring panel that selected Mr. Smith and would hire him again. He was a good manager for Wayne County.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Extremely competent,
- Very energetic,
- Intelligent,
- People person,
- Hard working, and
- Willing to think outside the box.

Strengths: Good with finances, good at managing staff.

Weaknesses: Works too hard.

Reference Notes William "Lee" Smith

Rita Hodges – Former Chairman of the School Board, Lenoir County, NC 252-560-9392

Ms. Hodges met Mr. Smith in the early 2000's. She interacted with him as the Chairman of the school Board in a neighboring County and served on a regional mental health board with him. She has the utmost respect for and highest opinion of Mr. Smith and his abilities.

Mr. Smith was very knowledgeable, always professional, and he managed tasks well. His job performance was excellent, and he earned the highest marks possible on reviews. He interacted very well with others.

As Ms. Hodges does not live in the County, she was not privy to every hiring choice. However, the employees hired by Mr. Smith that she interacted with were top notch. Mr. Smith's decisions in general were very good.

Mr. Smith was an innovator who thought outside the box. He assessed current operations before making any changes. He then improved processes until they functioned at the highest possible level. He was very good about keeping others informed, primarily through email but sometimes via the telephone.

The mental health board faced a very sensitive personnel issue where someone accused a provider of improprieties. Mr. Smith resolved the situation. He had good financial skills and was always quick to respond to phone calls and requests for information. Everyone that Ms. Hodges knows and works with would agree with the statements in this reference.

Ms. Hodges is not aware of anything controversial in Mr. Smith's private or personal background. She has not discussed his departure from the County with Mr. Smith, but her understanding is that the resignation was politically influenced and not due to job performance.

Without a doubt Ms. Hodges would hire Mr. Smith. Any municipality would be fortunate to have Mr. Smith as their manager. He is an asset.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Smith:

- Professional,
- Knowledgeable,
- Extremely competent
- Top notch individual,
- Good communicator, and
- Innovative.

Reference Notes
William "Lee" Smith

Strengths: Communication.

Weaknesses: His plate is so full that he is always busy.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
December 5, 2022

Smith GONE - Long-suspended county manager, Chatham reach severance agreement; commission appoints Michael Kaigler interim

Author/Byline: Will Peebles

The Chatham Commission on Friday approved the resignation of now-former County Manager **Lee Smith**, who has been on administrative leave since July 21, and formally began contract negotiations with Assistant County Manager Michael Kaigler, making him **Smith's** official successor. Kaigler had been serving as interim manager since **Smith's** suspension.

Chatham County Chairman Chester Ellis said after a lot of back and forth with **Smith's** lawyer, Brent Savage of Savannah-based Savage Turner Pinckney Savage & Sprouse, they were finally able to come to an agreement.

Smith, reached by text Friday, said the day was bittersweet. "Today is somewhat bittersweet for me. I tremendously enjoyed my time as part of Team Chatham and will always consider the entire team as family. I am glad the negotiations were finalized today so myself and Chatham County can move forward. I am pursuing opportunities in a number of places but consider Savannah home. I plan to maintain my home here and possibly return when retirement rolls around," a text from **Smith** read.

Ellis did not divulge any details about **Smith's** severance agreement and told reporters he would rather they "get it in writing" to avoid any inaccuracies, though he also said the contract "will be made public." Savannah Morning News acquired the agreement from **Smith's** lawyers Friday afternoon. In **Smith's** severance agreement, most questions surrounding his resignation are answered, but not all.

What we know:

Smith will officially resign as county manager, effective Jan. 2, 2023. **Smith** will remain on county payroll for a full year, receiving bi-weekly installments of \$9,931.20, for a total of \$258,211.20. The agreement outlines this as "nine months' salary in accordance with his employment contract and additional three months' salary as is stated in the Chatham County Enabling Act." Additionally, the county will continue to make employer pension contributions until Jan. 2. The county will stop paying **Smith's** annual car allowance of \$7,200 per year and will make no further contributions to **Smith's** retirement plan after Jan. 2. **Smith** may be eligible to draw benefits as allowed in accordance with the pension and health plan not to exceed 12 months from the agreement.

Still no reason given on why **Smith** dismissed. In a previous interview with SMN, **Smith** said he believed the reasons for his suspension to be "personal and political," but even after the severance agreement was approved Friday, Ellis refused to say why **Smith** was suspended, again deferring to the agreement itself. But the agreement didn't have any information on why Smith

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

was suspended. In the agreement is a stipulation: "**Smith** has not engaged in, nor is **Smith** aware of, any misconduct or wrongdoing on the party of the County of any kind or any regard." Additionally, the agreement stipulated that **Smith** will not sue the county "out of or in connection with the employment relationship, previously existing between them, or the termination of that relationship," unless the county violates the agreement in any way. "Let me just say, I wish **Mr. Smith** well. I guess some might say I might have been his cheerleader," Ellis said.

Smith said in a previous interview that the whole process -- uncertainty about why he was suspended, dealing with severance negotiations, watching his team carry on without him -- has been rough on him both mentally and emotionally. When people ask him why he was suspended, he doesn't have an answer. "I tell them: 'I don't know, I must have been in a coma. Because I don't know what I did,'" **Smith** said. "Nobody's telling me anything. So, all I can say is: it has to be personal and very political."

In the time since his suspension, **Smith** and his lawyer have been negotiating a severance agreement with the county. **Smith** and Savage received an initial severance agreement sent by the county on Aug. 25 and a second proposal on Sept. 6. The later agreement included a smaller payout. **Smith** told the Savannah Morning News last month that he sought three things from the severance agreement: vestment in the county's pension fund; health insurance in retirement; and the equivalent of nine months' pay.

Smith's contract called for the nine months' salary buyout should he be terminated without cause. **Smith's** salary at the time of his suspension was \$235,100, meaning he was contractually due \$176,325. According to Savage, **Smith** was pursuing a higher payout.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
November 6, 2022

Suspended Chatham manager speaks about his ouster

Author/Byline: Will Peebles

In July, Chatham County Manager **Lee Smith** was called into Chatham Commission Chairman Chester Ellis' office. At that meeting, he said Ellis was "very, very nice" and "compassionate," but ultimately handed **Smith** a letter, dated July 19, in which the chairman explained he was suspending **Smith** and placing him under investigation due to an unspecified "recent chain of events."

But even now, more than 100 days later, **Smith** has yet to be told what he did wrong or the findings of any supposed investigation. He still hasn't been removed from his position, not by resignation, termination or otherwise. "I do believe Chairman Ellis was trying to protect me from being fired by the [commission]," **Smith** said. "I believe that wholeheartedly, and others do also. It just was a way to block a [removal] vote, quite honestly." Chatham County code requires a two-thirds vote -- six of the nine members -- to remove a county manager from office, but they must adopt a preliminary resolution stating the reasons for removal. This preliminary resolution must also pass by more than two-thirds vote.

In the time since his suspension, **Smith** and his lawyer, Brent Savage of Savannah-based Savage Turner Pinckney Savage & Sprouse law firm, have been trying to negotiate a severance agreement with the county, thus far unsuccessfully. **Smith** and Savage received the initial severance agreement sent by the county on Thursday, Aug. 25. They received another severance agreement from the county on Sept. 6, this time with a smaller payout, and a request for an answer by Tuesday, Sept. 13, 51 days ago as of Nov. 3. **Smith** said there are three things he's asking for in the severance agreement: He wants to be vested by the county to have a pension in retirement; to get health insurance in retirement; and nine months' salary. All three were in the agreement, **Smith** said. **Smith** found the offer agreeable but county leaders reneged. "I signed it, we sent it back, and they then pulled the offer," **Smith** said. "My attorney and I, we looked at filing suit against the board for not fulfilling their obligations [in the severance agreement] and giving me something which I signed in good faith."

Now, **Smith** is still waiting, and he says the whole process -- uncertainty about why he was suspended, dealing with severance negotiations, watching his team carry on without him -- has been rough on him both mentally and emotionally. When people ask him why he was suspended, he doesn't have an answer. "I tell them: 'I don't know, I must have been in a coma. Because I don't know what I did,'" **Smith** said. "Nobody's telling me anything. So, all I can say is: it has to be personal and very political."

A change in attitude toward Smith

A few years ago, **Smith** came out as gay. "I went through a pretty bad divorce after I came here, and soon after that, I came out as gay. And I don't wear pride flags or anything like that. I'm just

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

who I am," **Smith** said. "And I will say that I felt a difference with board members after that happened. It is what it is. You can like me; you can dislike me. I am who I am."

Smith says after coming out he felt that he was viewed differently by some members of Chatham Commission, though he specifically said Ellis treated him no differently after. "I would say with the chairman. No. But with some of the other board members? Yes. I do," **Smith** said. "I can be criticized for this, whatever happens, happens. But I do believe that just the way I'm treated has changed. I just feel disrespected."

Commission complaints

While he claims to not know the exact reason some commissioners want him removed as manager, he has suspicions. **Smith** says through conversations with commission members he deduced that their complaints stemmed from two things: Their inability to review **Smith's** performance formally, and that he was not communicating "the way they thought I should communicate." But since the county has yet to provide him with reasoning for his suspension, he's not sure. All he knows is that someone -- or more -- wants him gone.

In the time since he was put on leave he's been applying for jobs elsewhere. But due to media coverage of his suspension and supposed investigation, he says employers are hesitant to give him a callback. "I've been applying for jobs. I can't even get a return call on jobs because this is still outstanding," **Smith** said. "You look on Google, and you're gonna see this first: That I've been suspended and under investigation." "This literally has hurt me so badly. You can't imagine. And I'm going to use the words 'absolutely terrified' about my future. I'm 58 years old," **Smith** said. "Maybe some decade I can retire, we'll see. But right now, I plan to work until I'm way, way gray."

Despite missing his friends and coworkers in "Team Chatham," **Smith** is fine with leaving, he said, provided the county meets his requests in the severance agreement. "I'm just looking at what I'm owed. What I deserve for the job I've done in eight and a half years," **Smith** said. "I don't have a single thing in my file. I've never been reprimanded, in writing, or in public, or I mean, nothing."

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
June 24, 2022

Chatham wants millage rate increase

Author/Byline: Katie Nussbaum

The Chatham Commission is scheduled to adopt a new budget -- and the property tax millage rate that goes with it -- at this Friday's meeting, the final regularly scheduled session this fiscal year. Yet, there remains unresolved details.

County Manager **Lee Smith** has called for a fiscal year 2023 budget of \$859 million that would require the commission maintain the 2022 millage rate, which is considered a tax increase as the county's tax digest has increased over the last year.

Commission Chairman Chester Ellis, meanwhile, is lobbying for adoption of the rollback rate, which is the millage that will generate the same amount of revenue in 2023 as was produced in 2022. Doing so would lower the general fund millage by approximately 1 mill or \$1 for every \$1,000 of a property's assessed value and would also lower taxes specific to unincorporated Chatham residents and those who pay for the Chatham Area Transit Authority.

Smith and the county staff declined to submit a budget proposal that adjusts to the rollback rate. The difference in general fund revenue between the existing and rollbacked millage rate is approximately \$22 million. Here are several areas where those extra dollars would go. All percentages are based on the difference between the FY22 adopted amount and the FY23 proposed amount.

District Attorney and Public Defender offices

These two pillars of Chatham's criminal justice system will see increased budget dollars. The District Attorney's office is set to receive an additional \$330,000 in funds, although that amount is nearly \$500,000 below what was requested by District Attorney Shalena Cook-Jones. The Public Defender's office will see a bigger bump: more than \$500,000, or a 15% increase.

Museums and community centers

Chatham County will make significant increased investments in county-operated museums, such as the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum and the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, and in its four community centers at Lake Mayer, Frank Murray, Tom Triplett, and the Chatham Co. Aquatic Center. The museums will get an increase of 88.9% to \$224,720 and the community center budget will increase 42.9% to \$227,131. These facilities have seen decreased use - and lower budget allowances - in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Risk reduction and intervention programs

The Front Porch, a community-based juvenile crime risk reduction program, will get a 16.9% increase to \$268,039. Similarly, Youth Intercept, another intervention program, will get a 16.8% increase to \$324,206.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Emergency management agency

The county's emergency management budget will increase by 13.5% to \$1,742,952. Much of those dollars are earmarked for increased employee compensation. The budgets for printing and binding, travel, and vehicles also were expanded.

Public information office

The public information budget will increase 52% to \$841,352, with much of that dedicated to employee compensation and related benefits.

County manager's office

The county manager's budget will increase slightly by 3.7% to \$1,311,999.

Solid waste fee hike coming

According to the budget, a recent financial analysis of the dry trash fee turned up a deficit of more than \$640,000 in FY23. The recent audit of the solid waste users determined that approximately 3,300 residences were not paying the current \$85 fee. County Manager **Lee Smith** is recommending the fee increase to \$96 annually. Additionally, Smith recommends that the county utilize a consultant to review the solid waste program for efficiencies and processes later in the year. Unincorporated residents will also pay a fee for fire service this year for the first time.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
September 1, 2021

County manager: Beleaguered 911 center for you in an emergency

This is an op-ed by Chatham County Manager **Lee Smith**.

Chatham County Communications, better known as 911, is a major service provided to our community. The department is responsible for routing emergency calls from citizens, visitors and motorists in an urgent situation or reporting an event witnessed. These calls consist of medical assistance needed, vehicular incidents, dangerous situations and the list goes on.

These calls require expeditious but concise data entry such as name, location, nature of the call, assessment of the situation and what emergency response services may be needed as directed by professional and dedicated 911 telecommunicators.

As noted in a news story published in this newspaper in early August, the 911 center has several vacant positions. However, the center consoles are always fully staffed, as 911 management has rearranged shifts to ensure full coverage as has been done for more than two years.

The county is recommending increasing salaries for telecommunicators in an attempt to better retain and attract qualified candidates. As additional positions are filled, 911 management is working to reduce 12 hour work shifts to reduce personnel fatigue.

The communication's center answers calls as quickly as possible; however, please keep in mind there are times the 911 center experiences a higher than normal level of calls due to multiple emergency events. These peak times will cause delays in answering calls and in some cases the incoming call will "roll" to an answering system. Your call has not been lost. The 911 system will automatically call the incoming number back with a telecommunicator prepared to take your information.

The 911 center receives over 10,500 calls per week with approximately 40% of those calls being administrative non-emergency calls. Citizens can help themselves and all other citizens by not calling 911 for non-emergency calls. These calls are holding telecommunicators for long periods of time creating long wait times for real emergencies.

Citizens can help to reduce the center's call volume by not calling 911 with non-emergency calls. Problems such as water meters, potholes, etc. are not emergencies. If you want to contact Chatham County with non-emergent items, please go to MyChatham.org on your mobile device's app or play store, download the app and register to report these types of incidents.

If you need information regarding a city or town service please contact them directly. We will begin a campaign to advertise these numbers in the next 30 days. The county will be working with all municipalities to begin a new process of non-emergent service calls within the next few months to direct you to the appropriate entity.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

COVID-19 has produced a myriad of problems affecting 911. Hospitals are experiencing a heavier than normal patient load in emergency rooms. This in turn is increasing the wait time of ambulances waiting to admit patients which in turn affects 911. Additionally, people experiencing mild symptoms or possible contact with COVID-19 should contact a medical provider, not 911.

The 911 service is a crucial part of emergency response for over 350,000 people every day, including regular citizens, visitors and commuting workers coming from other areas. The County estimates receiving over 600,000 calls in 2021.

We need your help to keep Chatham County safe and allow 911 to do its job to dispatch emergency services such as fire, rescue and law enforcement to save lives.

Your Turn

Lee Smith

Guest columnist

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution
August 6, 2021

You might experience delays when calling the Chatham County 911 call center. Here's why
Author/Byline: Katie Nussbaum

Savannah and Chatham County residents dialing 911 to report an emergency are experiencing delays in the calls being answered as the center faces a shortage of operators. The lags are marked by repeated rings. For those who abandon the calls, the system has a mechanism to seize those calls and give a return call with automated prompts, which will place the caller back in the queue for an operator. The 911 call center currently has about 20 vacancies, according to Chatham County Manager **Lee Smith**. "It's a major problem, but we're not at a crisis yet," **Smith** said.

The shortage creates a domino-like effect. When an emergency call comes in, operators stay on the line until first responders are on site. They cannot work other calls in the meantime. "So that means if you've got 12 or 15 people on shift that takes a person totally out of the loop. So quite frankly, when we peak out like that, there's not a lot you can do. You try to expedite calls, but expediting calls can be dangerous," he said. Several calls made to 911 recently by former Savannah City Council member Julian Miller went unanswered. Miller was calling to report a person who appeared to be having a medical episode along Abercorn Street. "He was leaning over like he was going to fall into traffic and cars were actually changing lanes to get around him. It was a dangerous situation," he said. The first two calls Miller made went unanswered for a combined 28 rings. Prior to getting elected to city council Miller served as the spokesperson for the Savannah Police Department, so he called an officer he knew to report the situation. In the meantime he received a callback from the automated system and after dialing one for an emergency, the phone rang another 12 times. Miller said the situation was frustrating. "It's kind of a hopeless feeling when you're waiting on an ambulance," Miller said.

Chatham County took over the 911 center in 2018. The operation serves Savannah and all Chatham County municipalities except for Tybee Island, which has its own 911 system. Fully staffed, the county's call center has about 100 operators and often competes with private industries and other employers like the Georgia Ports Authority for employees. "Sometimes with private industry, we're not able to compete at the same level. So it is very tough for local governments," **Smith** said.

To offset the shortage, operators are working longer shifts, but **Smith** said overtime can be dangerous for a stressful job. His office along with the 911 team and human resources are currently looking at ways to scale back the current 12-hour shifts by anywhere from two to four hours. "Twelve hours is too stressful and I think that is part of the issue; they're very stressed, that is a, a very difficult job. It's a thankless job," he said. "Those folks take a beating with folks not just trying to hear a call, but they're trying to de-escalate situations. So it's not just with medical protocols, they become mental health counselors. We deal with a couple thousand suicide attempts a year, which they de-escalate many times. That is very stressful." Non-emergency calls. Many local residents view 911 as the main contact number for local

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government. Non-emergency calls accounted for 90,048 911 calls between Jan. 1 and Aug. 3, or about 40% of the 310,348 calls. Many of those calls are in regards to water, sewer or other municipal services, **Smith** said. "I know those calls may be important to you, and that you've got a concern about your water, or about a cat running through the yard. Not that that's not important, but to 911 it is not. 911 is for the safety of individuals and property, period," **Smith** said. The county is working to partner more with neighboring municipalities to put together protocols so that the call center will no longer be responsible for those non-emergency calls. If callers make their way through the automated prompts, it reverts the call back to 911. "I have made a commitment that that loop will close; it has to close. It's about lives, it's about property, a fire or it could be a wreck, those are more important," **Smith** said. "Eventually we're going to deny those kinds of calls with call takers and not take information." **Smith** said the change will happen by the end of this year.

The City of Savannah currently operates Savannah 311 for non-emergency calls related to property or city services and other municipalities might have to look at doing something similar. The county has also explored the possibility of a 24-hour call service where operators would take notes and information and forward it to the correct government entity or organization. "So we're trying to find a better effective way. It's going to cost, but when I look at putting people's lives in jeopardy, that cost is worth the investment," **Smith** said.

Recruitment. In an effort to fill the operator vacancies, the county has stepped up it's recruitment through recruitment videos and a larger social media presence. Applicants remain few in number but the county has seen an uptick in qualified candidates. New hires undergo a minimum nine-month training program, which also includes on-the-job instruction.

Smith said he considers the operators the first line of defense. "I'm not saying that anyone else is not as important, but if that first portal is not as effective and efficient as it should be, everything else fails," he said. "And that would be EMS, fire, law enforcement, marine patrol, because they have to have good data when they walk in to be able to service their calls." A communications officer trainee's pay starts at \$13.52 per hour and at a minimum applicants must have a high school diploma or GED and at least three months of work experience involving customer service, to include some experience dispatching or using a multi-line phone system. Applicants must also pass CritiCall testing, which assesses the skills and aptitudes needed to be a 911 call handler and dispatcher. Completion of various training also comes with pay increases.

Both full-time and part-time positions are available, **Smith** said. Interested applicants can apply online through Chathamcounty.org or even call the county manager's office at 912-652-7869. "I will make sure they get to talk to someone who can talk about the job, what it entails, about county benefits, about salaries. We're trying to take a proactive stance to get people to apply and to come in because they're also good jobs," **Smith** said. "I know they're challenging, but it's not all bad. They've got a great family out there. They're very close, they're very supportive of each other. You have to be in those stressful times. You know, sometimes somebody needs a hug."

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
June 29, 2020

'Cautious' Chatham budget approved \ - Rate rollback for unincorporated areas adopted
Author/Byline: Nick Robertson

Amid an uncertain economic forecast, Chatham commissioners unanimously approved an austere budget for fiscal year 2021 at their regular biweekly meeting Friday. Because of the ongoing economic turbulence caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Chatham's new budget calls for cost-cutting measures - including a hiring freeze and a pause in most new capital-improvement expenditures - in what County Manager **Lee Smith** characterized as a "cautious approach for the next fiscal year." The county's FY 2021 spans from July 1, 2020, to June 30.

Totaling just over \$205 million, Chatham's FY 2021 General Fund Management and Operations budget was passed without increasing the previous year's millage rate of 11.543, although for this budget item county officials declined to apply the rollback rate applicable under Georgia state law as an option for local governments to adjust property taxes to account for inflation. Following requests from several commissioners, the county's \$40.5 million FY 2021 Special Service District (SSD) budget - applicable only to residents of the county's unincorporated areas to fund the Chatham County Police Department, public works and other services typically provided by municipalities - did include a millage-rate rollback from 4.911 to 4.801.

"Ideally, I would love to have been here representing and adopting the rollback rate for [the General Fund Management and Operations budget], and a further reduction in the Special Service District," said Commission Chairman Al Scott, citing projected sales-tax losses as one of several economic plights likely facing Chatham County in the upcoming months. "Given the situation, I was very concerned that if we went down that road, we would jeopardize violating our own policy that we adopted on maintaining a 30% reserve," Scott said, adding that this reserve is intended to avoid entering "a deficit-spending mode that we cannot afford to be in as a county government" if Chatham were to be struck by another economically devastating disaster, such as a hurricane.

While lauding the rollback-rate adoption in the SSD budget, Commissioner Pat Farrell questioned if the county's current taxation structure is fair in regard to the amount of SSD revenue being transferred to the General Fund, an amount he pegged at "roughly \$3.2 million." Farrell said that this arrangement was established decades ago, before the county's unincorporated areas experienced considerable urbanization, and that Chatham is one of only six counties in Georgia that has a separate SSD budget. "I have some qualms about using indirect costs under this scenario," Farrell said, urging the commissioners to reexamine the county's budget structuring during the months ahead. "We may need to ask ourselves if this is indeed a proper way to tax and provide services."

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Commissioner Dean Kicklighter agreed with Farrell while voicing opposition to "double-taxing the residents in the unincorporated area" with the SSD budget. "This is three million paid by the unincorporated area residents, and it would be no different than asking the city of Savannah to contribute \$5 or \$6 million towards the overall budget for the entire county," Kicklighter said.

In response to these concerns, Assistant County Manager Linda Kramer said that staff would be open to reevaluating Chatham's taxation structure in the future with direction from the commissioners. "As we roll into our mid-year budget review, this would be a good time to look at the policy itself and just get more feedback from you all," Kramer said.

Chatham's FY 2021 budget was passed with a stipulation that it be reviewed later this year to possibly amend spending plans depending on economic developments of the upcoming months. "We'll revisit the budget sometime in November or December, when we have a better and fuller understanding and can do some projection on where we think sales tax will land in these, what I call, abnormal conditions," Scott said. "Hopefully we'll be, at that time, within six months of some sort of vaccine and really getting back to the new normal."

Friday's Chatham County Commission meeting was the first held since its chambers within downtown Savannah's Old Courthouse had been refurbished to comply with COVID-19 guidelines, with the dais expanded for increased physical distancing and plexiglass dividers installed between each commissioner's desk. Scott said he expects this coronavirus-prevention arrangement to be maintained into 2021.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
June 24, 2019

Stranded veteran prompts new 911 protocols for Chatham County

Author/Byline: Tandra Smith

The Chatham County Police and Sheriff's Department now has new protocols put into place regarding 911 calls after a man was stranded for hours on Interstate 95. As of noon Monday, all calls made to the Chatham County 911 Communications Center where an incident involving a locked car poses a major safety concern will have an officer dispatched to them. This includes, but is not limited to, being stranded on a major thoroughfare or having a child or animal locked in the car.

The changes come after a woman called the center Saturday about a man being stranded on the interstate. The Navy veteran, only identified by the name of Paul on a Facebook post by Lisa Quanstrum, was sitting on the side of the road after locking his cell phone, contacts and other personal items in his car.

According to Quanstrum's post, Paul had been on the side of the road for close to two hours before she stopped to help him. Quanstrum called 911 and was informed that nobody would be able to come out and help the stranded man because it would be a liability to unlock car doors for individuals, according to her Facebook post.

Lee Smith, county manager, confirmed that they did receive calls about the stranded man in a press conference Monday. **Smith** said that an agency was not dispatched because the man was located outside of their jurisdiction, Port Wentworth's, to be exact.

Though **Smith** wishes that more information, particularly medical, was communicated more clearly, he said that he really faults no one in this situation. **Smith** said the lack of a response was a combination of where they were and the protocols not being what they should have been.

Smith also said that the changing of the protocols would have occurred whether or not the Quanstrum's Facebook post had gone viral or not. "If we get one call on something, we have it investigated," **Smith** said. "We don't work for ourselves here; we work for our citizens and for 15 million visitors and people that pass through."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
May 25, 2019

No tax hike in county draft budget
Author/Byline: DeAnn Komanecky

No tax rate increases are recommended in the fiscal year 2019-2020 Chatham County budget presented to commissioners for a first look at their regular meeting on Friday.

County Manager **Lee Smith** said the budget was planned using the current millage rate of 11.543 mills in the general fund and 4.99 mills in the special service district, which covers services the county provides in the unincorporated areas including police, public works, engineering, and building safety. The budget for the general fund is listed at \$203 million and \$36 million for the SSD. Commissioners will be meeting one on one with **Smith** and county staff to review the budget before a public hearing is held on June 14. The budget will be adopted on June 28.

The general fund budget proposal includes an almost 7 percent increase. The SSD budget would increase by almost 5 percent. Some highlights in the recommended budget include 21 new full-time and two new part-time positions along with 20 reclassifications and four salary adjustments.

Smith said five of the positions are to create a new department, juvenile indigent defense. The new department will be supervised by the county's indigent defense department head and will use county staff and contract attorneys.

The change is being made due to the high costs associated with indigent defense in Juvenile Court, **Smith** said. Probate Court will have two part-time positions changed to full-time, if the budget as written is approved. The county also plans to set aside \$1 million to use for debt service on the new Trial Court facility.

The new courthouse is estimated to cost \$80 million. The court is in the design phase which should be complete in early 2020. Phase 1, to demolish the old county jail to make way for the building is complete. The site is located at Montgomery Street next to the existing courthouse. The building will provide eight courtrooms for the Superior Court, four for the State Court, a jury selection room and administrative space for judges and staff.

Special Local Option Sales Tax funds from the upcoming SPLOST VII include \$50 million for the new courthouse. Voters will decide whether to approve the one cent sales tax in November. During the upcoming year, county staff will work on developing requests for proposals for the project and finance options. The county also plans on securing a canal clearing contract, estimated at \$250,000 to help Public Works in maintaining the drainage system. A \$250,000 mowing contract for roadways is also planned.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
January 30, 2019

Freight depot demolition OK'd

Author/Byline: Eric Curl

Despite pleas from about a dozen opponents, the Metropolitan Planning Commission recommended approval of a plan to demolish a 90-year-old freight terminal and construct a seven-story apartment complex on the site just outside of downtown Savannah's protected Historic District. Tuesday's vote, which was recommended by MPC staff, came after County Manager **Lee Smith**, speaking as a commissioner, threatened to contact the county attorney in response to some commissioners questioning aspects of the plan he said were outside their authority, including the planned demolition itself and whether potential improvements to the adjacent Savannah-Ogeechee canal were approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "We have to stick to the purview of this board," **Smith** said.

The property owner, WEDP, will next have to present the general development plan to develop 255 market-rate apartments at the site at 703 Louisville Road, along with an accompanying rezoning, to the Savannah City Council for consideration.

The vote on Tuesday came after a consultant's report commissioned by WEDP found that the terminal was not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to significant architectural alterations during the past 50 years. The owner's representatives also said that - regardless of whether tax credits would be available - preserving the structure would not be economically feasible due to the building's dilapidated condition and significant design and engineering challenges that would be associated with erecting the project around the depot building located on a brownfield site. "It would cost a lot of money, and it would be a really tall order to get this building back to where it is completely preserved," said WEDP Attorney John Northup III. But local architect Kevin Rose said the building could be saved using a little imagination and vigor, and he questioned the study's findings. "This goes back to a report by a developer that is suiting the developer to reach their own goals," Rose said.

Historic Savannah Foundation President and CEO Daniel Carey noted that MPC staff's recommendation for approval also included six conditions, including the incorporation of some aspects of the building into the project, confirmation on how a 20-percent green-space requirement would be met, and clarification on the type of green infrastructure, low-impact stormwater management techniques that would be used. "There are so many reservations and concerns, it was curious how we ended up with a recommendation for this," Carey said.

Northup said the owners could demolish the building even if it was eligible for the national designation, and they agreed to meet federal preservation standards to mitigate the loss by compiling a photographic archive of the structure. The MPC's vote comes after the Savannah City Council's vote on Nov. 20 to approve WEDP's petition to acquire a 1-acre narrow strip of city-owned land along the Savannah-Ogeechee Canal, which feeds into the Springfield, to

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

support the project. In addition to paying the city \$120,000 for the property, WEDP is to invest a minimum of \$1.5 million to build a retaining wall along the canal, according to the agreement.

City officials said the canal and Canal District will benefit from construction of the new retaining wall, which would be dedicated back to the city upon completion. City Manager Rob Hernandez, a member of the commission, was not present at Tuesday's meeting.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
September 21, 2018

Chatham County receives national award for branding of Chatham County Police Department

Author/Byline: Staff Member

On Sept. 6, the Chatham County Public Information Office accepted the City, County, Communications and Marketing Association Silver Circle award at the Savvy Awards in Milwaukee, WI. Chatham County was a finalist in the new logo, artwork and branding campaign category for the branding of the Chatham County Police Department, said spokeswoman Catherine Glasby. "I am so proud of my Public Information Team, especially Abby Murphy who created all the logos and artwork," she said. "While the Silver Circle award is a 2nd place award, it shows the depth of talent that we have on this team. The winner of the Savvy Award was Clark County Water Reclamation, NV (Las Vegas). Clark County worked with a marketing company and we did everything in house."

Chatham County competed against a number of communities in this category, according to Glasby.

At Friday's county commission meeting, County Manager **Lee Smith** commended team members for their hard work. "In 2018, the County has received national awards from organizations like the Association County Commissioners of Georgia , National Association of Counties , Government Social Media Organization, Facebook and now 3CMA," he said. "It shows the dedication of Team Chatham to deliver high quality services to our citizens. I am very proud of all the members of Team Chatham for their accomplishments."

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
June 8, 2018

Chatham doubles dry trash fee
Author/Byline: Eric Curl

Chatham County is planning on maintaining the existing property tax rate, but residents of the unincorporated county will have to pay double to have their yard waste and bulk items picked up. After his predecessor, Russ Abolt, made failed attempts to implement a similar increase for years, County Manager **Lee Smith**, who took the job in 2014, managed to convince the majority of the Chatham County Commission to raise the annual fee charged for dry-trash collection from \$43 to \$85. On Friday, County Chairman Al Scott joined commissioners James Holmes, Tabitha Odell, Jay Jones and Chester Ellis in approving the increase that **Smith** and Finance Director Amy Davis said was needed to cover most of the costs of the \$2.4 million operation, which includes weekly curbside yard waste collection and monthly bulk item pickup.

A solid waste management fee to use the landfill was also increased by state legislators from \$1 to \$2.50 per ton. Some of the \$1.6 million in additional revenue generated by the landfill fee will be used to cover annual depreciation costs of about \$255,983 needed to replace about \$4 million worth of aging equipment and vehicles, under the approved plan. "Public works was cut so deeply back in 2007 and 2008 that they never caught up," **Smith** said.

Commissioners Patrick Farrell, Dean Kicklighter and Helen Stone voted against the changes after raising concerns about the need for the increase and the impact on residents. Farrell said the county had increased property taxes in previous years and police costs are down after Chatham split from the city in February to form a stand alone department. "I don't see the case for raising it," he said. "I see the case that we reduce it from \$43 to zero personally." The dry trash fee had been increased to \$173 last year to recover the costs of removing debris from Tropical Storm Hermine and Hurricane Matthew the previous fall, but the \$130 increase was to be a temporary measure to restore the reserve funds used for the cleanup.

Kicklighter had suggested using reserve funds to cover the costs of the dry-trash service and equipment since the county now had enough to cover more than three-months of operations, while two months is what is generally recommended. "I think we need to try not putting the fee on the citizens," he said. "Use some of the reserves, buy the capital improvements and see how it shakes out next year." But Ellis and Holmes both said that the three-month reserve amount, which was agreed to as a goal of the commission's, was needed to prepare for more storms. "We need to look at our immediate past," Ellis said. "If we have one, two or more hurricanes like we had with Matthew and Irma, we are going to wind up spending \$30 million up front." The fee increase was approved as part of a revised revenue ordinance for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, which begins in July. The proposed budget maintains the existing property tax rate for the county and Special Service District, which pays for services provided outside Chatham's municipalities. The commission is expected to adopt the budget on June 22.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
February 10, 2018

**CHATHAM TO REPAY CITY FOR PAST POLICE WORK - \$2.1M TRANSFER
MARKS LATEST STEP AWAY FROM JOINT DEPARTMENT**

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

The Chatham County Commission on Friday authorized staff to cut a \$2.1 million check to the city of Savannah for police services provided in the past.

The back payment, which was approved by both entities in advance of the Feb. 1 split of the Savannah-Chatham police department, is part of an ongoing reconciliation effort between the two governments, County Manager **Lee Smith** said. Briefly addressing the payment after the commission's meeting Friday, Smith said he expects any remaining vehicles and equipment from the joint department to be returned to their respective owners in the next couple of weeks. In addition, he said, county staff have nearly finished installing the necessary infrastructure at the county-owned precinct on Whitemarsh Island and he reported that Chatham officers will begin occupying the Islands Precinct in the next week or two.

It's now been a little more than a week since the two governments resumed sole responsibility for policing their own jurisdictions, and the county manager said things are picking up in unincorporated Chatham's reformed police department. The county manager told the commission that 15 sworn officers are preparing to join the Chatham County Police Department's ranks, with an additional 70 or 80 recruits waiting in the queue. "It's moving," he said Friday.

Meanwhile, as the county works to put the people and equipment in place to run the standalone department, other adjustments are being made to the county's code of ordinances to reflect the Chatham County Police Department's return. The commission held a second and final reading Friday of two ordinance amendments that replace references to the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department in the revenue ordinance and other code sections with "Chatham County Police Department." A similar revision to the Chatham County Speed Zone ordinance will be up for second reading at the commission's next meeting.

In other business Friday:

- **Smith** reported that the county is hoping to raise funds from the private sector to purchase a \$250,000 digital scoreboard for Memorial Stadium. Smith added that the county is continuing its master plan for recreation in the community, an effort that is expected to include cooperation from local municipalities and the Savannah-Chatham school board. Commission Chairman Al Scott said the findings in the recreation master plan will be a driver in sales tax spending moving forward.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
December 30, 2017

**CHATHAM DOWNPLAYS POTENTIAL LANDFILL RELEASES - ARSENIC,
COBALT FOUND AT CHEVIS ROAD, SHARON PARK**

Author/Byline: Mary Landers

Routine monitoring of two Chatham County landfills has raised a concern about heavy metals leaking into groundwater at Chevis Road and Sharon Park. Chatham County advertised its findings as public notices in the Savannah Morning News in early November. "Arsenic has been detected in groundwater at levels significantly above background concentrations and above Georgia EPD-approved groundwater protection standards," the notice for Chevis Road Landfill reads. "Metals have been detected in groundwater at levels statistically significant above background concentrations and above Georgia EPD-approved groundwater protection standards," the notice for Sharon Park Road Landfill reads. The metals detected at Sharon Park were arsenic and cobalt, with readings of up to five times the limit for arsenic there.

Chatham County Manager **Lee Smith** said the county doesn't see a public health concern because elevated levels of either metals were detected in only two of a dozen monitoring wells at Chevis and two of 14 such wells at Sharon Park. The county's environmental consultant at both sites since 2008, Advanced Environmental Management, wrote in its report for Chevis Road Landfill that "Arsenic appears to be naturally occurring in the soils at this facility" and that "turbidity is at least partially influencing arsenic detections." AEM is "ascertaining where to put additional wells" to determine where the contamination is coming from at both sites. "If it is the landfill then mitigation will be required," **Smith** said.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Jeff Cown said last month his agency had not yet confirmed the release, despite the fact that the sampling occurred in March. EPD confirmation is what triggers the requirement for the public notice. Like **Smith** and AEM, he noted there are high levels of naturally occurring arsenic in Chatham County. "We want to inform the public. We don't want to scare the public," said Cown, chief of the land protection branch for the Georgia EPD.

The public notification requirement came about with a 2016 law requiring landfills to notify local authorities of the release of contaminants "dangerous to human health." The legislation was prompted by the releases at Broadhurst Landfill in Jesup where large quantities of coal ash were shipped in and local residents didn't know about the releases from the landfill until well after the fact. The law requires municipal solid waste landfills to notify local governing authorities of the city and county where the landfill is located if there is a release of a contaminant that is likely to pose a danger to human health. It doesn't specify which contaminants fall into that category. The law also requires notice in a local newspaper within 14 days of "confirmation of the release by EPD."

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William Lee Smith
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Smith said that while the lack of that EPD confirmation meant the county was not obligated to publish the notice he wanted to do so to be proactive. "We are getting ahead of the curve so we don't wait six to nine months for this to be exacerbated," he said. **Smith** said the new law was meant to target coal ash but has unintended consequences for other landfills. He expects to see changes to the law in the upcoming legislative session.

But Altamaha Riverkeeper Jen Hilburn called for continued notification. "This is another of many examples of leaks of toxic heavy metals from improperly stored contaminants. With coal ash being moved around for proper storage we must move towards placing all contaminants, coal ash and more, in lined and capped facilities away from our waterways," said Altamaha Riverkeeper Jen Hilburn. "A little arsenic here, a little thallium there, a little toxaphene here a little benzene there....when contaminants are regularly leaking at statistically significant levels, we all suffer as these pile up in our rivers, in our drinking water supply. Death by a thousand cuts is still death."

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
November 29, 2017

**CITY SEEKING \$6 MILLION POLICE REIMBURSEMENT FROM COUNTY -
ALDERMAN ANTICIPATES MATTER WILL END UP IN COURT**

Author/Byline: Eric Curl

The city of Savannah is still attempting to recover more than \$6 million from Chatham County for Savannah-Chatham police costs, as the two governments prepare to end the merger and create their own police departments, according to officials. But the matter will not likely be resolved before the city adopts its 2018 budget, said Savannah Alderman Julian Miller. "That will probably drag on for a couple years," Miller said. "I anticipate it will end up in court."

However, County Commission Chairman Al Scott said he is not sure there is a dispute in a texted response to an interview request Tuesday and he suggested the reporter talk to County Manager **Lee Smith** about the issue. An attempt to arrange an interview with **Smith** on Tuesday through a county spokesperson was unsuccessful.

The city expects to be reimbursed \$3.6 million by Chatham County for police costs next year, according to the preliminary 2018 budget released last week. But that amount is to fund a Counter Narcotics Team position and for merged police services to continue through January, according to city spokesperson Michelle Gavin. The city is still owed about \$2.3 million for 2016 police costs and an additional \$4 million above the 2017 budgeted amount, Gavin said. The reimbursement amounts are based on the findings of an operations study by Berkshire Advisors that was funded by both governments to provide a fair funding formula. But Chatham officials rejected the consultant's findings, which they said were flawed, and refused to adopt the study's recommendations. In response, the City Council voted in July to end the police merger on Feb. 1.

Meanwhile, City Manager Rob Hernandez is proposing more than \$12.7 million in spending reductions in the city's 2018 budget, unless alternative revenue sources such as a proposed fire fee or tax rate increase are adopted to cover projected shortfalls. But the disputed police reimbursements would not fix the revenue deficits city staffers are projecting for 2018 and beyond, even if the city were able to reach an agreement before the end of the year, Miller said. "You have to be careful of taking a one-time revenue and putting it in a budget," he said. "A budget revenue needs to be recurring." Police-related expenses in the proposed 2018 budget drop by about \$9.2 million to about \$56.8 million next year as a result of the department split, but that cost does not include the consultant's recommendations that the City Council has said it wants to implement in order to improve emergency response times. Those recommendations include 12 more positions for a total of 620 police employees, in addition to more vehicles, at an additional cost of almost \$1.4 million, according to an October staff report. Police Chief Joseph Lumpkin has requested an even larger department comprised of 650 employees, with 555 sworn officers, which the city estimated would increase costs by about \$3.8 million.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The city's preliminary budget assumes Savannah will continue to operate the regional 911 center at a deficit with no additional funding support from either Chatham or participating municipalities, requiring an almost \$2.3 million subsidy from the general fund - an increase of \$657,946 over 2017, according to Hernandez's budget report. The county has expressed its intent to assume operations in July next year and to cover any funding deficits retroactive to Jan. 1, 2018, but the arrangement is tied to the settlement of the disputed issues regarding unincorporated area law enforcement services, Hernandez said.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
October 28, 2017

JAIL GETS LAST-MINUTE HEALTH CONTRACT \ SHERIFF, COMMISSION CHAIRMAN HAMMER OUT DEAL FEW HOURS BEFORE ITS EXPIRATION

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

With just hours left to go before it was set to vacate the facility, Atlanta-based inmate health services provider CorrectHealth was awarded a contract Friday to continue providing health care at the Chatham County jail. On Friday afternoon, Sheriff John Wilcher reported that he was able to work with Chatham County Commission Chairman Al Scott to draw up the extended contract with the company, which will continue through the June 30, 2018, end of the current fiscal year. Wilcher said he hand delivered the document to the chairman just before 4 p.m.

The sheriff said now that the contract is in place, county staff will be posting a request for proposals for inmate health services and take bids for Fiscal Year 2019, which starts July 1, 2018. "It's just a continuation of the contract, it's the same rate as the old contract," the chairman confirmed Friday. He added the document will also have to be approved by the rest of the commission. Assuming the contract is confirmed by the other commissioners, Friday's agreement with CorrectHealth brings to an end a dramatic series of negotiations over inmate health care at the Chatham County jail.

In a summary of the talks provided to the commission last week, County Manager **Lee Smith** said Chatham staffers kicked off the renegotiation efforts with CorrectHealth early this year, and that they continued even after the county commission voted to enter into a new contract with the company on Oct.6. But by the following week, **Smith** said, he made an executive decision not to renew the company's contract based on a "lack of response, budget and impending deadlines, but more importantly the legal requirements to ensure health care at the detention center."

Smith wrote that he immediately contacted representatives of Vienna, Va.-based Centurion Inc., to see if they could take up the contract on an emergency basis until the county could re-advertise the service and select a new inmate health services provider. The company indicated that it could, and the county commission narrowly approved the emergency contract at its meeting Oct. 20. Even with that approval, however, it was unclear in the days leading up to Friday's down-to-the-wire contract whether Chatham County officials would have a company in place to provide health care to inmates at week's end.

Although the Chatham County Commission vote was for Centurion to take up health care services beginning today, a series of letters sent back and forth in the days after that vote indicated that, despite its best efforts, the new company would not be in place by the time CorrectHealth had vacated. In a Tuesday letter to the commission and the sheriff, **Smith** wrote that he had requested that CorrectHealth remain in place through mid-November to assist in the transition, but CorrectHealth President Dr. Carlo Musso firmly declined. Musso wrote, in a letter

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

sent in response to **Smith's** request, that the county manager had misrepresented to the county commission the facts about previous efforts to come to new terms over his contract with the county, and he was unwilling to continue his contract past Oct. 27. "When I initially read your request to extend our contract, I was inclined to agree to continue to provide services, as long as necessary, given the prevailing interests of the health care needs of the inmates at the CCDC and the needs of the Sheriff's Office," Musso wrote. "We are simply unable and unwilling to extend our relationship with Chatham County, as you have repeatedly and unnecessarily disparaged our reputation and the quality health care services we provide. We simply have no trust in the honesty or integrity of your office. Our last day will remain Oct. 27, 2017 for which full payment will be demanded."

County spokeswoman Catherine Glasby did not respond to repeated requests for comment on the charges levied by agents of CorrectHealth or on the status of the inmate health care contract this week. The sheriff, however, said the new contract with CorrectHealth is basically an extension of the company's previous contract at a monthly cost of just less than \$600,000. And unlike the previous contract, which was between the Chatham County Commission and CorrectHealth, Wilcher said the new version also includes him. "The chairman and I ... sat down and came to an agreement," Wilcher said. "It's the same contract from last year. Everything should go status quo. I'm happy with it."

Moving forward, the sheriff said CorrectHealth has agreed to pursue accreditation under the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, a designation he expects they'll receive by April.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
October 19, 2017

SHERIFF CRITICIZES EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE CONTRACT FOR HEALTH CARE AT JAIL

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

Although he said he's made a point of not involving himself in ongoing negotiations, Chatham County Sheriff John Wilcher also made it known this week he isn't pleased with the process other county officials are using to contract for inmate health services at the county jail.

On Tuesday, the sheriff fired off a pair of letters to inform Chatham County Manager **Lee Smith** and Commission Chairman Al Scott that he disagrees with the county's use of emergency procurement procedures to hire Vienna, Va.-based Centurion Healthcare to take up the inmate health services contract. Wilcher also accused the county manager of keeping him in the dark about the negotiations with the company and of espousing a "cavalier attitude" about the work being done at the jail. "After considerable personal reflection and discussion with my senior management in the sheriff's office, I would like to let you know that I am greatly troubled by the way the county staff has gone about trying to micromanage a critical function in my jail operation," Wilcher wrote in his letter **Smith**. "It is clear that you are trying to run the county taxpayer's detention center from Bull Street, and doing so without the first bit of medical and/or law enforcement experience. You have consistently failed and refused to include me in the discussions, and have acted with disrespect towards the office I hold and with total disregard of the hard work and tireless efforts of my staff."

Asked Wednesday for comment, county spokeswoman Catherine Glasby said **Smith** would not be available to discuss the sheriff's accusations until after the county commission meets Friday. The agenda for that meeting indicates the commission is slated to discuss inmate health services, but no other details were available. Staff reports associated with the discussion weren't expected until "later in the week."

The announcement Monday that the county was negotiating with Centurion marked a change in direction for the inmate health services contract. Up until last week, county administrators had been in talks with the current provider, CorrectHealth of Atlanta, to continue providing the service for a second year. But those negotiations were ultimately unsuccessful and, the press release distributed Monday said, "Chatham County staff, the County Attorney, Sheriff John T. Wilcher, and Correct Health mutually decided not to extend or renew the contract."

Wilcher, however, disputes that he was involved in the decision to end the negotiations with CorrectHealth. In his letter to Scott, the sheriff wrote that he thought a new contract with the Atlanta company was forthcoming - until he was notified it wasn't. "Imagine my surprise when ... I received notification of the firing of CorrectHealth," Wilcher wrote. "I have not interfered in any of the issues that have taken place during the negotiations and have stayed out of it simply to allow for the county as the client to do what they do best." Reached by phone Wednesday, the

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

sheriff said he plans to continue to stay out of the talks. But as the elected official charged with overseeing the jail's day-to-day operations, Wilcher said he wants to be kept in the loop on the progress of the talks and on the plans of any company hired to do business at the jail. The sheriff added that he won't allow Centurion staff to operate without first conducting background checks and polygraph tests. "I just want to make sure that when they do the contract I am covered with the proper medical care for the inmates and if not the same staffing, then more staffing," he said.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
September 21, 2017

COUNTY APPROVES PURCHASES TOWARD NEW POLICE DEPARTMENT\ - NEW POLICE CARS, SALARIES ON DOCKET FOR FRIDAY'S COMMISSION MEETING
Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

Chatham County staffers have gotten the green light to make the purchases and hires necessary to reestablish a standalone county police department. And based on some of the expenses already incurred, it would no longer be feasible for Chatham officials to continue to negotiate with their counterparts at the city of Savannah to maintain a joint Savannah-Chatham police department, County Manager **Lee Smith** said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

To meet the Feb. 1, 2018, deadline set by the Savannah City Council in a July vote to dissolve the Savannah-Chatham police department, the county commission has already agreed to make purchases that, if the merged department were to be salvaged, would no longer be usable, **Smith** said. In addition, the county manager said, staffers have received bids for other equipment and services, and completed the design of the official seal and badge for the reformed Chatham County Police Department. "I've been giving marching orders," **Smith** said. "We've already sought bids for uniforms, we've chosen the badges, the seals, the colors of the uniforms (and) the car decals. We've got the bids back for weapons we have to purchase - guns, tasers - so we'll be bringing those budget amendments. You'll probably see them at every (commission) meeting or every other meeting from now until winter."

One of those budget requests is going before the commission Friday. Staffers are recommending that commissioners approve the purchase of 20 new Ford Explorer Police Interceptors from Hardeeville, S.C.-based O.C. Welch Ford-Lincoln at a cost of \$538,500. In a memo submitted to the commission along with its agenda for Friday's meeting, Fleet Operations Director Calvin Turner said he was suggesting the purchase because the county police department has "an immediate need for police pursuit vehicles to establish and handle patrolling the unincorporated areas of Chatham County." "In order to have the vehicles ready to patrol, Staff contacted several Ford dealerships to obtain pricing information and availability," Turner wrote. "O.C. Welch confirmed to staff that he has six ... vehicles on the lot which are available for immediate delivery and is expecting the balance to be shipped any day." If approved by the commission Friday, the vehicles would be added to the growing tab for the county police department.

The commission on Sept. 8 approved the purchase of a new phone system and radios for the Chatham County Police Department at a combined cost of more than \$400,000. The board also voted earlier this month to amend its budget for police services and create three new information and communication services positions for the police department. According to a budget amendment on the agenda for Friday's meeting, those ICS positions are expected to cost \$247,900 in the current fiscal year.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

In the meantime, staffers reported at the commission's meeting two weeks ago that more than 100 applications for various positions in the department had been received and return offers had been extended to the 29 officers on the county retirement plan who now work for the Savannah-Chatham department.

And **Smith** said Wednesday the search firm Stanton Chase has already begun interviewing candidates from across the state and nation to lead the department as chief. "This is a big deal," he said. "It sounds very easy to do this, but there are parts that are very complicated, like getting a chief on this fall and two assistant chiefs. ... (But) since the city gave us the February deadline it's what we have to do."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
June 25, 2017

**ACTION DEMANDED ON 'URGENT' PROBLEMS\ - JUDGE: BATHROOM
OVERFLOW, COLD TEMPS MAKE WORK DIFFICULT**

Author/Byline: Jan Skutch

A Chatham County Superior Court judge has blasted "chronic, unresponsive management" at the county's aging courthouse and demanded, for her fellow judges, that conditions there be given "urgent priority." Judge Louisa Abbot directed her ire at two specific conditions - a malfunctioning air-conditioning and heating system, and a repeatedly overflowing bathroom in an office that houses judges' staff attorneys - at the J. Tom Coleman Courthouse on Montgomery Street. "Surely such conditions would not be allowed to exist in your offices," Abbot wrote in a Tuesday letter to Chatham County Commission Chairman Al Scott and his fellow commissioners. "The judges - on behalf of jurors, employees, and all other users of this building, of this county building - demand that you make the health and comfort of the public and your employees an urgent priority."

Abbot's action was sparked by frigid courtroom conditions for jurors during a weeklong trial for serial rapist Trevon Hendrix this month. Attached to Abbot's letter was a second letter signed by the 14 jurors in the Hendrix case complaining of Courtroom 2-A being "unbearably cold for much of the week. At one point, the temperature was 60 degrees and it rarely grew much warmer," they said. "The inability of the county to have an operating, functional air conditioner made our jury service in a most serious case all the more difficult. It is a disservice to citizens who have jury service, to the court staff and other court personnel and to all others who have to come to the J. Tom Coleman building. "We call upon you as the elected leaders of our county to investigate this matter and treat it as urgent to find a lasting solution immediately so that other citizens are not subject to adverse conditions while serving as jurors." Abbot said she asked the jurors to sign the letter "because jurors and members of the public have had to suffer dramatic temperature shifts for months."

COUNTY'S RESPONSE

County Manager **Lee Smith** said in an email response to Abbot on Wednesday that the county is addressing courthouse problems. "We have been looking at many of these issues and addressing as our budget will allow and developing a long-term plan for the full renovation of the facility as well as addressing the construction of a new trial court facility. Investment in the present facility has to be examined as we plan for the future facility in cooperation with new facility ensuring that taxpayer funds are used wisely." "Your input is always wanted. Communication with myself, my office and my management team is paramount in advance to properly address issues such as these in a timely manner. ... My door has always been open to the judiciary and will continue to be."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

CONTINUING CONCERNS

But Abbot's concerns were just the latest complaints about ongoing problems at the courthouse since it was put in service in 1978. Chatham County renovation efforts at the courthouse to date have bypassed trial floors on the second and fourth trial floors where the air-conditioning/heating systems have frequently been the target of complaints. It leaves some floors of the six-story courthouse too cold, others too hot. State Court Chief Judge H. Gregory Fowler said that on Nov. 14, he sent jurors in a criminal case home "because there was no heat" in the courtroom he recalled being between 54 and 64 degrees. "It happens often enough (to) where it is irritating," Fowler said. "I am sorry about this and I apologize," Abbot told the jurors who arrived in court on June 7 for the Hendrix case to find it 60 degrees. "I am a public servant. I do not like to have anyone uncomfortable. In particular, I don't like to for you all to be uncomfortable. "It's unfair. This is your courthouse. You pay for this courthouse, you and your, you know, ancestors. But we pay for the maintenance of it." She took care to tell jurors she was not criticizing the maintenance department employees "because they have been, personally, extremely attentive and very concerned."

In her letter to Scott, Abbot especially singled out Jack Ingram (the senior building maintenance supervisor is actually Climmie Ancrum) and Solomon Roberts (building maintenance mechanic) for being "unfailingly attentive" to her concerns. "So you know, I'm a Southerner. I don't like cold. So I'm doing everything I can," she told jurors. And, she said, a letter from the jurors to the county commission "I think (will) get their attention far more that I can. The power of citizenry is, thank goodness, still powerful." Such a letter "would make each one of (the commissioners) feel personally responsible for the people who come into this building every day and who are doing serious business ..."

ABBOT TO SCOTT

In her letter to Scott, Abbot said those using the courthouse "have had to suffer dramatic temperatures shifts for months. "The second floor is icy; the fourth floor is broiling. The new first floor courtroom is inoperable due to HVAC problems. To no avail, judges have conveyed our growing dismay about the temperatures," she wrote. "Given the chronic unresponsiveness of management," Abbot contacted Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Burns for help and was told by a county employee, Anthony Stephens (assistant building maintenance and operations superintendent), that "all he had to do was to 'unlock' the thermostats which had previously been locked so that no one could alter the temperature." She called that "shocking news," questioning why, if it was so simple, did the judges have to make repeated complaints about the temperatures? "Why were the thermostats ever locked anyway?" she asked, adding that it "shows something is seriously amiss, not only the temperature but also the utter lack of communication."

Abbot then turned her irritation to the restroom on the fourth floor where eight staff attorneys, formerly law clerks, share a suite. "For several years the toilet in the staff attorney restroom has been overflowing and causing flooding, soaking carpets, causing noxious odors and making work conditions intolerable," Abbot wrote. Those conditions have sickened staff attorneys from "chemicals used futilely to try and disinfect the area. One attorney had to have foot surgery after walking through the infected water."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Efforts by fellow Superior Court Judge John E. Morse Jr. to explain the seriousness of health conditions and the inconvenience to Stephens have not been followed up on as promised, she said, adding that, "Nearly two weeks have now passed with the usual lack of communication." "The toilet continues to overflow, frequently spontaneously, belying the blame placed on the staff attorneys by maintenance," she wrote. "The alternate restroom in the hallway has the same problem so the staff have no other options."

SMITH'S RESPONSE TO ABBOT LETTER

Judge Abbot,

I am in receipt of your letter reference conditions in the courthouse. Your input is always wanted.

Communication with myself, my office or my management team is paramount in advance to properly address issues such as these in a timely manner. We have been looking at many of these issues and addressing as our budget will allow and developing a long term plan for the full renovation of the facility as well addressing the construction of a new trial court facility.

Investment in the present facility has to be examined as we plan for the future facility in cooperation with new facility ensuring that taxpayer funds are used wisely.

Please feel free at anytime to contact me for discussions reference your concerns as they are important to Chatham County and myself. My door has always been open to the judiciary and will continue to be.

Thanks for your input and we look forward to improving the facility for all in Chatham County and thank you for your dedication and service to the citizens of our County.

Respectfully,

Lee Smith

County Manager

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
June 16, 2017

COUNTY STARES DOWN TOUGH BUDGET CHOICES\ - OFFICIALS WEIGH REQUESTS ON TOP OF \$273M WITHOUT CLEAR WAY TO PAY FOR IT ALL
Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

The requests have been submitted and most of the recommendations are in, so now it's down to the Chatham County Commission to decide what will get funding and what won't in their upcoming 2017-2018 budget. Commissioners are slated to adopt the budget and set their millage rates when they convene for their next meeting, June 23, leaving them just one more week to weigh final petitions from department heads, community organizations and their constituents. As it stands, they have a lot to consider. Along with the combined \$273 million budget, tax rates and fees recommended by County Manager **Lee Smith** at the beginning of the month, county department heads and local nonprofit organizations during the past couple of weeks have laid out requests for extra funding to cover new staff, equipment, programs and space they say will be necessary to do their work in the upcoming fiscal year. Based on the projected revenue from property taxes and other fees, however, the county commission won't be able to pay for it all.

During a public hearing Friday on the proposed millage rates for the county-wide maintenance and operations fund, the unincorporated Special Service District and the Chatham Area Transit service district, Commission Chairman Al Scott said that while the county as a whole has experienced some growth during the past year, the unincorporated county has been relatively stagnant.

SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT

In the worst-case scenario proposed by county staffers earlier this month, the commission would need to levy a 1.6-mill increase to the property tax charged to taxpayers in unincorporated Chatham County - the Special Service District - from 4.13 mills to 5.73. All of this additional revenue would cover rising costs for the joint Savannah-Chatham police department as outlined in a recent study on the department's operations. The police study, which was jointly funded for \$109,000 by the city and county last spring, determined the county's share of police costs moving forward had increased by about \$3 million to more than \$17 million a year. In addition, the report indicated that Chatham County owed \$5 million to Savannah for police costs dating back to Jan. 1, 2016. Addressing the unincorporated tax rate during the one of the hearings on the millage Thursday, Gayla Reffner, a resident of the county's 6th District, said she isn't opposed to paying her share for services but only if she receives those services, and so far, she isn't. Despite complaints about illegal shooting ranges and other problems near her property, Reffner said she hasn't received a satisfactory response from the police department. "I think it's unfair you're taxing us for something we're not getting," she said.

As of Thursday, however, it no longer appeared that all of the additional tax revenue will be necessary. **Smith** said after the budget workshop Thursday staff has already found errors in the study that drop the cost of the back-payment to the city by \$1 million. He said staff will continue

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

to comb through the study during the next week to determine if other adjustments are needed before final adoption of the budget. "We will make a recommendation next week but this board is going to have to decide," **Smith** said, adding that if the commission opts to budget below what was recommended in the study, the county and city will have to head to the bargaining table again to discuss the costs before the Savannah City Council adopts its own budget in December.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS BUDGET

Meanwhile, the county is proposing to maintain the property tax rate charged to taxpayers countywide at 11.543 mills. This is the same millage levied in the past two budget years, Scott said, but because of growth in the local tax digest - built up by new development in west Chatham and increasing property values - it is expected to bring in additional revenues. According to the county manager's summary of the proposed budget, the bulk of these additional revenues will cover costs to continue to operate Chatham Area Transit's Paratransit program from one end of the county to the other. The cost for Paratransit is expected to climb by 85 percent in the upcoming budget, from less than \$2.7 million to more than \$5.1 million. "Our demand is going to grow as our population ages," said CAT's Chief Financial Officer Terri Harrison Thursday, despite efforts to cut costs by engaging new scheduling software, applying for grants and encouraging Paratransit riders to use other modes of public transportation. The county is only required to provide the program within CAT's service district, but the commission decided years ago to continue to provide Paratransit service county-wide, regardless of whether the cities participate. The county manager's budget indicates that if the commission opts to continue to operate Paratransit countywide, it could recoup some of the costs by expanding the CAT service district to include all areas of Chatham County not currently paying for the transportation system's service.

CAT SERVICE DISTRICT

In the upcoming fiscal year, CAT's is requesting that the county commission set a millage rate for the transit district at 1.15 mills - an increase of 0.15 mills over the district's current tax rate. Harrison said the hope is that the increase will bring in another \$1.5 million in revenues for CAT, to prevent the need to cut services or staffing.

DRY TRASH FEES

Along with the recommended millage rates, Chatham County staff have recommended a temporary increase to the annual \$43 dry trash fee paid by unincorporated residents. The fee, which could amount to a two-time additional charge of \$100 or a one-time additional charge of about \$130, is designed to help the county recover some of its emergency reserve fund after last year's two tropical storms.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
April 23, 2017

INTERNAL AUDIT FINDS RISK IN CHATHAM'S PUBLIC WORKS' PAYROLL RECORDS\ - COMP TIME CALCULATIONS FALL SHORT OF FEDERAL STANDARDS, ADD UP TO \$17,000

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

Internal auditors reviewing the payroll system at Chatham County Public Works recently discovered deficiencies that put the department at odds with federal employment standards. According to an audit report produced by the county in response to a request under the Georgia Open Records Act, some public works employees built up compensatory time in excess of what local government employees are allowed to earn under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. The internal audit, which reviewed the public works department's payroll from July 2014 to July 2016, was conducted after employees alerted the county to discrepancies between the compensatory time tracked by the department's payroll system and its timekeeping system.

Jeannie Alday, director of Chatham County's internal audit department, said that since auditors reviewed the system most of the findings have been addressed. She said similar issues should be nullified once the county implements a new, automated timekeeping system for all departments. Alday said county officials are reviewing vendors for that automated system now.

A fact sheet provided by the U.S. Department of Labor indicates that federal regulations allow for state or local government agencies to grant their employees comp time in lieu of overtime pay in some cases. Comp time is capped at 480 hours for public safety and seasonal personnel and at 240 hours for all other government employees, including public works. In Chatham County, public works is responsible for maintenance of a variety of county properties, including its roads and bridges, storm drains and solid waste drop-off centers. Throughout 2015, the March 24 internal audit report says, the public works department kept records of comp time in an "off-book," rather than in the official payroll system. The result, the document says, is the two records were never reconciled, and they began to show different comp time balances over time. "The off-book record was not compliant with (Fair Labor Standards Act) limitations on the maximum accrual of 240 hours of compensatory time," the audit report says, "and some employees had accrued significantly higher balances." The report says that as a result of the incorrect timekeeping, about one-third of public works employees were overpaid, costing the county more than \$17,000. Another third of public works employees were underpaid by nearly \$10,000. Two-thirds of employees in the public works department had their comp time or overtime incorrectly calculated and 55 percent of those who were granted comp time weren't eligible to receive it. Using a recently implemented audit rating scale, in which 1 reflects a perfect score and 5 indicates serious problems, the county's internal auditors gave the public works department's payroll system a 4-, or just above the bottom of the scale.

Addressing the audit recently, County Manager **Lee Smith** said he wasn't all that surprised by the findings in public works, where employees often work long hours outside of a typical shift.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Those odd hours, he said, coupled with payroll clerks who aren't fully trained in federal labor standards, can cause some of the problems the internal audit revealed. "First of all, those folks worked and they are due that time, so what we're doing is paying those out. I would say those 99 percent have been corrected and now we have internal auditing and ensuring those people are doing what they're supposed to do," **Smith** said. "Exempt, non-exempt employees, that can be confusing. We have had to back up and try to bring everybody up to date, and say this is how you're classified. It's not that we want to hurt anybody, we just have to be legal."

In the case of those employees who were overpaid, **Smith** reported that the county would not seek back payment. It was not the fault of those employees, he said, that their time was miscalculated.

'DIDN'T HAVE THE TRAINING'

One finding listed by auditors in the report was incorrect comp time balance sheets. Records kept by the public works department were different from those maintained by Chatham County's human resources department. To address this problem, management in public works, with assistance from human resources, will improve its efforts to meet Fair Labor Standards by retraining supervisors, superintendents and managers in comp time requirements. The reports says management will also periodically monitor comp time usage and balances. In addition, auditors found that manual comp time calculations allowed for some employees to use comp time or get overtime pay when it hadn't been earned. Auditors wrote that because the department's practices weren't in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, the county was at risk of violating federal labor laws and incurring fines and penalties.

Rather than provide comment for this article, representatives of the U.S. Department of Labor's regional office in Atlanta provided fact sheets about the agency's process for reviewing FLSA violations. According to those sheets, the Department of Labor has the authority to recover back wages from employers and assess civil penalties. In especially egregious cases, the department can litigate or even prosecute employers found to willfully violate federal employment requirements.

But Alday said in the case of Chatham County Public Works, these actions won't be necessary. The county has already corrected the areas of non-compliance, she said, and there's no evidence that any of the issues found were intentional. "I wouldn't consider it a serious issue," she said. "It wasn't a malicious thing. They weren't aware because they didn't have the training. ... I think definitely this is something that has been addressed by management. ... I have every confidence they have a handle on it now, they understand it and will do some formal training pretty soon."

Internal auditors are scheduled to conduct a follow up review of the payroll system in public works in late July.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
January 11, 2017

MPC SWEARS IN MEMBERS

Author/Byline: Savannah Morning News

Members of the 2017 Metropolitan Planning Commission were sworn-in on Tuesday by Chatham County Superior Court Judge John Morse before their first meeting of the year.

The 14-member board is chaired by Tanya Milton and is responsible for development, urban and transportation planning, historic preservation and much more in the Savannah community.

2017 commissioners are:

Tanya Milton, James Overton, Joseph Welch, George Woods, Shedrick Coleman, Travis Coles, Ellison Cook, Joseph Ervin, Rob Hernandez, Timothy Mackey, Lacy Manigault, **Lee Smith**, Linder Suthers, and Tom Woiwode.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
February 28, 2016

DA: No crime discovered in alderman's gun buyback effort

Author/Byline: Jan Skutch

Chatham County District Attorney Meg Heap says her review of a gun buyback program did not reveal any evidence of "criminal wrongdoing" by Savannah Alderman Van Johnson in connection with a grassroots program here. "Upon review of the GBI investigative report in this matter, I concur with the GBI's assessment that there is no evidence of criminal wrongdoing by Mr. Johnson," Heap said in a one-paragraph letter to GBI officials in Statesboro. Heap's findings, supported by a GBI review she requested last summer, puts to rest a probe of alleged irregularities in the handling of guns from a Savannah gun buyback initiative.

Heap sought the GBI review after discussions with County Manager **Lee Smith**, who made a formal request for a "criminal investigation into the allegation" involving the nonprofit Savannah Youth City Inc. "gun buyback program, process of buyback, securing of firearms, etc." The request, and Heap's conclusion, were sent to GBI Agent-in-Charge Bill Bodrey in Statesboro.

Johnson said Tuesday that his intentions "were clear and they were pure and within the confines of the law. "We have a significant problem in our community that guns are being used by people who should not have them," he said. "They need to get rid of them. ... The most important thing is to get the guns off the streets before they hurt someone." "I'm still collecting them," Johnson said in what he called "a direct attempt to be able to get some of these guns off our streets." **Smith's** request identified "circumstances surrounding the surrendered firearms collected by Savannah City Youth Inc.'s program." "The firearms were surrendered to Chatham-Savannah Counter Narcotics Team to be secured while the matter is being investigated."

"We're doing safekeeping," **Smith** said during a news conference. "We had concerns about it, and I had gotten calls in my office. I had worked with CNT and said to them, I think for the safety of the public, the best thing that could happen ... (was that) CNT hold those (and) inventory them."

Johnson announced the gun buyback program in late November 2016, in concert with the nonprofit. He called it a local gun effort to prevent local gun violence in Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County where there were 280 aggravated assaults with a gun in 2016. That same year, the Savannah-Chatham police recovered 1,092 guns, according to department officials. "Each one of those guns represents a minimum of one life that can be taken if it's in the wrong hands," Johnson said at the time.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News
December 5, 2015

**CHATHAM SELLS WATER SYSTEM - \$6.9M WILL HELP STAVE OFF
BANKRUPTCY, HELP WITH REPAIRS**

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

Chatham County has put an end to its public water system. In an 8-1 vote Friday, the Chatham County Commission approved a purchase agreement with Savannah-based Water Utility Management, doing business as Chatham Water Utility, for the majority of the water system - all but the systems at Little Neck Road and Modena Island. The private company will buy the system for about \$6.9 million. The agreement also sets the company up to manage the county's sewer system for about 10 percent of its revenues. The county was unable to sell the sewer system because the city of Savannah treats wastewater from unincorporated Chatham and won't accept it from a private vendor.

With the cash from the water system's sale, the county intends to make repairs to the sewer system, which County Manager **Lee Smith** said is decades behind on its maintenance schedule. **Smith** has said Chatham's water/sewer fund has been operating at a loss for years and would have gone bankrupt within the next two years. The contract requires Water Utility Management to offer positions to county staff affected by the sale and to maintain current rates for three years.

But the contract also left some unknowns. Commissioners Dean Kicklighter and Helen Stone pointed out that with the sale, the cities of Savannah and Pooler, which have provided a backup water supply for customers of the Runaway Point and Hunter's Ridge systems, will no longer do so. "It's just a concern that I have if we don't have a backup here," Stone said Friday. Kicklighter added that based on a text message he received from Pooler City Manager Robbie Byrd on Friday morning, the county should consider negotiating with the city of Pooler for the sale of the Hunter's Ridge system. In that way, he argued, the county could ensure that customers of that system never pay more for service than their fellow Pooler residents. Citing a desire to hold off on the purchase agreement to meet with Pooler, Kicklighter was the sole vote against the contract Friday. Other board members charged that Pooler had an opportunity to express an interest in the system's purchase when a request for proposals was issued earlier this year.

Water Utility Management President Mark Smith said he's optimistic of reaching an agreement with the city of Savannah to provide backup water in the event of a failure. He said he's also optimistic his firm will work out an agreement with Savannah for the future acceptance of wastewater from his company. Commissioners also voted to sell the Little Neck portion of the water system to Savannah-based Consolidated Utilities for \$63,000. County Attorney Jon Hart on Friday estimated he could bring an agreement for the future operations of the Modena Island well to the commission by its next meeting on Dec. 18. The county has been in negotiations with property owners on Modena for the future of that system.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
September 29, 2015

FOLLOW-UP AUDIT SHOWS IMPROVEMENTS IN BUILDING SAFETY DEPT.

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

A follow-up review of the Chatham County department that oversees building inspections and issues occupational tax certificates reveals that staffers have corrected some of a number of cash-handling problems identified last year by internal auditors. The Building Safety and Regulatory Services Department also is responsible for code enforcement and the tags for animal vaccinations.

According to the document produced by internal county auditors in May, five of nine internal control deficiencies in the department had been addressed since the first report, including problems with the security of the department's finances and the lack of daily deposits. Four issues remained, however, including a concern that the department's operations coordinator had too much oversight of the department's finances. This finding had not been corrected in the eight months since the first audit was completed, despite the department head's written response that he intended to "implement all the recommendations identified in the report."

The follow-up audit is dated May 15 - the same day the Savannah Morning News put in a request for any and all internal audits completed since the start of the year. The follow-up audit wasn't produced, however, until another request for internal audits was made Sept. 14.

WHAT IMPROVED

Last September, internal auditors with Chatham County sent a memo to the county manager that reported a slew of problems at the department. Among the concerns were missing receipt books, unsecured registers, an unlocked safe, cash deposit shortages and late deposits. In the response letter included with the audit, director Gregori Anderson promised to improve those operations. County Manager **Lee Smith** said in an interview in March that administrators would be monitoring the department to ensure improvements.

Although one follow up has been completed, Assistant County Manager Michael Kaigler said Friday administrators will continue to require additional follow-up audits at building safety. "One of the thing we saw is a disconnect. We didn't have departments doing continuous communication," **Smith** said Friday. "(Kaigler) is doing regular meetings with all these department managers, decision makers. ... That's really helping because those disconnects mean mistakes. We're able to avoid those situations because we're all talking now."

According to the most recent audit of the department's operations, building safety staffers have completed a required annual risk assessment - the first in at least two years. In addition, the department began maintaining animal registration records as the county's records retention policy required. Locks were installed on the cashier's drawer and bank deposit slips are now stored in the department's safe. The department also reconciles and deposits money collected daily. Unlike

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the original audit, the follow-up makes no mention of cash shortages or missing funds, late deposits or poorly secured funds. "We actually met with the Homebuilders Association, and although I can't speak for them, they were very complimentary, saying we were acting in a timely manner ... that things were going well," **Smith** said. "We do know we're going to take a look at moving animal control ... (and then we) won't be collecting the animal control fee out there. We'll consolidate up front and be a bit user friendly."

WHAT DIDN'T IMPROVE

A recurring finding in audits of building safety has been the lack of segregation of duties. Last year, auditors reported no change in this condition since the previous report, and a similar note was made in the follow up - despite assurances from the director that closing the department's Chatham County annex location "eliminated the segregation of duties issue." This time around, the concern was that the department's operations coordinator continued to be involved in every level of handling and depositing cash, a practice that had led to cash shortages in the past. The operations coordinator had also continued to process and record payments from a personal office - despite previous audit recommendations and instructions to conduct all processing at the cashier's booth - "up to and including ... the day before auditors reported to Building Safety."

"An effective system of internal control over cash receipts requires that the reporting and depositing functions be separated; this decreases the likelihood of errors (or) misappropriation," auditors wrote. "Conversely, the likelihood of errors and possible misappropriation increases when employees responsible for handling these cash receipts also maintain the records used to document such receipts."

Assistant County Manager Linda Cramer said this concern could be explained by a staff shortage at the time of the internal auditor's visit. The department was without a cashier during that period, she said. "There is a cashier up there now, and I think she's working out really well," Cramer said Friday. Meanwhile, auditors found that in some cases, receipts had been erased from the system without explanation and without management's knowledge. In some cases, daily reconciliation reports were inaccurate, missing or incomplete. The auditor also pointed out that the department had ordered another receipt printer, even though an assistant county manager had instructed them not to last August.

The report suggested more in-depth reviews of businesses to which occupational tax division issues permits and an update to the department's cash-handling policy. The county commission voted in January to require all departments that handle cash to develop written financial policies and ensure these policies are followed. In an email last week, Chatham County Finance Director Amy Davis reported that most departments had followed through. Some, she said, are still working on their policies with the help of a consultant because of changes to their software or recommendations in their audits. The internal audit department is reviewing the policies one-by-one, Davis wrote.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

A final concern in the follow-up audit about an "outdated" computer software used by the department wasn't thoroughly reviewed, auditors wrote, because the county was in the process of replacing it. Cramer said she wasn't sure this aspect of the audit report will ever be fully resolved. All totaled, of the 16 recommendations made by auditors last September, the department by May had implemented nine of them, the follow up says.

NEW ISSUES

The follow-up identified two additional areas of concern. In two separate cases, customers of the building safety department were subjected to charges that violated county policy. The occupation tax department had implemented a \$5 fee for businesses seeking copies of their occupational tax certificate, despite a county ordinance that sets the cost at 25 cents per page.

Customers paying by credit or debit card at the office, meanwhile, were being charged convenience fees, despite a recent change to county policy that waived these fees for walk-in customers. Cramer said these charges have since been rectified. In addition, she said, outside auditors are in the process of reviewing the operations at Building Safety and Regulatory Services as part of their annual audit of Chatham County. "They've been out there for a couple of days," Cramer said. "I'm interested to see what they're going to say. They're the ones that caught on to this in the first place."

Smith said county managers in the meantime are continuing to hold regular discussions with various departments and are planning regular visits to those departments. "We need to be more visible as a management team," he said. "I think that helps with morale. It's tough when you're in a department and you're seen as having problems. People have pride in what they do and they want it done well."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: To view this Lawsuit in its entirety, please follow the link below.]

<https://casetext.com/case/santifort-v-sue-guy-in-her-pers-capacity>
September 8, 2015

Santifort v. Guy

Civil Action No. 4:14-CV-225-F
09-08-2015

DONNA R. SANTIFORT, Plaintiff, v. SUE GUY in her personal capacity, **LEE SMITH**, in his personal capacity, JOE GURLEY, in his personal capacity, STEVE KEEN, in his personal capacity, and COUNTY OF WAYNE, NORTH CAROLINA, Defendants.

James C. Fox Senior United States District Judge

ORDER

Plaintiff Donna Santifort ("Santifort") sues Defendants Sue Guy, **Lee Smith**, Joe Gurley, Steve Keen and County of Wayne for damages arising from her termination of employment. The defendants have filed three motions to dismiss, all of which have been fully briefed. For the reasons more fully stated below, the motions to dismiss are DENIED.

I. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

Santifort initiated this action by filing a complaint in this court on December 5, 2014 [DE-1]. She filed an Amended Complaint [DE-4] later that same day. In the Amended Complaint, Santifort alleges she was terminated in violation of her First Amendment rights and wrongfully discharged in violation of public policy.

II. STANDARD OF REVIEW

III. DISCUSSION

All of the Defendants have filed motions to dismiss, which have overlapping arguments. All Defendants contend that Santifort has not stated a First Amendment retaliation claim. Specifically, Defendants argue that Santifort's speech and petitions were not protected by the First Amendment because they were not made in her capacity as a citizen and did not involve a matter of public concern. Defendants Guy and **Smith** also argue the claims must be dismissed because Santifort has not adequately alleged causation, and because they are entitled to qualified immunity.

As to **Smith**, the court notes that as a matter of state law, he had the authority to terminate Santifort's employment. See N.C. Gen. Stat. § 153A-82(1); see also 6A N.C. Index 4th § 35 ("In counties that have a county manager, the county manager is responsible for suspending or removing county officers, employees, and agents and is required to do so in accordance with any general personnel rules, regulations, policies, or ordinances that the board has adopted."). This, combined with the allegation that Santifort was terminated in **Smith's** office at a meeting he

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

convened gives rise to the plausible inference that **Smith** terminated her employment. **Smith** makes much of the fact that Santifort has alleged that he signed a letter thanking her for her comments, and that she alleges that his ouster was the goal of the scheme by fellow Defendants Guy, Gurley and Keen. The fact that **Smith** thanked Santifort for her comments in September does not foreclose the idea that he may have preferred her not to speak; moreover, although the different Defendants may have had differing reasons for their desire to silence Santifort, it does not preclude the inference that Smith terminated Santifort in retaliation for her critical remarks at the County Commissioner meetings. Santifort will, of course, have to gather evidence to support these inference and contentions, but at this juncture her allegations are sufficient.

Guy similarly contends there are no factual allegations showing that she was involved in Santifort's termination, and accordingly the claims against her in her personal capacity must be dismissed. Under § 1983, "it must be affirmatively shown that the official charged acted personally in the deprivation of the plaintiff's rights." *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841, 850 (4th Cir. 1985) (internal quotation and citation omitted). It is true that unlike Smith, there is no indication that Guy had the statutory authority to terminate Santifort's employment, nor are there allegations that she was present for Santifort's termination. Nevertheless, Santifort alleges that Guy, along with other defendants, used her as a pawn in a scheme to ultimately oust Smith as manager, and that once that scheme on its way to being accomplished, they had no further need of her. Santifort also alleges that two days after her outburst at Guy, she was terminated without giving a statement.

In this case, Guy and **Smith** argue only that Santifort has not met her burden in alleging facts that make out a violation of a constitutional right. For the reasons the court already has discussed, the court disagrees, and finds that the record precludes a ruling on qualified immunity at this time. Moreover, neither Guy nor **Smith** proffer any argument as to why they have met their burden in showing that the right was not clearly established at the time of the incidents giving rise to this action. Accordingly, the motions to dismiss are denied on this basis. B. Wrongful Discharge Claim

IV. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Motions to Dismiss [DE-17, 26] are DENIED. The Motion to Dismiss [DE-12] filed by Defendants County of Wayne, Joe Gurley, and Steve Keen is DENIED as to the § 1983 claims and ALLOWED as to wrongful discharge claim. The Clerk of Court is DIRECTED to continue the management of this case. SO ORDERED. This the 8th day of September, 2015.

/s/ _____

James C. Fox

Senior United States District Judge

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
September 2, 2015

'WHISTLE-BLOWER' CHALLENGES FIRING

Author/Byline: Jan Skutch

An attorney for a fired Chatham County employee is challenging the termination, arguing she was a "whistle-blower" who was fired for calling attention to "serious financial deficiencies" in the county office.

Shaundra D. Smith-McKeithen, 45, was terminated by the county's Building Safety and Regulatory Services Department on Aug. 27, 2014, after an internal audit revealed multiple problems - going back for years - in management of funds and permits. Those problems were never corrected.

Attorney Bobby Phillips, in an ante litem notice of claim last week, said the termination was wrongful. "The basis of this claim is my client's contention that she was fired because she was a 'whistle-blower,'" Phillips said. "I understand Ms. Smith-McKeithen was in a probation status as a new employee; however, it is my contention that the Whistleblower Act trumps any spurious attempt by the county to avail itself of a defense on that basis."

An ante litem letter is required for a person who plans to sue a governmental unit. Phillips said he was notifying the county to give them time to investigate the claim and avoid litigation. Smith-McKeithen has announced she will run for the Savannah city council in the 5th District, opposing incumbent Estella Shabazz.

According to Phillips, his client notified County Manager **Lee Smith** to "serious financial deficiencies" in the department and her complaints were validated by an audit performed Sept. 24, 2014. "Apparently the deficiencies had existed as far back as 2012 when there was a similar audit," Phillips said. "Those deficiencies were never corrected."

The Sept. 24 audit report found concerns regarding the handling of payments similar to issues discovered in 2012 but never corrected. **Smith** attributed the department's problems to a lack of proper training and policies, as well as inadequate staffing.

Smith-McKeithen, who supervised the issuance of business licenses in the occupational tax office, was given her termination notice on Aug. 27, 2014, after being hired in mid-March. She said at the time she was being fired after she tried to fix a culture that fostered problems within the department.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
June 27, 2015

CHATHAM BUDGET TO HELP USHER IN PROJECTS\ - PUBLIC WORKS, MORE STAFF, COMPENSATION PART OF TAX INCREASE

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

The Chatham County Commission on Friday adopted a combined \$463 million budget and maintained its millage rates, a move that will increase taxes but also kick off long-awaited projects. For the maintenance and operations property tax - the property tax paid countywide - commissioners set the millage rate at 11.543 mills, the same rate paid by Chatham County property owners in 2014. Because the county opted not to roll back the millage rate this year, growth in property values will reflect a 4.37 percent increase. Last year, the county commission reduced the M&O millage to its current level by distributing \$4 million in excess special purpose local option sales tax funds. That SPLOST rebate has since been depleted, but County Manager **Lee Smith** said Friday increasing the millage won't be necessary to get additional initiatives started.

During the upcoming budget year, which begins July 1, the county will be hiring staff and buying equipment for the public works and building safety departments, **Smith** said. The result will be more building inspectors for areas that have been under-served, he said, more right-of-way maintenance and better upkeep of local parks - all while keeping the millage rate flat. These property taxes will feed some other changes in the \$170 million general fund, including higher compensation for county jurors and grand jurors, an increase to workers' salaries and some new positions, according to the county's 2016 budget proposal.

In addition, the commission maintained the millage rate for the special service district - the amount paid only by property owners in the unincorporated area - at 4.13. Growth in property values will increase the amount paid by property owners in the unincorporated county by 1.37 percent. This millage rate helps to balance the \$30 million special service district fund. The SSD budget includes \$14 million for Chatham County's share to operate the Savannah-Chatham police department plus another \$250,000 for the county to hire a consultant to review the police department's operations and determine the county's true share of costs and ownership. Despite these costs, the county manager reported that Chatham County will pay about \$2 million less for police service in the upcoming budget year than it did in the current fiscal year. The commission also maintained 1 mill for the Chatham Area Transit service district, which, after accounting for value growth, is a 4.71 percent increase over the amount paid in 2014.

Commissioner Helen Stone, a member of the CAT board of directors, reported Friday that for the first time in many years, CAT has not ended the year with a deficit. "This is one of the first times they have had a budget operating in the black, and they're paying down their line of credit," Stone said. "I think the staff at Chatham Area Transit needs to be commended for that."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
May 24, 2015

TOP BOSS: A YEAR IN THE LIFE\ - COUNTY MANAGER HAS TACKLED CHANGE, PROMISES MORE STILL TO COME

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

Sitting in his office at the old county courthouse on Bull Street on the day of his first anniversary, May 12, Chatham County Manager **Lee Smith** says it's hard to believe a year has gone by already. Much of his time as the county's chief appointed official has been spent responding to questions and comments from the public or meeting with his counterparts in the county's various municipalities. He also meets regularly with his executive team of department heads and Chatham Commission Chairman Al Scott. On many of his days outside the office, he says he found himself driving around, getting acquainted with his new community and the places that came up in discussions with county commissioners or team members. He acknowledges that a lot has changed since he took up his post, and, he says, more change can be expected in the year to come.

THE POLICE MERGER AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SAVANNAH

On May 13, just a day after **Smith** sat down to discuss his first year as county manager, he joined with Savannah City Manager Stephanie Cutter to announce a new proposal to fund and operate the Savannah-Chatham police department. It was a step forward, he told those gathered at the press conference, not only because it showed how far negotiations over the police department had come, but also because it showed how cooperative the two governments had become. It was a far cry from the comments he was making at commission meetings late last year when he bemoaned the city's lack of responsiveness. "When you've got a relationship between individuals or corporations or governments, you've got to build loyalty and trust," **Smith** says. "It doesn't just happen. Stephanie and I have had multiple meetings ... Now we have a relationship where we can trust each other. It's the same thing with the other managers. We now meet quarterly with all the city managers. We all get together and discuss items, and I think that's key. It's just the communication."

Chairman Scott says his goal to improve these relationships and it seems to be working. "He's been holding meetings with the managers of all the townships and the manager at the Landings. She represents a community of roughly 10,000 people," Scott says. "We're just quietly trying to improve our working relationship with all the cities. (**Smith**) buys into that, so his agenda is my agenda, and my agenda is his agenda. He's not out freelancing. That's what I like about him. He spends a lot of time reaching out." Of course, not every meeting with the local city managers is going to be devoid of conflict. Each of these managers answer to a collection of elected representatives, all of whom have their own priorities and agendas. But the conflict, **Smith** says, isn't always a bad thing. When push comes to shove, community leaders in Chatham and the surrounding counties have shown they can band together. Look, for instance, at the joint development authority created in what was ultimately an unsuccessful bid to woo the Swedish auto manufacturer Volvo. "With Volvo we were disappointed, but it proved one thing. We were

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

able to put a joint development authority together ... in less than 60 days. That's amazing," he says. "We're all disappointed about Volvo, but that's case in point, we were all prepared. Bring on the next project."

FINDING AND SOLVING PROBLEMS

Only a few months after settling into his new role with Chatham County, the new manager found himself facing audits and lawsuits that showed systemic problems in some county departments. Internal and external audits revealed that the Building Safety & Regulatory Services department was missing money, slow to cash checks and not operating as auditors had recommended. Not long after, an attorney for the families of workers killed in the 2008 explosion at the Imperial Sugar Refinery filed suit against the county, alleging that a former probate court clerk had stolen thousands of dollars set aside for the children of the deceased. Most recently, Sheriff Al St Lawrence announced the firing of nine deputies, some of whom, he said, contributed to the death of an inmate on New Year's Day.

These are problems, **Smith** says, but they're also opportunities for improvement. The county manager says many of the issues he's found in different departments can be traced back to inconsistencies in oversight and not following policies. In the case of the courts, **Smith** says, the county in the past had been involved only as far as paying for services. Despite contributing substantially to the operation of the local courts, Chatham officials haven't had much oversight. This, he says, needs to change. "Courts are not necessarily our area. However, we have responsibility," **Smith** says. "We pay money for some of those services, so we should have more oversight for the money we're spending. We have some great judges, but we have some flaws, and those are being dealt with by the right authorities." A new financial policy approved by the county commission in January should help county departments avoid future problems, he adds. Each department head was instructed to draft financial policies that included internal controls, and finance director Amy Davis has said they must be in place by the start of the next fiscal year.

Departments that handle cash will be under video surveillance, **Smith** says, for the safety of the county's customers and for its employees. "Everybody's heard me say, people respect what you inspect," he says. "I think (the problem) has been inconsistent policy and our inability to inspect the departments on a regular basis (but) now we're doing that. One of the things you're going to see this year is we're upping the security systems. I'm going to have a camera that (records) every transaction."

A NEW APPROACH TO BUDGETING

Much will be said about Chatham County's budget during the next few weeks, as the county commission prepares to adopt the spending plan for the next fiscal year. It's the second year the county has crafted a zero-based budget, a more thorough process that requires justification for every expense. Because he started with the county after much of the grunt work on the current budget was complete, this will be the first year **Smith** will be truly involved in planning for the county's fiscal year. Unlike this year, there will be no contingencies in the budget for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1. While the county previously provided for department heads to make emergency expenses without getting clearance from the county commission, **Smith** says

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the removal of contingencies will free up about \$700,000. "People are a little nervous about that, but it forces you to budget better," he says. "(A contingency) falsely inflates the budget. I think it needs to be a true budget." Along with the removal of nearly all the contingencies, **Smith** says, you'll see more focus on capital projects in the upcoming budget. "We definitely have to look at our capital policies," he says sternly. "We do not fund capital up front. We fund capital on the back end. We fund capital by, 'Let's see what's left over.'" The lack of planning for future capital purchases has left the county in the uncomfortable position of telling taxpayers they're going to have to wait for services. And developing a capital plan isn't going to be immediate. **Smith** says it will take at least five years to get a capital budget in good working order, and even then the county may have to look at borrowing money to get the projects going.

Also stay tuned for a greater reserve fund.

Smith says he's been given the directive by Chairman Scott to improve the county's bond rating. He says doing so will require enough reserves to fund the county for 90 days and a more fiscally conservative approach to running county government. "I wanted fiscal responsibility," Scott says. "That's an umbrella phrase, but I don't think we do a good job on planning capital projects or setting aside funds to meet those needs. We usually respond to stuff, rather than plan for it. "The county has a AA bond rating, I want to move it to AAA. You just can't get there overnight. ... Much of what the county manager is doing is heading us in the right direction. You can't accumulate anything short term. We're looking at it long range. I want to keep taxes low as possible, I want to eliminate duplication of services, I want to improve the county bond rating, and where we can, I want to support local business. (**Smith**) understands that."

CHISELING AWAY AT THE PROJECT LIST

Smith says he expects to get more county projects started in his second year. A major special purpose local option sales tax project, reconstruction of Memorial Stadium, will kick off in the next year. The county is still determining how it will proceed with the stadium. Should they build it elsewhere or reconstruct it? The county this year also anticipates kick-starting renovations at the J. Tom Coleman Courthouse with SPLOST funds, part of a larger, three-phase project that will result in a new court complex on Montgomery Street. Chatham officials are weighing funding the project through a public-private partnership, and a review of the bids for such a partnership is under way. "You're going to see a lot of SPLOST projects starting," **Smith** says. "I definitely think you're going to see some capital that will impact the general public. My board made it clear to me that when this last SPLOST was adopted there was still SPLOST money on the table that we haven't spent, and we should have. We're putting bids out, and we're going to get these projects started. "People voted on some projects years ago and have not seen anything happen. Why? If there's a reason, tell folks. But let's not sit on things. Let's get it done. I'm excited about getting some of these things to happen." Another major upcoming project will be the sale of the county's water/sewer program, he adds. The enterprise has lost funds for years, **Smith** says, and creates a disparity between unincorporated neighborhoods that have the service and those that do not.

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William Lee Smith
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INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PUBLIC

Smith says a surprising facet of his job is the amount of time he spends dealing with the day-to-day problems of Chatham County homeowners. He is faced with these challenges more now than in any other government position he's held. He recalls a time recently when the county was contacted by a local property owner who had dealt with flooding in her backyard for years. "She felt like nobody was responding to her - the city, the county," he says. "I took out like 10 people from different agencies. We went out and looked because we owed her an explanation for what was going on." Not only did it benefit the property owner in question, **Smith** says, but it gave him an opportunity to see how county employees are interacting with the public they serve. He says he stresses to his employees that the public deserves to be respected, to be heard when they have a problem. "Genuinely listening to them, caring about what's going on with them, is important. I hear too much about government for the sake of government, and none of us are entitled to these jobs. We're here to work for 200,000 and some people," he says. Chatham County Commission Chairman Al Scott's opinion of the county manager's work during the first year: "I'm very happy with his performance over the last 12 months, and I think it's the beginning of hopefully a long-lasting relationship with the county. I think he's energetic, he's proactive. I think he's going to move the county in the area of increased technology. "He has a number of things on his plate, and he brought with him when he came here things he was doing at smaller counties that he's going to implement."

Three months after County Manager **Lee Smith** took up his post with the county, he listed these priorities. Here's how he's done so far:

- * Development of a long-term strategic plan: The county commission in November approved a contract with the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition to gather data and develop a strategic plan for the community. The plan, which will be known as Chatham Community Blueprint 2035, will span 20 years. It is expected to be complete by this December.
- * Reorganization of Animal Control: Included in the framework for a new agreement to operate the Savannah-Chatham police department is a provision that places the animal control division under the county manager's oversight by July 1, 2016. **Smith** has said the department at that time will be civilian operated and will likely rely on partnerships with organizations like the Humane Society for Greater Savannah.
- * Service request system: The county manager has eyed the city of Savannah's 311 system as a model for a similar program in Chatham County. He said he envisions a mobile application that would allow the county to track the source of its requests for service and provide for photos and other data. This has not yet been developed.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
May 1, 2015

**EMERGENCY EXPENSES AT HEART OF BUDGET - COUNTY'S \$200M PLAN
INCREASES TRANSPARENCY**

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

Chatham commissioners on Thursday got their first look at a \$200 million budget proposed to operate the county for the upcoming fiscal year. The spending plan presented by finance director Amy Davis includes nearly \$170 million in the general fund and \$30 million in the county's special service district. It anticipates a 1 percent increase in the county tax digest. Though the county is continuing the thorough, zero-based budgeting process that began with this year's budget, the upcoming budget marks a shift in the county's spending philosophy. Previously, the county had built in contingencies to provide department heads with flexibility to make emergency expenses, but the proposed budget for the upcoming year has cut all the contingencies - about \$700,000 worth, Davis said.

County Manager **Lee Smith** said this was an intentional change to increase transparency in budgeting process. "It was one of my policies to eliminate contingencies," **Smith** told the board during its non-voting workshop. "If I need to make a change in the budget, I need to come to you."

The change will require more than just the county manager to present his need to the board, commission Chairman Al Scott said. All of the county's constitutional officers such as the sheriff and district attorney will be required to justify their emergency expenses before they're allowed to make them.

Another first is the development of a capital improvement plan, which the county manager expects will track capital expenses and keep them in line with the commission's forthcoming strategic plan. Currently, **Smith** said, the county isn't funding capital projects on a regular basis and the result is a backlog of needs that have not been addressed. "Capital assessment management is something our team has talked about a lot," **Smith** said. "There are hundreds of millions of dollars of capital needs that the county is saying we need that are not funded. ... That's not how you fund capital. You incorporate that in a long-term capital reserve and you begin to put money away to pay for that."

Other expenses expected during the next fiscal year, which runs from July 1 to June 30, 2016:

* The budget includes a pay increase for jurors and grand jurors. In February, the county signed off on a request from Superior Court Administrator Crystal Cooper to grow the allowance for jurors from \$10 to \$15 for the first day of service and from \$20 to \$30 for grand jurors and for jurors sworn in on a panel. This will be paid for out of the general fund.

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William Lee Smith
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- * The general fund includes a 1.5 percent increase to the salary table and considers new positions, including a public communications officer and audio/video technician.
- * The board is still weighing two options for the \$30 million budget for the special services district. One option includes a \$14 million contract with the city of Savannah to co-fund the Savannah-Chatham police department. The other provides for \$16 million to restart and operate a county police department. No agreement has been signed by either side to continue the joint department, and a scheduled presentation on a framework proposed for a new agreement did not take place Thursday.

Smith said he expects officials from both sides to release a joint statement related to a new merger agreement early next week. That will include a new division of costs for Chatham County Recorder's Court.

Scott said the county has incurred about \$2,000 in expenses to hire a search firm to find a county police chief in the event negotiations don't pan out. The expense for a county police department is expected to decrease after the initial startup costs. **Smith** said the commission will get a more thorough view of the budget document during its meeting Friday.

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News
April 11, 2015

COUNTY: MAYOR MISSES MARK \ DESPITE LETTER, OFFICIAL SAYS POLICE MERGER STILL NEEDS WORK EVEN THOUGH SOME ISSUES RESOLVED

Author/Byline: Kelly Quimby

As Chatham County administrators prepared to head back to the bargaining table with officials from the city of Savannah, county officials on Friday were making it clear that an agreement over the future of the Savannah-Chatham police department wasn't as close as city officials had made it seem.

In the latest chapter of the public back-and-forth between Savannah and Chatham County officials, county manager **Lee Smith** said the two governments have not agreed upon a framework for a new police merger agreement - despite claims to the contrary made by Savannah Mayor Edna Jackson in a letter delivered to Chatham Commission Chairman Al Scott earlier this week. There are still points to be worked out between staff members, **Smith** said during an impromptu discussion of the subject at the county commission's meeting Friday.

It's true that some issues have been resolved, Chairman Scott said. Scott said he discussed many of the items in Jackson's letter - including cost sharing for animal control, mosquito control and for property crimes investigations - with her during a regular lunch meeting earlier this month. But something was missing from her list, the chairman said. "One of the things we discussed at lunch that's not in her letter is that after two years, we would move to an evidenced-based funding formula - no ifs, no ands, no buts," Scott said. "That's not in the letter. Outside of that, those are points we discussed."

The county in recent months has proven unwilling to budge on this funding proposal. Arguments against it have been that it would prove too expensive for city residents. That, Scott said, is not the county's concern. "I want this to be as clear as a bell. The county's policing responsibility is to the unincorporated area of Chatham County," he said. "This isn't about crime-fighting in Savannah. We have no responsibility for it. Period. This must be emphasized. "I just wanted to make it clear ... I don't have any responsibility for policing anything in the city of Savannah."

Addressing pleas for third-party mediation that have come from officials in Savannah and the business community, **Smith** said the county has received few to no specifics about how a mediation would be conducted.

Chatham officials previously said an agreement with the city needed to be reached by the end of March, but **Smith** told Commissioner Dean Kicklighter on Friday the "drop dead date" for an agreement will have to be sometime this month. It has been nearly seven months since the county voted unanimously Sept. 26 to end the current merger agreement and set an 18-month deadline to reach a new one.

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William Lee Smith
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Last month, the county voted to approve a contract with Baltimore-based Stanton Chase to search for a county police chief at a cost not to exceed \$65,000. Scott reported that while money hasn't yet been spent, work to develop a profile for the right candidate has begun. The search firm will be billing its work at an hourly rate.

Smith said a new chief could be in place as early as August or September, and the county could then move ahead with its plans to rebuild and operate a department at an annual cost that Smith said will be less than what the county is currently paying for police service under its agreement with Savannah.

Smith told a skeptical Commissioner Yusuf Shabazz he'd bet on his position with the county that the savings would come in by at least \$2 million a year. "We've looked at the model ... I think we will be well within \$2 million (in savings)," **Smith** said. "We've had our experts look at it. You will pay less than you're paying today. I will guarantee you, I will place my job on the line you will not (pay more)."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Savannah Morning News (GA)
May 9, 2014

COUNTY'S NEW BOSS STARTS MONDAY

Author/Byline: Marcus E. Howard

Following retiring Chatham County Manager Russ Abolt's final county commission meeting today, his successor is set to begin work Monday - though a salary agreement has yet to be finalized.

Lee Smith has not signed and returned the county's one-page compensation offer, which was sent to him via FedEx along with paperwork and a copy of the county's employee manual. **Smith** has been dealing with a family illness in Durham, N.C., but is expected to travel this weekend to Savannah, said Al Scott, commission chairman.

As there is no agreement to consider, the commission will likely take up **Smith's** salary at the May 23 meeting, said Scott, who has been working with the county attorney to determine whether **Smith's** employment benefits are subject to commission approval. **Smith's** nomination as county manager was approved unanimously by the commission on April 11. The details of his compensation package have not been disclosed. However, he will be paid less than he made as county manager in Wayne County, N.C., Scott confirmed.

Considered among North Carolina's highest paid county managers, **Smith** received \$221,408 annually, plus a \$12,000 travel allowance, as part of a six-year contract that was terminated earlier this year when he and Wayne County reached a \$325,000 settlement over his severance package following his resignation.

According to Scott, the salary range for the Chatham County manager position was between \$175,000 and \$220,000. "I said to him that I wasn't willing to match his salary in North Carolina, at least not the first year, because based on performance you want to be able to reward somebody," said Scott. However, **Smith** has been offered an open-ended contract that could be renegotiated in July 2015. And should he be forced out of office this calendar year, under the terms of the contract **Smith** could be entitled to six-months of severance pay, said Scott.

In addition to a transportation allowance, **Smith** - who turns 50 this month - would be entitled to benefits under the county's defined benefit retirement program based on salary and years of service, self-insured health plan and life insurance coverage of one times his salary.

Meanwhile, Abolt, who has been cleaning out his corner office of 26 years this week, will work for the county as a paid consultant over the next few weeks, not to exceed 90 days. He will, according to Scott, be compensated based on his nearly \$190,000 annual salary, which could amount to a little more than \$700 a day. In 2012, commissioners granted Abolt a retirement package that included \$30,000 a year for six years after his retirement, plus coverage of his and his wife's health, dental and life insurance premiums, as well as a \$200,000 non-term life

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

insurance policy. Abolt also elected to continue participation in an independent defined contribution plan.

As county manager, **Smith** will oversee about 1,544 county employees and a half-billion-dollar county budget. Approximately 98 percent of the fiscal year 2015 budget will have been completed by staff by the time **Smith** sits down next week at his new desk in the Old Courthouse on Bull Street. A budget workshop with county officials has tentatively been scheduled for June 3.

One of **Smith's** first tasks will be to meet with county employees in various departments and later with Scott and the two assistant county managers to discuss what it will take to successfully work together. Scott and Abolt were scheduled to meet Thursday to talk about his consultation. "That's why Russ is so invaluable so that he can sit down with him and just go over all that," said Scott.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne-Wilson News Leader (Fremont, NC)
February 13, 2014

Smith steps down as Wayne Co. manager

Author/Byline: Barry Merrill

The dance that began six weeks ago that would lead to **Lee Smith** leaving his post as Wayne County Manager ended suddenly Monday afternoon. County Commissioners adjourned from a session to discuss school funding to an executive session to discuss with their attorney an offer to resign from Mr. **Smith**. When they reconvened in open session, a unanimous vote approved paying Mr. **Smith** \$325, 000 in settlement of his employment contract and agreement to leave the office. The agreement which was made part of the public record and released to the public states all parties agree not to make written or verbal statements that hurt the personal or professional reputation of those involved. All questions to the county on the matter are to be directed to County Attorney Borden Parker.

Mr. **Smith** had been the target of County Commissioner Joe Daugherty for many months, criticizing the costs of his contract which the former Democrat-controlled county board had approved. In October, Daugherty made a motion to fire Mr. **Smith**, but none of the other commissioners voted in favor of the motion.

In late December, the county granted an emergency leave of absence to the county manager, by some accounts reacting to stress from pressure from the board. In early January, his status changed to a paid leave of absence, with Commissioner John Bell, the lone Democratic holdover from the former board, voting against. Mr. Bell offered the motion Monday afternoon to accept the resignation agreement.

In January Mr. **Smith** retained an attorney to represent him in negotiations with the county, and his attorney publicly asserted if the county fired Mr. **Smith**, the county would owe Mr. **Smith** \$1.4 million under the terms of his employment contract.

A motion by Daugherty was not on the agenda for Monday's meeting, but a resolution had been anticipated. Chairman Wayne Aycock had appointed a working group to begin interviewing potential candidates to assume an interim manager position. They had begun interviews on Friday. Commissioners Ray Mayo, Bill Pate and Ed Cromartie are serving as that working group. They had a second interview on Tuesday. Commissioners are hopeful that an interim manager can be named by the end of February, as the county should be deep in the budgeting process at this point of the fiscal year. As there has been no deputy or assistant county manager on the staff, it is widely anticipated that the county will have to recruit someone from another county to take Mr. **Smith**'s place. The NC Association of County Commissioners has been contacted for help finding suitable candidates.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne-Wilson News Leader (Fremont, NC)
January 9, 2014

Wayne Co. Manager is suspended

Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

Wayne County Manager **Lee Smith** was suspended with pay last Friday during a special meeting of the Board of Commissioners. The board voted 6-1 with District 3 Commissioner John Bell casting the lone vote against the measure, which was decided after a 2½ hour closed session meeting.

No one on the board would say the reason for the suspension and when or if Smith would return to his post. Smith had been on a leave of absence since Dec. 17 when At-large Commissioner Wayne Aycock was named acting county manager. Smith was not at the most recent meeting, held in the Wayne County Administrative Building. County Attorney Borden Parker said the closed session meeting was necessary because it involved attorney-client privilege and the board would be considering "the performance and fitness of county employees."

Smith had seemingly no problems during his first decade plus time in the manager's box. But that changed when the board switched from a Democratic to Republican majority a year ago. Six months later, the board voted on whether to keep **Smith** or remove him.

Upset about a payroll issue, District 6 Commissioner Joe Daughtry made the motion to void the contract with **Smith** at the board's July 16 public meeting. Daughtry cast the lone vote against **Smith**. And since the board refuses to give specifics to the public, rumors, guessing and misinformation abound. What is known is that **Smith** makes more than \$200, 000 annually and may not return based on his life situation and/or the board's decision.

When Aycock took over, he said **Smith's** leave of absence was temporary. "Lee has asked for some time off and I think it's well deserved," Aycock said. "It's only going to be a couple of weeks."

Wayne County does not have an assistant county manager or for that matter anyone with a track record of being responsible for nearly every aspect of county business, including financial matters. The Democratic board gave **Smith** a six-year contract on Jan. 1, 2012.

The county can terminate the contract by giving **Smith** a 30-day notice, but would have to pay his salary and provide benefits, even if **Smith** were suspended from his duties. The county would then have to pay **Smith** a one-time payment to cover any accrued vacation and personal time and also pay his salary and benefits for 12 months. The board set no timetable for **Smith's** return, nor did it say he would return.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Mount Olive Tribune (NC)
November 27, 2013

Commissioners get \$1.87 million shopping spree

Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

The demise of the North Carolina Eastern Region group has turned into an economic development tool for Wayne County. On Tuesday, Nov. 19, the Wayne County Board of Commissioners decided to take advantage of money it gave to the organization to fund four projects for a cost of approximately \$1.87 million.

County Manager **Lee Smith** and District 3 Commissioner John Bell, a member of the Eastern Region board, put a quick plan of action together that includes the purchase of a 45-acre site in the Mount Olive Industrial Park, 50 acres for a veteran's cemetery, equipment for Wayne Community College and renovations at the Wayne Executive Jetport. The four projects will be funded fully and Wayne County can also borrow up to \$576,000 with the one thirteenth-allocation portion from the 13 counties in the Eastern Region. The five-year loan has a 1 percent interest rate.

"These are long term investments that will do good for the county and citizens in different ways," **Smith** said. "This money is an investment in our future. We tried to target how we use the money, so that it would have an impact for 20 to 30 years."

Bell was instrumental in making sure the county would get its share, an amount that was collected from license plate sales since 1998.

Smith drew up the action plan, which he said couldn't tackle an extremely costly project, such as infrastructure concerns, but one that would help several places in the county.

Bell said the Eastern Region group is closing in June 2014 "Let's make this clear, this is \$1.8 million that already belongs to Wayne County, but indeed, Mr. Bell is getting his wish," District 1 Commissioner Ray Mayo said. "This could set us on a pace for economic development and our No. 1 concern, creating jobs. But at the same time it will increase the quality of life for all of Wayne County. It also helps Seymour Johnson (Air Force Base) with flight encroachment."

Smith has worked out a deal to purchase the property in the Mount Olive Industrial Park for \$420,000. The county already owns two plots of land next to it, which are 47 and 24 acres. All three plots are located behind Hwy 55's headquarters (formerly known as Andy's) and between Old Mount Olive Highway (SR 1938) and U.S. 117. Mt. Olive Pickle Company owns the property on the backside of the county's land. Fifty-plus acres for the cemetery, located along Long's Plant Farm Road, would cost \$462,600.

Welding equipment that will be stored and used at Wayne Community College was a part of the Wayne Economic Development Alliance's proposed Manufacturing Center of Excellence. The

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

county will spend nearly \$300, 000 on welders, \$130, 000 on simulated welding Smith training equipment, and \$275, 000 on a waterjet machining center and \$69, 500 on a CNC mill that works in conjunction with WCC's engineering lab. Workers and students will then be able to use computer-aided manufacturing, or CAD, with computer-aided manufacturing (CAM). The hands on CAD-CAM will allow students to learn about the realities of modern industry. "These are the jobs that are in manufacturing today," said District 5 Commissioner Bill Pate. "And they're good paying jobs. I'm hoping some day we find a bigger facility to put this in."

Smith said discussions on that matter are already on the table. He also said the money from the Eastern Region has to be used quickly. "I had been advised to draw it down as quickly as possible," **Smith** said. "So we're looking to having it done by spring to June."

At-Large Commissioner Wayne Aycock said the plan for spending the money was well devised. "All four projects are worthy, and I'm most excited about the WCC because it has educational opportunities and all that equipment," he said.

While **Smith's** spending plan passed unanimously, not everyone was happy it took flight so quickly. District 6 Commissioner Joe Daugherty expressed his dismay in not being in the loop as the plan took flight. "My concern is there wasn't any discussion on this and I wish I were at least asked for my input on how the funds would be used," he said. "This is the first time I'm hearing about this. It seems to me everyone on the board should be

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne-Wilson News Leader (Fremont, NC)
February 21, 2013

Audit report praises state of Wayne County's finances

Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

The recently elected Wayne County Board of Commissioners received an audit report Tuesday morning for the fiscal year that ended in June 2012. The report came from Paul Nunn and Danna Layne, accountants from Nunn, Brashear and Company. The twosome delivered good news on how the previous leadership had built up the county's reserve funds and that its credit rating had skyrocketed in recent years. Nunn said the county's finance department was awarded a certificate of achievement for excellence in financial report. "It's probably the 16th year in a row you've received this award," he said. "Your finance department has done a very good job."

The unqualified opinion from the accounting firm, the highest ranking given during an audit, showed many positives for the county. "Our debt ratio is very, very low compared to other counties," said County Manager **Lee Smith**. "This has helped us get a high rating and enables us to get loans and helps out in obtaining grants and money."

The county's reserve and general funds are extremely healthy. Nunn said the county does not have much in terms of outstanding capital loans, with the exception of those that funded new buildings at Norwayne and Eastern Wayne middle schools, which came via Qualified Construction School Bonds. It increased the county's long-term debt to \$13.77 million.

The county's net assets increased by \$1, 918, 372, mainly because of governmental activities. The unassigned funds in the general fund checked in at \$28.1 million, or 34 percent of total general fund expenditures. The state mandates that eight percent of the general budget be set aside as unassigned. Two Republicans questioned why the unassigned fund was such a high percentage. "Your officials in the past wanted an additional 14 percent, which is not that uncommon," Nunn said.

Final budgeted revenues for the general fund were \$97.9 million, while actual expenditures were \$83.8 million. Wayne County gets 55 percent of its governmental revenues via property taxes, nearly 21 percent from human services and 17.6 percent from sales tax. The county spends 32 percent of its governmental money on human services, 31.7 percent on education and almost 20 percent on public safety.

In the coming weeks, five Republicans will get a bigger input on the budget as **Smith** and his staff prepare the 2013-14 fiscal year. The commissioners will meet with every department head in the county on March 11-12. **Smith** said each department would be given about 15 minutes to talk with the board. The board has also scheduled a meeting with the Wayne County Public School board and high-ranking officials on March 15. These discussions will likely center around the school system's capital improvement projects, specifically buildings. Other topics at the meeting included: - The board talking with County Planning Manager Connie Price about

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

having his department approved small subdivisions, rather than bring them to the full board. Price said this would not include subdivisions or plans that affect the schools, fire departments or sheriff's office. They will revisit the topic at a later date.

Commissioners questioned a \$200, 000 budget amendment for the detention center. **Smith** said the money would hold the county over through the year in terms of paying to have prisoners outsourced to other facilities. He said the jail is always over its capacity of 200, usually by at least 40 inmates. He said that figure has spiked in the past six months and could rise even higher. "If it got as high as 60 it will take more," **Smith** said. "When you hit the 240 mark, the jail inspector starts writing you up."

The board also balked at forgiving \$26,000 that is owed to the county by Wayne Opportunity. The nonprofit handles the county's recycling and uses residents as workers. CEO John Chance said the company has laid off 18 staff workers, but still has 55 employees and 96 clients. Chance said one program has been eliminated and that the company owes \$27, 000 in back taxes. **Smith** said the county has an interest in keeping a relationship with Wayne Opportunities, mainly because it saves the county money.

Chance said the current price of \$54 a ton it receives for recycling materials is too low. "We're losing money until it goes over \$60 a ton," he said. "We've stopped our contributions to employees' 401K programs and are making every effort to stay in business." **Smith** said the county used to subsidize Wayne Opportunity but saves \$75, 000 to \$100, 000 annually from its agreement with the nonprofit. - Commissioner Joe Daughtery suggested the county look into options on residents who file late for present value use of land. The board has granted every late application in the past four months, and has to deal with the concern nearly every time it meets. The board approved a final resolution authorizing a grant programs for ACX Pacific Northwest, Inc.

In another matter that required more discussion, the board talked about whether it would sign off on a grant that would create a walking trail from Wayne Memorial Hospital to Wayne Community College through a medical park and residential district in Goldsboro. The county owns the land and would use it as part of the 25 percent match (\$200, 000). But the deal is contingent upon the city of Goldsboro taking responsibility for liability concerns of the trail. County Attorney Borden Parker said the county could get off the hook, but since it owns the land, it could be subject to responsibility in court, even after signing off to Goldsboro.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Princeton News-Leader (NC)
October 18, 2012

Wayne agrees to pay EMS workers time and a half for overtime hours
Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

The Wayne County Commissioners approved a measure on Tuesday that pays emergency workers time and a half for overtime. The move was made months after numerous problems were found in the new payroll system used to tabulate paychecks for about 60 emergency workers. In the new system, adopted in July, many workers were both overpaid and underpaid. Bob Jackson, chairman of the Wayne County Republican Party, instigated the topic during the public comment portion of the meeting. "We continue to hear about problems and they have not been solved," he said. "Now I'm hearing some employees have obtained the services of an attorney. We're led to believe other departments have problems as well. And a \$200 gift of forgiveness for overpaid, why don't we give that to the underpaid?" Emergency worker Rich Swinson III, who lives in Princeton, said all employees have heard are promises that are not kept.

"Today, it was proposed by email by Mr. **Smith** (County Manager **Lee Smith**) we will get straight pay for up to 40 hours and all the hours over (are) time and a half," he said. "We welcome that as long as the hourly rates don't change. We would also like to pay back money in equal increments over the course of the coming year."

District 1 Commissioner Ray Mayo jumped on the topic as the first speaker during a time when commissioners can comment openly on any matter. "We need to approve time and a half today," he said. "I'm told Mr. **Smith** has already done that, so I ask the county attorney if this isn't something this board should have done? I'm not against what is being done, but the protocol. The commissioners should have been involved." Borden Parker, Wayne County Attorney, responded. "In my opinion, the board would need to approve it, and if it costs more, a budget amendment would have to be made," he said.

Smith said he felt the board was behind the move. "My understanding was in concept you accepted it," he said. Determining overtime has been the biggest concern, according to **Smith**. "It's only for EMS workers that we used Chinese, or fluctuating overtime came into play," he said. "I've never been able to figure it out. There's no incentive to work more and get paid less (per hour)." **Smith** said the problems would cost the county money. "Probably at least another \$200, 000 through this year," he said. "But we can afford to do this, and we owe these employees. We have the money, and I will bring an amendment to you in January."

"Somewhere down the line, that guessing about overtime has to stop," Commissioner Jack Best said. **Smith** agreed, but added there are unknown variables. "We have to have a cushion, such as in the case when there's a hurricane or disaster," he said. "We're not going back to the old system, we'll just inputting the data differently. We will be stronger after we come out of this." Emergency workers filled the seats at the previous two meetings. On Tuesday, about 10 showed up. They clapped when the proposal was approved.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne-Wilson News Leader (Fremont, NC)
June 7, 2012

Smith presents budget proposal to Wayne County Commissioners

Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

Wayne County Manager **Lee Smith** laid out his proposed 2012-13 budget Tuesday morning to commissioners. The board's initial reaction to the budget seemed to be positive, as everyone liked the proposal, trusted **Smith** to make the right decisions, or felt it was best to discuss any differences they had during the June 21 workshop. **Smith** said many big capital projects are being put into the budget, while others needed to be discussed. The budget must be in place by June 30. Among the wish list projects were:- Helping Wayne Community College with its power plant woes and possibly providing a new building.

- Helping the Division of Social Services - Helping the Agriculture Extension Center - Providing money for needed renovations at Wayne County Public Library's Goldsboro branch and the need for a hub library in the northern part of the county to match what is offered in Mount Olive and Goldsboro.

- Assisting in the master plan of the Wayne Executive Jetport.

"I'm asking the board to take a look at these, so we can choose our next step," **Smith** said. "We have to plan our future based on needs, mandates and money." The budget he has put together is chock full of projects that the county has already started, and a few that were once covered by the state or federal government, but are now in the hands of county officials. The \$159 million budget will not include a tax increase. The number of county employees has dropped from 927 in 2003 to 700, and **Smith** has asked all department heads to make 2.5 percent cuts. He also said there would be a job freeze on new employees. "I don't know if we can do that, but I'd like to try," he said. "These are painful and tough economic times. There's a limit to the freeze in that, for example, we have to replace someone like a DSS worker who has an unbelievable caseload. By law, we can't shift that to another employee." Big items included in the budget include: - Replacing about \$120, 000 lost from funding the Day Reporting Center, which **Smith** said saves the county about \$850, 000 annually.

Setting aside about \$1 million for renovations to the jail. Work started this week, but it will not include repairing the roof, which could cost another \$1 million. Spending about \$300, 000 to add quick response vehicles for the Emergency Services and additional help. The move is in lieu of adding another EMS station, and to keep the response time to about eight minutes. Paying out 2.7 million and \$3.85 million for building projects for the Service on Aging and Mount Olive's Steele Memorial Library, respectively. Investing \$400, 000 for the fuel farm at the Jetport. Giving \$500, 000 to the Development Alliance. Giving \$250, 000 to the Wayne County Public Schools for money lost from North Carolina's Low Wealth allocation. **Smith** worked out a deal where \$16 million in renovations at Norwayne and Eastern Wayne middle schools were paid for without raising taxes or stepping on anyone's toes, using lottery funds to pay for the principal and local funds to pay the interest, which is later replaced by federal funds. The projects will be complete sometime this year.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The News Argus
March 11, 2012

Smith elected to lead state panel

Author/Byline/Byline: Staff Reports

Wayne County Manager **Lee Smith** has been elected chairman of the state Department of Health and Human Services Waiver Advisory Committee.

The committee works in aiding development of performance and outcome measurements of the new local management entities and of managed care organization members. The 20-member committee is comprised of mental health providers, medical personnel, agency staff who work with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illness and substance abuse challenges, local management entities (LMEs) and managed care organization (MCO) members.

"I'm excited about participating on a committee that will be the catalyst to a better Mental Health provider system to our clients in North Carolina," **Smith** said. "The major directive is to set measurable actions ensuring proper patient care at an affordable cost."

The committee is responsible for reviewing quarterly and annual report summaries of LME-MCO performance; providing consultation around local and statewide system goals; reviewing outcome measures and trending data; and will assist with problem identification and resolution. "Mr. **Smith** is a perfect fit for this position," said Wayne County Commissioner Chairman John Bell. "He was instrumental in pulling the Eastpointe organization together and has expanded it from four counties to 12 counties."

Bell said that **Smith's** outstanding job as Wayne County's manager and as chair of Eastpointe has gained him recognition and respect throughout the state. "He's known to be well-organized, likable, fiscally conservative, while having the ability to get things done," Bell said.

Smith has been the Wayne County manager for the past 10 years.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Mount Olive Tribune (NC)
September 22, 2011

Commissioners discuss Eastpointe merger, approve new hazard plan

Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

Wayne County Manager **Lee Smith** briefed county officials on work being done that will combine three health care Managed Care Organizations during Tuesday's meeting of the county commissioners. Wayne County MCO provider is Eastpointe, which also serves Duplin, Lenoir, and Sampson counties.

Smith said the state has required many of the MCOs across the state to merge, resulting in fewer organizations that state authorities need to work with. **Smith** Eastpointe is trying to become the lead agent in a merger with the Benson Center, which serves Edgecombe, Greene, Nash, and Wilson counties, and Southeastern Regional, which serves Robeson, Bladen, Scotland, and Columbus counties. Eastpointe has a Medicaid population of 58, 600. The Benson Center serves 51, 168, while Southeastern Regional serves 68, 912.

Smith said the new 12-county organization would be more cost effective and look to stay out of "owning and maintaining buildings" to cut down on overhead. "Statewide, they are looking to trim the number of MCOs to seven or eight," **Smith** said.

Another benefit of the managed care merger approach is that the new organization can re-invest any money it saves. "In the old system, all the money that was left at the end of the year went back to the state," **Smith** said. "We are also not required to have programs that work well in one area, but not another. We might find it works well in Lumberton, but not needed here, and vice versa." The new group is hoping to be formed by Jan. 1, 2013. Based on today's figures, the Medicaid population base total would be 178, 680, with an available Medicaid funding pocketbook of \$40 million.

Smith assured the commissioners that no one would come back looking for money from Wayne County in the event of overspending. He said a recently passed N.C. House Bill does not hold county governments responsible or financially liable for such expenditures. **Smith** said neighboring Johnston County was asked to join the new configuration, but has declined, choosing to stay with a partnership that includes Cumberland and Wake counties.

Commissioners approved the Hazard Mitigation Plan following a public hearing where no one spoke up on the issue. The plan outlines in great detail what needs to be done in emergency situations such as floods, thunderstorms, drought, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

No one spoke up during another public hearing on the county's appropriation of \$206, 220 in funding for the Rural Operating Assistance Program. The programs give money for transportation needs for the elderly, disabled, and poor people with medical needs. About \$62, 000 goes for the elderly and disabled, \$36, 00 for an emergency transportation assistance

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

program, \$560, 000 for a rural assistance program for people without public assistance to pay for their transportation needs, and \$28, 000 is geared to the rural general public.

Other topics at the meeting include:

The board approved five people to Goldsboro's Municipal Planning Organization. Residents appointed to the board include J.E. "Pete" Parks, Vicki Simmons, and Ann Ham, all of Goldsboro. LaGrange's Jo Ann Summerlin, of the Wayne County Planning Board, and Cooperative Extension head Kevin Johnson, of Pikeville, were also selected.

Pamela Holt and Angie Boswell were named as primary and secondary agents on Wayne County's Emergency Management team. Wayne recently got approved for individual assistance from FEMA, and many of the money decisions will fall under the authority of Holt and Boswell.

Smith said second notices on property taxes would be mailed to those who appealed their revaluations within two weeks. He said there were about 1, 800 appeals, and that nearly half will see changes when they open their letters. Any appeal beyond that would have to come within 15 days.

The board approved rezoning 29 acres in Pikeville to Residential-Agriculture 20. The land, which the town of Pikeville released to county authority, is owned by Brian Marcoux. Three subdivision plats were approved. They included one lot on the north side of Old Grantham Road owned by Darryl and Karla Thompson; one lot on the east side of Mt. Carmel Church Road that is being developed by Dale Perry, and one lot on the west side of Price Road near N.C. 55 for developer Lynn Davenport.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne-Wilson News Leader (Fremont, NC)
August 18, 2011

Board accepts bid for Norwayne and EW projects, turns attention to funding

Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

The Wayne County Board of Commissioners took another step forward with building projects at Norwayne and Eastern Wayne elementary schools on Tuesday by agreeing to allow County Manager **Lee Smith** to accept the lowest bid and seek financing options from banks. Monteith Construction's bid of \$14, 535, 000 for both schools earned that company the contract, edging out two other companies by less than \$200. Three firms also bid separately on the two schools as separate projects, but **Smith** said Monteith's bid on both schools was the most cost-effective. The bid came in low enough to include items listed on the project's alternate list, which included \$12, 000 for mobile units at Norwayne and a \$250, 000 update to climate control projects for the school's cafeteria and gymnasium. Eastern Wayne's \$227, 000 climate control project for its gymnasium was also included.

Before Monteith, which has offices in Wilmington and Charlotte, can start, financing has to be arranged. The total bill for both projects is \$16.4 million. **Smith** said the county could now seek \$15 million in Qualified School Bonds. Lottery money and local funds -mostly sales tax receipts - will be used to pay the principal, while federal money can be used to cover the interest, which is about \$750, 000 annually. The county must pay the interest and wait to be reimbursed by the federal government, however. "These reimbursements are on a year-to-year basis, so we have to be prepared if something happens and we don't get reimbursed," **Smith** said. County Attorney Borden Parker said this could save the county \$11.7 million over the term of 14 to 17 years. The bonds have to be sold before December or be forfeited. The county then has a three year three year period to spend the proceeds and complete the project.

Smith said he originally planned to seek bank financing and get approval from the Local Government Commission in November, but because of fluctuating rates, he decided it would be best to do it in September. "There will still be some funds remaining from the lottery money, and I've advised (Superintendent) Dr. Stephen Taylor to allocate it for a solid project to protect it," **Smith** said. Both Eastern Wayne and Norwayne will have old structures demolished, and new twostory classrooms built. The county will use school buildings and property as collateral. Then, the county will lease the buildings and land to the schools until construction warranties expire. **Smith** said the county did not have put up collateral for its last three school projects. A public hearing on the resolution to seek Qualified School Construction Bonds is in the works. Commissioner John Bell asked **Smith** if there was a sales tax advantage if the county owned the schools. **Smith** said the checks and balances are such that it would likely not make sense.

Other topics at the meeting included: · New Wayne County Cooperative Extension Director Kevin Johnson spoke to the board about having his new title and also the title of Crops Agent. **Smith** said that one man cannot do both jobs, and that farmers in the area have bombarded him about the importance of a Crops Agent. The county pays 75 percent of the crops

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

agent's salary. Johnson said the state has not filled the position in part due to its 12.3 percent cut, and that 80 vacant positions have not been filled. The board is sending a request letter to fill the position to North Carolina State University, legislators, and other key parties. **Smith** said the county sends \$30,000 annually for the position, and asked the board to consider paying the entire salary.

- **Smith** distributed new literature to the board concerning the policy of naming county properties and facilities.
- **Smith** told the board that the Wayne County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan it approved in June was approved by the N.C. Office of Emergency Management and FEMA. The delay in getting it approved was because the city of Goldsboro was not included. Goldsboro is now included, joining Mount Olive, Fremont, Pikeville, Eureka, Walnut Creek, and Seven Springs.
- The board approved a fireworks demonstration in Pikeville on Sept. 10.
- **Smith** said a Veteran's Medical Clinic would be established in Goldsboro. "With the many veterans in the area, this is great news," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Mount Olive Tribune (NC)
June 9, 2011

Citing shortfalls, Wayne plans to raise taxes
Proposed budget for 2011-12 includes 2.35-cent tax hike
Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

The price of living in Wayne County is going up. County Manager **Lee Smith** is asking taxpayers to dig deeper. There is a 2.35 cent increase in the 2011-12 budget that county commissioners got to look at for the first time on Tuesday. The increase would provide and additional \$1.3 million for the county's coffers. A person with a property value of \$100, 000 would pay an additional \$23.50 annually. **Smith** said it would pay for future debt service.

Smith has several big ticket items on the table, including \$15 million for projects at Norwayne and Eastern Wayne middle schools, \$13.8 million to renovate a building on William Street for the Health Department, \$3.5 million for Wayne Community College, \$3.85 million for Mount Olive's library renovation and a new senior citizen's building in Goldsboro.

The Commissioners, who didn't have time to read the budget in its entirety, didn't question the tax hike. They will quiz **Smith** on it on Monday at 8:30 in the commissioner's room on the fourth floor of the courthouse. "The \$1.3 million can be accounted with the \$450, 000 we need for social services, balance." Many residents are also getting socked with property tax increases via revaluation.

Every residence and all but a few businesses in Goldsboro have been mailed revaluations. They won't start paying the new rates until September. The \$158 million budget keeps a hiring freeze for "non-essential employees," cuts service hours at the libraries, could delay response time by law enforcement, and will mean longer waits at health and human services. "The state continues to cost shift to county governments," **Smith** said. "Our focus remains on providing high quality service, provided in a professional manner and as The price of living in Wayne County is going up.

County Manager **Lee Smith** is asking taxpayers to dig deeper. There is a 2.35 cent increase in the 2011-12 budget that county commissioners got to look at for the first time on Tuesday. The increase would provide and additional \$1.3 million for the county's coffers. A person with a property value of \$100, 000 would pay an additional \$23.50 annually. **Smith** said it would pay for future debt \$250, 000 in health costs, loss of lottery money and state retirement," **Smith** said. "Just these are 2.35 cents. We can't even do these without going into the reserve fund "The \$1.3 million can be accounted with the \$450, 000 we need for social services, \$250, 000 in health costs, loss of lottery money and state retirement.. the state continues to cost shift to county governments." quickly as possible. "**Smith** said that while he felt Wayne County was in good shape, it was being cautious. "The outlook for the county's financial condition can be characterized as cautiously optimistic as we see the first signs of what is expected to be a recovery," he said. "While some revenue sources are experiencing flat or declining revenues,

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

others are showing early signs of improvement. We cannot be sure if or when revenue growth will return to historical levels if every, which makes planning for the future speculative and maintenance of reserve funds even more critical at this time." After **Smith** delivered the proposed budget, he was confronted with another problem, Senate Bill 756, which would require all persons placed in jail to come up with a 15 percent bond payment. **Smith** said passage of the bill would fill the jail in no time. "We'll have 300 to 350 (inmates) by late summer, and at \$50 to \$75 per day, we will have to build a new jail," he said. "We had that planned in the next 7 to 10 years, but not this soon.

Smith said it would cost about \$75 million for a jail to house 500 prisoners. "The day reporting centers and electronic devices work, and it's a lot cheaper," **Smith** said. Our local legislators get it, but four legislators in the western part of the state have stonewalled us. "The debt service for a new jail is \$3 to \$3.5 million a year, which by itself is a 12 cent tax increase. We're not talking about violent criminals here, either. A jail bond issue would put our capital improvement plan on its head."

Wayne County Sheriff Carey Winders, who has gone four years without having money for a new deputy in the county's budget, said he's out of room already. "We have 245 people today and a facility that should hold 200," Winders said. "If misdemeanor offenders are kept in jail it will go out the roof. There's also no federal or state money for meth lab cleanups, so it will be up to us to pay that cost."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne-Wilson News Leader (Fremont, NC)
January 13, 2011

Wayne Co. manager asks commissioners to hold off on new building plans

Author/Byline: Michael Jaenicke

Wayne County Manager **Lee Smith** has saved taxpayers plenty of money over the last five years via creative financing, aggressively seeking grants and knowing how to form partnerships. Through it all, progress has been made. Now, it appears as if **Smith** is holding back. At the last County Commissioner meeting he told the board to put a temporary hold on plans for a new building for the Health Department and Services on Aging. The move came just before the board was to put its stamp on a \$838, 480 architectural contract.

Smith's concerns were the state's sluggish economy and a projected \$3.7 billion budget gap. While Wayne County's unemployment rate was 8.5 percent, statewide it stood at 9.9 percent. Fifty-two of 100 counties have double-digit numbers. And hardly any talk about money is done in 2011 without mentioning the Republicans as a new force in Congress, which was a Democratic majority for the past two years. "I just came back from a conference and the forecast doesn't look promising," he said in taking the building off the docket. "I am talking May or June. I'm afraid to sign any contracts starting a project. This is a \$13 to \$14 million project. I've been pushing for this but I will tell you I am fearful until I see what the state economy and state budget is going to do. I'd rather hold off."

As usual, **Smith** was trying to make something better and also save money. His department's plan was to renovate the Mason's Department Store on North Walnut Street in Goldsboro. The \$13 to \$14 million project looked like a bargain compared to building one for \$40 to \$45 million from the ground up. So a year of talking up the plan now sends it to the back burner.

But **Smith** didn't back off a long ago proposed plan to spend \$15 million for capital improvements at Norwayne Middle and Eastern Wayne middle schools. The \$15 million plan is divided equally between Eastern Wayne Middle and Norwayne Middle schools. The plan in Pikeville is to build a two-story classroom, air-controlled gymnasium and renovate the current cafeteria. The plan at Eastern Wayne calls for a two-story classroom and administrative building, and air-controlled kitchen and gymnasium. But the bonds must be sold by Dec. 31. The county will then have three years to complete the projects. Commissioners plan to visit each school later this month.

Most people in the Norwayne district have heard expansion talk so much they've become "doubting Thomas" about whether it will ever be done. Talks about it started at the county level in 2006. Norwayne Middle has more than 1, 100 students and is the biggest and most crowded school in Wayne County. Additionally, Norwayne was built on a flood plane, and there has been talk about constructing a building on higher ground the school owns. Both schools have buildings that are aged and in need of repair/demolition. The system is still hurting from projects last year at Brodgen Primary, Mount Olive Middle and Greenwood Middle.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne County Superintendent Steven Taylor also showed concerns about the economy. He's worried about jobs being sliced. But the plan is to begin construction in the spring and have it completed within a year. Taylor said his system is already down 100 positions, and fearful of what 5 to 15 percent cuts in the budget will do to his staff. About \$4 million was cut from his state budget the past two years. "We've been told our state agencies will take a share of the hit and education is a big part of that," Taylor said. "Any way you slice it, when you cut personnel, you cut services to children, and it makes remaining personnel you have do everything they can to get the job done." But Taylor remains optimistic about the building projects and the collaboration they have with county officials.

Commission Andy Anderson said money was tight and warned school officials about adding "padding" to the two projects.

Smith saved the county \$750, 000 to \$800, 000 in interest that will be reimbursed by the federal government. **Smith** seems to think the bid process and sale of bonds will move rapidly.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News Argus
May 5, 2010

County bond rating goes up
Author/Byline: Steve Herring

Wayne County could realize millions of dollars in interest savings in coming years and find itself more attractive to economic development as the result of action by Standard and Poor's Rating Services. County officials were notified late Friday that S&P has raised its long-term rating on the county's general obligation debt from "A+" to "AA-." "It is hard for me to believe in the hard economic times we are going through that we have had a bond (rating) increase," county commission Chairman Jack Best said during the board's Tuesday session. It is the first such increase in at least 25 to 30 years, County Manager **Lee Smith** said.

"It shows that the county, county management, county board and finance people have done a great job," said consultant Robert High, vice president of Davenport and Co. and past secretary of the N.C. Local Government Commission, during a telephone interview. "They have been fiscally responsible. They have maintained the financial health, in fact have improved the financial health of the county, which is all for the betterment of the residents of Wayne County. "It's hard to put absolute terms on a bond upgrade. For one thing, it should be something that the folks of Wayne County should be proud of. I think it is very helpful to the businesses in the community. It gives them, and should give them, comfort that they are not going to be caught with any surprises from their government trying to dig out of a hole, so to speak. I think from a business standpoint a rating is also good for industrial recruitment for the same reason -- it shows stability and strength in the government." The upgrades do not happen by chance, High said. "Upgrades are not freely available, they are rare. I don't know that you ever anticipate an upgrade, especially in a down economy."

An upgrade also brings benefits, just like a higher credit score benefits the consumer, High added. "From a credit standpoint, the better your credit rating, as with individuals, you should be able to borrow money at a lower cost and the availability of credit in a tight credit market is improved. The benefits are many. The benefit is more derived from the reasons that they got the upgrade -- the fact that the government is well managed and you don't have tax rates bouncing up and down. It is consistently managed. So they are able to step up and help in bad times."

Smith called the news, "a dream come true." "We know we have capital programs in the future," he said. "This shows that we are stable. Companies that invest in areas look at things like this because they want to go to areas where you have secure services. Also, in future interest this saves us money. This will save us millions of dollars over the coming years."

Reading from the S&P report, Best said the rating reflected the county's:

- * Continued growth and diversification of the local economy
- * Strong financial management and growth in the level of the general fund balance reserves
- * Low overall debt burden and rapid amortization of debt.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The report cited the county's consistent "sound financial operations which have contributed to consecutive operating surpluses since 2003." In particular it noted the 2007 unreserved fund balance of \$22.9 million or 27.1 percent of expenditures. By 2209 the balance had grown to \$26.5 million or 31.7 percent.

The growing fund balance has been a favorite target of critics of the board. "In the past we have been criticized for the fund balance," **Smith** said. "What are people going to say if we grow fund balance? The story is we stuck to it because it is fact, you have got to have it to survive."

Smith said the county knows it will have future debt and is preparing for it, adding that rating agencies are looking at how that is being done. "A lot of things, including the economy, are out of the county's control, but you can prepare for it," he said. "Commissioners have allowed us by hiring the right experts, putting the policies in place, putting reserves in place -- we were prepared for the downturn. We are weathering it, but we have a long way to go." **Smith** also had high praise for Pam Holt, the county finance officer. A number of other factors have played into the county's economic picture, **Smith** said.

"Our saving grace has been the state, by virtue of Cherry Hospital, the federal government with Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, and growing manufacturing in the area -- AT&T, AAR," **Smith** said. "I think that to me validates the investment we have made in economic development and the investment we made in things like WORK Keys because that has produced jobs, and if you have a good stable labor market the positions are going to come and they have started coming. I think those things have put us over the top."

Also of importance is the new U.S. 70 Bypass that is under construction that will connect to Interstate 795 that connects to Interstate 95. "Business and industry coming to our community should say that this is a community that is stable and growing and that is reasonable in what they charge and how they do business," he said. "This is positive all the way around."

The county has been able to diversify and the goal is to be even more diversified, he said. "That is what the Wayne County Development Alliance is working on, the chamber," **Smith** said. "So you don't worry about one single industry that closes their doors tomorrow that would shut you down. We have been able to suffer through economic hits and loss of jobs."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News Argus
August 13, 2009

Smith told Price to hold off on hearings

Author/Byline: Steve Herring

Wayne County Planning Director Connie Price might have been hesitant Tuesday night to say who told him not to schedule community meetings to discuss zoning, as had been ordered by the county Planning Board. But County Manager **Lee Smith** had no such problem. "I told him," **Smith** said Wednesday. The issue came up after Planning Board member Steve Keen reminded fellow board members that they had agreed to hold a series of public meetings starting with one on the U.S. 70 Bypass interchange at Wayne Memorial Drive. The meetings were to gather public input and interest in zoning. Keen asked Price if he had scheduled the meetings and Price replied he had been told not to but declined to say who ordered him to hold off.

At issue, **Smith** said, is the danger of zoning being confused with a multitude of other issues currently facing commissioners. In addition, county commissioners need to be aware of what the Planning Board would be sending out beforehand, he said. **Smith** said it was not an attempt to censor the Planning Board, but rather to allow commissioners to be aware of what was going on when people began calling about the meeting. The Planning Board's first attempt at having a zoning meeting earlier this year was the victim of such confusion, he said.

The original concept was to have a series of meetings across the county starting in the areas along U.S. 70 west at Rosewood and the U.S. 70 Bypass and Wayne Memorial Drive interchange.

A brewing controversy over the Goldsboro Municipal Planning Organization erupted prior to the start of the meetings. The meetings were canceled out of concern that the issue of zoning would be lost in the confusion. Conditions are ripe for the same problems to develop again, **Smith** said. "I am concerned there are a lot of issues out there," **Smith** said. He cited the lingering MPO uproar, possible changes in the subdivision and mobile home ordinances and zoning. "There are a lot of irons in the fire," he said. "I said (to Price) let's be clear (about the issues). I am telling you not to do this now. Let's get these other issues out of the way and settled. "I have no authority over the Planning Board, but I do over the planning staff."

There has been a lot of "mixing" of the issues, he said. As such, he added, it is important to get good information to people and not waste their time. "They need to be educated on the subject matter," he said. "It is as simple as that. Also, the commissioners need to at least know what is going on. They are going to get calls and they are going to be in the dark. I am telling you right now we need to keep the issues separated."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The News Argus
August 11, 2009

County manager vows to help schools

Author/Byline: Phyllis Moore

Stepping out of his role of county manager Monday night, **Lee Smith** made a commitment to Wayne County Board of Education to enlist an army of volunteers for the school system.

A parent himself, **Smith** took on the mantle after serving as a test proctor at his daughter's school in the spring. Witnessing some of the students' frustration in being able to finish the tests struck a chord with him, he said. "It was obvious they were not going to make it," he said. "I left there very upset, very concerned. ... What I saw in talking with some of the staff was the frustration of the teachers, though they have these kids seven, eight hours a day, nine months a year."

While parents have the most important job in the world raising a child, teachers are in second position, **Smith** said. "They influence our children, but they have got a disadvantage also. They become parents for eight hours a day," he said.

There's a question bandied about the county commission when challenges present themselves, the county manager said -- "What am I going to do about it?" **Smith** said he took the question to heart and decided to take action. "What I'm about to tell you is nothing new," he told the board. "It's no great idea. It happens every day." Mentors and tutoring are needed in the school system, experts say -- to provide individual attention that the teachers often can't give. **Smith** proposed the "local government volunteer partnership," starting with the county staff, volunteering and being trained for the job. "Every one of my county commissioners have made a commitment" to do that already, **Smith** said. Since, a total of 30 volunteers have stepped forward. "My goal is 100," **Smith** said. "I want to exceed that goal. We have all volunteered to give our time."

If it takes a village to raise a child, then who better to set the example than its leaders? "We have to take care of our children by giving them an opportunity," **Smith** said, citing something he recently heard schools superintendent Dr. Steven Taylor say at a seminar -- "Children must have at least one person who believes in them." A few volunteers will make a dent, but many can make all the difference. **Smith** said he has made a commitment to "go after 100 folks," but added he is confident the number could exceed that. In addition to the commission and county staff, he expanded his challenge to include the City of Goldsboro and outlying areas -- Mount Olive, Fremont, Pikeville -- "because everybody has a talent, to go into our schools." It's time for the community to step up, **Smith** continued, because the school board cannot do it alone. "It's put up or shut up time for this community. I mean it," he said. "We're committing our staff to take time, mentoring takes a lot of time, training. You're talking making a commitment to a child long-term." **Smith** said he envisions providing training for the volunteers, and at the outset mentors will be assigned to the middle schools.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

School board members were appreciative of the suggestion. Board member Shirley Sims praised **Smith's** decision. "Today you have taken the charge and the challenge. If we could get others who have made such negative comments (about the schools) ... because you're either part of the solution or you're part of the problem," she said.

Board member Thelma Smith also thanked **Smith** for his stance. "What you did is what we have been trying to ask all along," she said. "We know we work hard -- our teachers, our staff, our superintendent. The next piece has been just what you told us." Many in the community have not set foot in the schools, so can't claim to understand the problems, she said. It would be nice if they could "see for yourself" like **Smith** did, she said. "By you speaking tonight, I'm sure there's going to be other groups in the area who are going to follow suit."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News Argus
July 9, 2009

Manager to county: Freeze my salary, too
Author/Byline: Steve Herring

When County Manager **Lee Smith** compiled the 2009-10 budget that was approved last month he did not include any salary increases for county employees or for himself, even though his contract with the county provides for an annual increase of 5 percent.

Smith's salary is \$160,416 and he receives \$12,000 annually for travel. According to data compiled by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, **Smith** is among 14 managers statewide who are paid a base salary of between \$150,000 to \$175,000. **Smith** oversees a \$157.6 million budget and more than 800 full-time employees and a total workforce of close to 1,000 when part-time help is included.

In a letter dated May 1, **Smith** wrote to commission Chairman Bud Gray that, "Due to economic and budget conditions, I am hereby requesting the clause within the employment agreement between me and the County of Wayne determining an annual increase for my position be halted for fiscal year 2009/2010. Due to the fact the county will be unable to give raises to county employees; I feel strongly that I should fall under the same guidelines/restrictions. I appreciate your support and look forward to a time when Wayne County can continue to grow."

Smith said he only decided to publicly comment on the letter after rumors surfaced that he had received a raise. "Otherwise I would have said nothing because I did not think it was deemed worthy," he said. "I just wanted it to be quiet. I did not want to come across like I was trying to be a martyr. "I asked a couple of board members about it and they said that is 'your call, we have a legal binding contract with you,' a five-year agreement."

Another rumor, he said, was that the agreement provided for a five-year severance package. "It is a one-year severance deal," he said. "If I am fired for something criminal, or for negligence, I don't get paid anything. I am not a county employee. I work by statute at the pleasure of the board of county commissioners. I can be fired for parting my hair wrong. "The board gave me a contract, they came in here and renewed my contract at their behest. They said, 'It makes us feel better and we want you to feel good about the job and not feel politically pressured every single day.' That gives you at least a feeling that your board is supportive."

County employees have policy and law behind them, **Smith** said. "The rights given to a county employee, I do not enjoy," he said. "They are by statute at the pleasure of the board. But they (employees) have forewarning and all of these other policies that we create. I don't. So the board was kind enough to do that and put it (a contract) together." The contract spells out the travel allowance and insurance. **Smith** receives all benefits provided full-time employees. The county provides at no cost medical and dental insurance for **Smith** and his family and at least a 5 percent annual contribution to **Smith's** 401K plan. **Smith** said he had received a call from the county's

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

human resources department that someone wanted a copy of the contract. "I told them to tell the person to call up (to his office) and that (a copy) is 10 cents a page," he said. "It is pretty easy. It is not a secret. There is nothing to hide. The rumor is that it has been asked for and that we have refused to provide a copy.

"I have asked the clerk to the board of commissioners and my assistant if there has ever been a request in my eight years for my agreement. No. It has never been asked for." **Smith** provided a copy of the two-page contract dated Jan. 1, 2008. In the contract **Smith** waives his rights of confidentiality concerning the agreement and notes that "to that end authorizes the disclosure of this agreement and its entry upon the board's minutes."

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners recently released data it collected from the state's 100 counties concerning salaries. According to the data Wayne County has a population of 114,000 and approximate valuation (2007-08) in millions of \$5,603.

The commission chairman receives \$11,838 annually and board members \$9,613. Commissioner Jack Best does not accept any of the pay or benefits, **Smith** said. "If there are other things that we attend or go to, if there is a cost associated with it, he reimburses us," **Smith** said. "He tries to pay in advance if he can, but sometimes that is hard to do. "He is in a position to do that and does not fault others who don't. He looks at it as he is serving the public and he wants to do that and that is pretty admirable. Not everybody can do that. He has done it since the day he got on."

Information was unavailable for eight counties in the data compiled by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. Another, Onslow, had a vacant manager's office when the information was gathered.

Managers' salaries range from a low of \$30,384 in coastal Tyrell County to \$215,656, plus another \$12,149 in travel in Mecklenburg County. Wake County is a close second at \$214,127 plus \$6,000 in travel.

Commissioners' salaries range from lows of \$450 per meeting for the chairman and \$150 for members in Tyrell County to a high of \$27,962 plus \$3,528 in travel for the chairman and \$22,370 plus \$3,528 in travel for members in Mecklenburg County.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News Argus
December 28, 2008

County manager looks ahead to 2009

Author/Byline: Steve Herring

There is not a lot to be optimistic about in a downward-spiraling economy that is still trying to find the bottom of the barrel. But Wayne County Manager **Lee Smith** is hopeful that steps taken over the past several years will help insulate the county from the worst of the freefall and allow it to keep projects, such as the \$23 million school facilities plan, on target. **Smith** also views the county budget's health as validation of commissioners' efforts to increase the county's fund balance in the face of criticism. He balances his optimism that the county will not only weather the financial crisis, and may even be able to garner some benefit, with deep concerns over what could be slash-and-burn tactics in Raleigh as legislators raid funds to cover a \$3 billion budget shortfall. Even with those concerns, **Smith** said commissioners have indicated there will be no property tax increase next year. "When I look at next year's budget I see no increase," he said. "I think we have to stay where we are or less. We made the cuts before 2008 in preparation for not only trying to get ready to borrow money for the jail and schools and those kind of things -- we were preparing ourselves for the future as far as having money."

"I still feel strongly about not using the capital and fund balance for one-time items. It is still for emergencies. I am still very hesitant to go back into the fund balance to pay for operations. Now for this coming year I know commissioners, in their mind are going 'no tax increase.' People are under hard times right now. "So what we did for this year we went revenue neutral and in some cases we went below state forecasts and said 'we don't believe it' (state projections). I did not plan on one extra dime this year in property tax and there is a reason because we didn't think it was going to be there." Some areas, say along the beaches, planned on higher values that have dropped dramatically and now they won't be able to make budget, he said.

The state had promised some \$2.5 million to \$3 million for Medicaid. "No way we were going to get that this year from the state," **Smith** said. "So I counted on a million and if I get \$2 million then great, you are \$1 million ahead of the game, but don't count on it." He added, "Sales tax is down, but you have got to remember we live 90 days in arrears in sales tax so you don't have a real picture yet. I will be real curious to begin seeing in February and March what December looked like. That will be the real test. "We know we will see a downturn. How much, I'm not sure, but we did not count on what the state had said. It could it get worse and if it does I will have to make adjustments on the county budget. We already have frozen jobs, already frozen capital projects. I think we have done the things we can do right now to kind of prepare for this downward shift in revenue." Complicating the economic picture somewhat is the county upcoming property revaluation. **Smith** said some people are concerned about conducting revaluation during an economic downturn. "It could have a negative impact," he said. "But say you get beyond 2011, the board may want to go to four-year (revaluation) cycle if you have an upturn in values because you don't want to live with lower values. You want to value closer to what the market value actually is." **Smith** said the state has depended on capital gains tax

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William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

revenues for years to balance budget. "They are not going to be there this year," he said. "It is going to be a problem." **Smith** said it is difficult to know what direction the new state leadership will take. "You have got to be prepared for what they pass down to you," he said. "Usually what they pass down to you is usually less in reimbursements, less in funds of any sort, but they will pass on program responsibilities that in the past have been their responsibility. For example, this past year the state required counties to shoulder more of the cost for foster children care. For Wayne County that meant another \$450,000. **Smith** is concerned about what the lawmakers will do and what funds they may take, including lottery proceeds meant for education. That, he said, could affect the county's school facilities plan. "They have got big holes to fill and where are they going to fill it -- they're going to start to look at pots of money," **Smith** said.

The county schools currently have \$6.2 million in lottery proceeds, but the money technically belongs to the state. "I say get it in the schools' checking account," **Smith** said. "Obligate it. I say build Eastern Wayne or Norwayne or a combination with cash tomorrow. Obligate it or we are going to lose it." "Bid it out and let's do that now," he said. "I am urging them (school board) to move quickly because I think they are going to lose it (lottery money). "I think if we borrow \$16 million and hope to use that (lottery) later I think it is going away. Ask counties about the inventory and intangibles (taxes) in the 1980s. The state said 'We'll never take your money.' Now it is gone." Even a supposed break in Medicaid has cost the county. "The state said 'we are going to give you full relief' and then when it passed they took some of my sales tax. We lost hundreds of thousands of dollars over that. Even though we gained, we still lost a revenue source. I think they are going to take it (lottery) because they don't have a choice. They are not going to raise taxes. "The next phase for the school plan is bond money and bond money is not there. It could be several years before the project could be done."

Smith said people have said to him that adding to the fund balance is just a way to get ready for capital projects. "That's true, but we also did it to build and our sustain our credit rating," **Smith** said. "You also want to do it in case of an economic downturn. Well, we are in one. "The thing Wayne County has been able to do over the past few years is to put some money aside."

Meanwhile, numbers from the Health Department and Department of Social Services worry **Smith**. Applications for the Women Infants Children (WIC) program are up by about 25 percent. Food Stamp applications are up as well. "I think our general health visits are up," **Smith** said. "It's not just those that who are poverty stricken who are walking into DSS and Health Department. These are people who just months before were making \$40,000, \$50,000 or \$60,000 and now don't have a job. They are coming to Wayne County going 'I need some help. I don't have health insurance, what do I do?' "We see them because that is our job. County employees are concerned because when there is an economic downturn their production goes up. That is the thing that is so concerning because that is when there is a strain on taxes yet there is more demand on services. I think we have to be real concerned about that." Housing sales are down, foreclosures are up as are job losses, he said. "There is a lot of fear out there," **Smith** said. "We have people here who build things for the automotive industry so we all are kind of standing back holding our breaths about that. When you watch the Congress hearings about GM and Chryslers that affects Wayne County."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The News Argus
October 26, 2008

County surviving economic downturn

Author/Byline: Steve Herring

County Manager **Lee Smith** said Wednesday he has "put the skids" on some county spending. **Smith** said while he remains confident that the county's sound fiscal responsibility over the past several years and its ability to grow its savings have put it in a position to weather the ongoing financial crisis, he is still concerned about news he is hearing from the state. The economic downturn isn't expected to derail the county's plans to put a new \$9.7 million communications system in place, but it is too early to tell if it will impact a planned \$22 million school renovation and building project, he said.

The "skids" include a freeze on hiring of non-essential personnel as well as a delay in some capital purchases until the end of the year to see where the county stands, **Smith** said. There are not that many capital purchases in the budget, items that include computers and vehicles, he said. For instance, the county is looking at shifting vehicles around instead of buying new ones, he said. "In some cases we have to buy new because we have some that are older that are costing us a lot of money," **Smith** said. "It (vehicle purchases) is being looked at on a case-by-case basis and we are doing a cost analysis -- how much does it cost to operate it and maintain it. If we are at a point at which we are losing money we will look at a new vehicle, one that might get better gas mileage and reduce maintenance cost."

The four-day work week the county implemented in August is also a "piece" of the county's savings efforts. "Now we are telling workers 'when you leave your office for a period of time, cut your lights off,'" he said. **Smith** said that might not seem like a lot, but if he saves \$25 a year by turning off the lights in his office and that savings is multiplied by all of the other offices then it "adds up."

Another area of savings has been in a reduction of the number of county employees. Over the past several years, the county has left 123 positions vacant, resulting in a savings of \$2.5 million to \$3 million, **Smith** said. But now employee turnover in the county is at an all-time low, he said. "People are staying put," **Smith** said. "I hope that county employees are fairly satisfied with their job and benefits. We used to have wiggle room in open positions, now it is just not there." **Smith** said he is concerned about what he is hearing about cuts on the state level. Early indications were a \$250 million budget shortfall. **Smith** said he would not be surprised to see a \$1 billion shortfall based on what he has seen.

Gov. Mike Easley has made cuts so that might help some, **Smith** said, and some areas look better than they did a couple of weeks ago. "I think the state will have to look to cut and one of the places I fear is going to be Medicaid," he said. "I have never taken what they (state) said they were going to give me at 100 percent," **Smith** said. "In some cases I cut it in half and say there is no way we are going to get that much. I just never felt that confident about it. I think that will

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

help us if the state decides to start drawing that (Medicaid) back next year. "Also, we planned for this year and next year that our revenues would be flat. No increases. Therefore, if you have extra money you bank it away. You don't spend what you think you might have. You spend what you know you have and save what you have. I think that has helped us this year and that is why I am not as panicked as some. The way a lot of folks fix budgets is that they overestimate revenues and adjust budget at year's end in an audit. We don't do it that way."

"Right now I think we are holding our own and are waiting to see the next sales tax figures," **Smith** said. "We have not seen a major hit yet, but they say we are going to get it. But I think by our projecting flat (revenues) I am hoping that we are kind of prepared for it. "But that does not mean the county can sit back and say it is prepared for it. We have to look for ways to cut back."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Princeton News-Leader (NC)
February 6, 2008

Smith sees more positive tone in county

Author/Byline: Barry Merrill

Wayne County Manager **Lee Smith** had just met with the Carl Best Leadership Group. That hadn't always been one of his favorite meetings. In fact, as he tells it, "I made them mad in 2007." One of the members of that farming community group, Gerald Ballance of Fremont, met with him after that meeting. "You came across very cold," Mr. Ballance reportedly told the county manager.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Ballance and the group to stand up and make their voice heard. "You have a say so in the community. You've got to tell us what you want in your community." **Mr. Smith** was very excited about what he heard this year as he challenged each one to raise one or two issues. He said 70% of the questions were about schools, reflecting their concerns and the increasing importance of education in farming. He said zoning was one of those subjects that riled many in years past, but today there is growing appreciation of the protection zoning offers farmers and others in the county. He said transportation, both rails and roads, are of concern to many in the county.

Agri-business is not the only ones concerned about schools. The business community has been stepping up, not only seeking improvement but offering how they can help. Business people are having a tough time finding and keeping qualified employees. Recently the county helped fund the Work Keys program, which certifies to employers that applicants have certain work skills necessary to do a job. He said this not only offers certification, but also orients students for skills necessary to be productive employees. School Board Chairman Thelma Smith is concerned about students who choose to drop out of school not finding a positive path in society.

Mr. Smith spoke about a program where Teresa Bayer is working the Judge Braswell and the Wayne County Development Alliance to provide GEDs for substance abusers who are completing rehabilitation and want to work. "We want to get them before they end up in jail and learn things that will make it even harder to turn their lives around." He hopes more mentoring programs can be developed to help meet the needs in the county.

Mr. Smith said that while some of his meetings with citizens have not always been positive, some of his meetings with county employees have not always been positive either. "We've made changes in staff, we've had staff turnover, and we've retrained. Some days people don't like me very much." He says they have been trying to clean their own house, not necessarily trying to find fault, but to find where they need to invest. They're setting measurable objectives in every department, and that's not always easy.

He pointed with some pride to the community's recognition of the need for a new animal shelter, and with the community raising \$600,000, including a \$100,000 anonymous pledge. He

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

mentioned that the fundraising success was earning him a haircut, as he was getting his head buzz-cut in response to a challenge he had issued. He also pointed to Commissioner John Bell taking his time to plant flowers at Goldsboro High School, trying to beautify that school campus as a volunteer. He wanted to make the school look better so people will take more pride in the school.

Mr. **Smith** is concerned about health services. He says while most of us see public health services as just for the poor, there are many in the county who can't afford health insurance, including many working people. Some can't afford the insurance or the deductible. He says the WATCH van services and clinics are vitally important for the county to provide those services. One of the benefits of improved health services is reduction in employee absenteeism, and healthier students do better in school.

Much of the conversation revolved around the recently proposed \$23 million school facility plan, and Mr. **Smith** acknowledged that was just the start of the needs. Finding money to do more school construction, along with a new detention center, buildings for health and DSS, and services for the aging is going to be challenging. "Wayne County can't borrow \$300 million." One of the benefits he sees to help finance will be lowered operating costs in new school buildings.

Eventually the county will need to pass a bond issue, but they need the vote of the people to spend the money. "Their vote will be the authorization to spend the money." Mr. **Smith** says in the six years he has been in Wayne County he's seen changes in the way the community is thinking about things in the county. "It's not the same chatter you used to hear. We're talking about 'what do you want to see better?'"

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne-Wilson News Leader (Fremont, NC)
September 27, 2007

Wayne Commissioners plan for growth

Author/Byline: Sarah A. Wise

27 September 2007 - School facilities in the northern end of the county were the hot button issue at the Wayne County Commissioner's Community Meeting at Charles B. Aycock Monday night.

After giving a brief presentation on services the county offers to all of its citizens, County Manager **Lee Smith** addressed questions that citizens had written and submitted before the meeting began. And while the topic ran the gamut from ditches to recreational services, the biggest issue on most people's mind was how soon schools will be expanded in northern Wayne County. Darron Flowers of Fremont asked why the county was just now looking at school facilities when growth and overcrowding issues have been apparent for years.

Mr. **Smith** explained that the county has had several big projects that also need their attention and money, and that they cannot just favor one project over the other. "As a taxpayer myself, I want to know what the payment on the building is, as well as the operational cost," he said. "I want to know how building is going to affect the tax rate."

Another problem, he said, was getting information on not just what it will cost to build additional structures at a particular school, but also the cost of maintaining that structure. "We are just now getting estimates on operational costs for the proposed school projects in the county," he said. "We have gotten that, and sent it back to the school board for revisions, and we're meeting with our financial advisors about it."

He also said that the county is composing a prioritized list of all county projects is in the works now, including either an expanded or a new jail facility, as well as consolidated library facilities in the northern and southern ends of the county. "We don't want to promise you that a high school is going to get built a certain year, and then when that year gets there, we can't go any longer without a new jail," he said. "The local government commission won't let you build that much at one time, you have to spread it out. So we're trying to get a handle on everything we're trying to do."

Later in the meeting, Mr. **Smith** addressed a similar question on addressing classroom space in the county, and dealing with overcrowded schools in some areas while having open space in others. He said that, while he knows it is controversial, the schools have been asked to look at things like reassignment and year-round school. They are also examining the possibility of setting county-wide rules limiting the amount of mobile units schools can have before they must build more classrooms at the school. "We have asked the school board to look at all the ways that we can utilize the schools better," he said, "and you can't do that without looking at some difficult options." He said that in addition to adding classroom space, the board also has to look at what he calls the core of the school - facilities like cafeterias, media centers, and athletic facilities. He said that the capacity to increase the core must be there before more classroom

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

space is added. Mr. Flowers asked where exactly the county was in building schools. "Not to be disrespectful, but can you tell us when you are going to be able to build at each of the schools?" he said. While he stopped short of putting exact years on construction, Mr. **Smith** did say that in the prioritized list from the school, building an additional building at Norwayne is second or third on the list, while building more space at CBA is sixth. He added that plans for a two-story educational classroom were in the works for Norwayne.

Vance Greeson of Pikeville then asked if American Disabilities Act (ADA) would be met in the two story structure, including putting an elevator in. Mr. **Smith** said the building would have to meet those standards to be approved.

School board member Dave Thomas, who also attended the meeting, added a little perspective to the situation in Northern Wayne County. "The high school has 1220 students right now," he said. "They have 305 students per lunch period in the original cafeteria built in 1961. There are 13 mobile units, and ten teachers without classrooms." He also said that Aycock is the only high school in the county that only has one feeder school, and that he felt the need for a second middle school was on the horizon. Pikeville Mayor Herb Sieger asked why the county was committing money to libraries he didn't think were pressing, because there are already facilities in both Pikeville and Fremont, when schools so clearly need to be built.

Mr. **Smith** said that the county is working on a five-year plan and a 10-year plan for all county projects, and that it would be unfair to dismiss any needed projects. He also referred Mr. Sieger to library director Jane Rustin for more information on the libraries.

The school discussion ended with an emphasis on a proposed quarter-percent sales tax in the county that could be used to generate revenue for schools. "We've heard from a lot of people that they would rather see the sales tax than a proposed land transfer tax," he said, "and we think that would generate more revenue." He encouraged citizens to contact the commissioners with their thoughts on the tax, and thanked them for all their input during the meeting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wayne-Wilson News Leader (Fremont, NC)
May 25, 2006

Medicaid costs put county in a bind. Wayne seeking Medicaid spending cap

Author/Byline: Reggie Ponder

The Wayne County Board of Commissioners wants the public to understand the bind that the county is in because of Medicaid costs. The commissioners held a work session on Medicaid costs at their meeting Tuesday. The focus of the work session was informing the public about the Medicaid situation. County Manager **Lee Smith** told the commissioners that county officials needed to watch the legislative short session "like a hawk." The legislators have a tough job because they have to find funding, he said. "The spiraling costs of Medicaid are crippling counties' ability to fund education such as school construction, teachers and classroom needs," according to a printed report that Mr. **Smith** presented to the commissioners. "Wayne County spends more for Medicaid than for school facilities." He said that Medicaid was a good program, but that the state-mandated payments were getting out of control. "There's a balance that we've got to find," **Mr. Smith** said. "And as commissioners, you've got a tough job ahead of you." Medicaid will cost county taxpayers more than \$7.5 million next year. That's a 77 percent increase since 2000.

The report indicated that 21.9 percent of the county's residents were Medicaid eligible, that 13 cents of the county's tax rate pays the county's mandated share of Medicaid, and that 9.1 percent of the county's current budget is required for Medicaid. The N.C. Association of County Commissioners' goal is the passage of legislation to implement a six-year phaseout of county participation in the costs of Medicaid. The association also wants the General Assembly to cap county costs at the fiscal year 2004-2005 level and provide relief by targeting supplemental financial assistance to any county in which more than a specified percent of the population is eligible for Medicaid. According to the association of county commissioners, the state has five counties that spend more on Medicaid than for their public schools current expense. Half the state's counties spend more on Medicaid than for public school construction and other capital expenses. Commissioner Wilbur "Andy" Anderson said that Monday's work session was mostly to get the word out to the public. "This is a big issue," Mr. **Smith** said. Projected Medicaid cost in the county is \$18 million by 2018, Mr. Anderson said. Officials need to work together as a team to resolve the issue, he said. "I don't know what the answer is," Mr. Sager said. But requiring Medicaid recipients to pay part of the bill, or changing eligibility requirements, might help. Illegal immigrants also are placing a burden on the Medicaid system, he said.

Mr. Sager said that he didn't want to deny care to anyone. He said that he just wanted to find a better way to handle it. He said that he was concerned about those on Medicaid, but that he also was concerned about those whose incomes are barely above the Medicaid eligibility levels and who can't get care. Mr. **Smith** said that county officials needed to remain engaged with state legislators as the General Assembly works on the Medicaid issue. Mr. Anderson said that he agreed with Mr. Sager's concern about those just above the Medicaid eligibility levels. Mr. **Smith** said that he and the commissioners received emails and telephone calls from families

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

in the \$23,000-\$35,000 income range who say, "I'm dying." They are caught in a squeeze because they don't receive Medicaid and related services and are supporting those that do. In other matters, the board proclaimed May as "Mental Health Month." County Manager **Lee Smith** said that if anyone had a complaint or issue with mental health services, to call 731-1133 and ask for "customer service" - "that is a brand new thing now across the state" - to report to Eastpointe Mental Health Services. "If something is going well we'd like to know that, too," he said. The board also proclaimed May as "Volunteer Month." The board unanimously awarded the banking services contract to BB&T on the staff's recommendation. Mr. **Smith** said that the finance office staff had done an excellent job reviewing the bids. Goldsboro attorney Phil Baddour was appointed to the U.S. Highway 70 Corridor Commission. Mr. **Smith** was appointed to the Wayne County Development Alliance, Inc. Board of Directors. Mr. Anderson said that the county was beginning to see results of improvements to infrastructure. The county commissioners need to continue working with county citizens and keep them involved, he said. "The sky's the limit in Wayne County," Mr. Anderson said. "I think we've got a very, very good future ahead of us." The Wayne County Board of Commissioners plans a bold effort to lobby the state legislature to cap county Medicaid spending and overturn a stringent environmental regulation.

During the commissioners' briefing Tuesday, held just before the regular board meeting, County Manager **Lee Smith** said that a "myriad of bills" had been proposed for addressing the county portion of Medicaid funding. "It will be a daily monitoring," he said of the county's role in watching the General Assembly. Capping county funding of Medicaid would help with local budget issues, he said. Commissioner Munroe "Jack" Best blasted a recent increase in nitrogen runoff fees for developers. The fees, imposed administratively through a state regulatory agency, have increased from \$11 per pound to \$57 per pound of nitrogen. Mr. Best said that for one potential project, the cost increased from \$109,000 to \$634,000. He said that the nitrogen runoff regulations could stifle development in Wayne County. "If you're in the development business, this is a deal-breaker," Mr. Best said. "This is a deterrent to anybody to come to Wayne County because they can't afford it." The issue is job creation, Mr. Best said. The projects that the county has been working on could mean a thousand new jobs for the county, he said. "You've got a board up there that's made up of environmentalists and tree-huggers," said Borden Parker, county attorney.

The fees only affect counties in the Neuse River Basin. Mr. Best and Mr. **Smith** said that the Neuse Basin counties needed to present a unified front on the issue at the General Assembly next week. Many Neuse Basin boards of commissioners and economic development groups don't understand the issue yet, Mr. **Smith** said. "Everybody's just not jumping up and down on this, and this is a killer," Mr. **Smith** said. He said that the General Assembly needed to overturn the administrative rule. The board resumed discussion of the issue later on during the regular board meeting. "This is an absolute death notice for us," Mr. **Smith** said during the meeting. He said that protecting waterways was important, but that there needed to be some balance. "That has got to be fixed," he said. Mr. **Smith** said that monitoring the legislature would be a constant task during the session. "We've got to be vigilant until the very last second," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News Argus
April 24, 2005

County must make budget decisions

Author/Byline: Barbara Arntsen

For the past three years, County Manager **Lee Smith** has squeezed every penny the county spends and cut 7 percent of the county's labor force to keep from using money from savings. **Smith** and the county commissioners have managed to keep the general fund at a little over \$18 million, while still providing necessary services to the public. But keeping the general fund at a level amount won't allow the county to accomplish long-term projects like building new schools, repairing and expanding water and sewer systems and providing quality health care services.

To adequately prepare for the future, the county has to add to its savings. That means the commissioners will have some tough decisions to make during budget talks this year. Can they add to the county's coffers to prepare for the future without cutting services or increasing taxes? When **Smith** began his job as county manager in 2002, he found that the county had reduced its general fund balance by almost \$12 million over the previous three years. And, **Smith** said, the 2002 expenditures were already over the budget projections.

Working with the finance office, **Smith** cut county expenditures by \$6.2 million between February and June 2002, thereby substantially reducing the amount of money the county would have to take from its savings. Through the budget reductions, he said, the county only had to take about \$3 million from the general fund that year, instead of the projected \$9 million. "My goal then was to look at why there was such a drain on the fund balance and figure out how to stop it," he said. **Smith** said that fund balances in all counties grew in the late 1990's because state reimbursements for various programs, like Medicaid and Medicare, were always coming in well over budget estimates. Those hefty reimbursements stopped by 2000, and counties were then faced with offering more health services with less money.

Smith looked at the county's audit figures over a 10-year period and found that expenditures were growing an average of around \$6 million per year. Revenue growth was not keeping up with expenditures, he said. That trend, **Smith** said, had to be reversed or the county would end up in financial trouble. "If you use your savings to buy groceries, or to pay the light bill, eventually you're going bankrupt," he said. Revaluation of county property added almost \$3 million to the county's revenues, he said, which helped offset the original \$9.5 million over budget expenses. So, when planning for the next year's budget, he budgeted to use \$4.2 million from fund balance, knowing the county would have to bring in revenues equal to that amount or risk draining its savings even more. "By the next year we had brought in revenues to cover that amount, plus we added \$25,000," he said. **Smith** said that adding \$25,000 wasn't much in terms of "growing the fund balance" but said his goal had been to break even for that first year.

For the last two years, the county has kept its fund balance even at \$18.2 million by reducing general fund expenditures by 13 percent, cutting labor by 7 percent and increasing tax collection

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

rates by almost 2 percent. A budget that once ballooned at \$96 million is now at \$83.5 million. By maintaining the fund balance and reducing expenditures, the county was able to maintain its A+ rating when reviewed in 2004 by Standard & Poors. Standard & Poors is an international company that provides independent credit ratings, risk evaluation, investment research, data, and valuations for government and corporations.

That A+ rating will help the county get the lowest interest rates when borrowing money, but the fund balance also has to increase to accomplish the projects facing the county. "The more debt that you have, the more savings you must have," **Smith** explained. "Three years ago we were \$9.5 million off budget, which is 18 cents on the tax rate," **Smith** said. "Now, at year's end, we're very close to projected expenses."

Wayne County meets the state requirements for the money in its general fund, but is on the low end of what the state recommends. "We're required to have at least \$13 million in there by the Local Government Commission," said **Smith**. "But they would like us to have between \$18 to \$22 million."

What the recommended budget will be for the county for 2005-2006 is still not known, because **Smith** and his staff are still meeting with department heads to hammer out the needs. And the county isn't expecting to receive the school's final budgetary needs until mid-May.

Some of the schools fiscal needs should become apparent next week when the commissioners and the school board meet for a day-long budget retreat.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
William Lee Smith
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News Argus
May 19, 2004

County manager gets four-year contract

Author/Byline: Matt Shaw

The Wayne County commissioners agreed Tuesday on a contract for County Manager Lee **Smith**, his first since taking the job two years ago. The four-year deal does not change **Smith's** salary, currently \$92,000, or his benefits, although it does call for **Smith** to receive any cost-of-living increase given other county employees.

The contract's main benefit for **Smith** is that it protects him against an arbitrary decision by the commissioners to fire him. **Smith** would be due six months of severance pay and compensation for lost benefits if he's dismissed without good cause. **Smith** called the contract a vote of confidence.

Traditionally, managers have worked at the pleasure of the board, **Smith** said today. They could be fired "for any reason or even for no reason." In the last decade or so, more managers have sought contracts as a way to protect themselves and their families. About half the county managers in the state have contracts, **Smith** estimated.

Smith is the first Wayne County manager to have a contract. He also had one in Washington County, where he worked until taking the job here in late 2001.

Commissioners said they wanted to give **Smith** stability, especially with the chance that some commissioners will not be re-elected this fall. At least one new face is guaranteed in District 5, while three other incumbents face challengers.

Commissioner John Bell said that he'd like to give **Smith** a 10-year deal and then later joked, "We could do like they do in some Third World countries and make him manager for life." "Whether he wants to or not," **Smith** responded with a laugh.

The new deal, which runs through May 2008, says that **Smith's** salary will be set as part of the budget process. He will receive at least any cost of living pay increase given employees, but commissioners could decide to raise his pay more.

The manager also receives all county benefits, \$8,400 for travel, medical and dental insurance for both him and his family, and a 3 percent contribution to his 401(k) retirement plan.

Compiled By: Shannon Farr
 Colin Baenziger and Associates

Salaries

Candidate Salaries

The following are the base salaries that the semi-finalist candidates gave to us. Although salary is always a consideration, we recommend that it not be the determining factor. A highly qualified, experienced candidate may warrant a higher salary. That individual may well save the Town several times the difference in salary by making better decisions.

We should add that we have spoken with all the candidates, and each has agreed to accept a salary of \$175,000 - \$235,000, which is the advertised range. Specifically, for those candidates above the top of the range, Ms. Alves-Viveiros, if selected, will not need to pay New Jersey state income tax. Hence, her effective salary is within the advertised range. Neither Mr. Russo nor Mr. Smith are working at the present time. Thus, while their most recent salaries were above the top of the range, any salary they receive will be a substantial increase over their current situation. If you have any doubts, we suggest you ask the finalists about their salary requirements when you interview them.

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Current / Most Recent Salary</u>
Alves-Viveiros, Sonia A.	\$ 237,000
Coldwell, Darren N.	178,200
Cole, Robert A. "Rob"	200,000
Daniels, Robert J. "Bob"	130,000
Irby, Glenn A.	176,363
Ladner, E. Lynne	154,113
Lawrence, William R. "Bill"	172,500
Russo, Christopher J. "Chris"	260,000
Smith, W. Lee	253,500

We will add that all the candidates are extremely excited about working as Juno Beach's next Town Manager.



Meeting Name: Town Council
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: Leonard G. Rubin, Town Attorney
Item Title: Ordinance No. 792 (Establishing a Temporary Moratorium on Commercial, Mixed-Use and Multi-Family Development Applications) (**First Reading**)

DISCUSSION:

The Town Council requested that this office prepare an Ordinance declaring a temporary moratorium on new commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family projects within the Town. The Town Council expressed concern with the potential impacts of such new development, including, but not limited to, the effect of such development on traffic, congestion, surrounding property values, aesthetics, and the demand for Town services.

In enacting the temporary moratorium, the Council seeks to evaluate its existing Comprehensive Development Plan and Zoning Code to ensure that all legal and necessary steps are taken to preserve the Town's character as a small seaside community. To that end, the Town has engaged the services of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to analyze existing conditions within the Town, complete a market study, explore various redevelopment strategies, and solicit public input for the creation of a Community Vision and Master Plan. The Town Council wishes to preserve the status quo while formulating the Community Vision and Master Plan. This will promote effective planning and development strategies and determine the appropriate methods and regulatory controls to ensure that future development fits within the Town's vision and does not permanently alter the character of the Town or overwhelm existing infrastructure capacity and roadways, thereby jeopardizing the safety and welfare of current and future residents and visitors.

The attached Ordinance establishes a temporary moratorium on the acceptance, processing, and consideration of any new applications for development approval of a commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family residential project within the Town's commercial and multi-family zoning districts. This moratorium includes the processing of any applications required for such projects, including, but not limited to, comprehensive plan amendments, rezonings, special exception approvals, and site plan and appearance approvals. The moratorium shall not apply for applications for development permits or appearance review within the Town's Residential Single-Family (RS) or Historic Preservation (HIST) Zoning Districts. As discussed at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting, the Ordinance has been amended to also exempt applications for modifications to approved site plans for commercial, mixed-use,

or multi-family residential projects that do not increase total square footage, traffic impacts, or demands on Town facilities or infrastructure.

The moratorium shall remain in effect for a period of up to one (1) year or the completion of the Community Vision and Master Plan, whichever first occurs.

An Ordinance imposing a moratorium is subject to the same statutory requirement for adoption as a rezoning ordinance. Consequently, the Ordinance was considered by the Planning and Zoning Board at a duly advertised public hearing. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board unanimously recommended approval of the Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Staff requests that the Town Council consider the adoption on first reading of Ordinance No. 792, imposing a temporary moratorium on new applications for development approval for commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family residential projects within the Town's commercial and multi-family zoning districts

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA

ORDINANCE NO. 792

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE ACCEPTANCE, PROCESSING, AND CONSIDERATION OF ANY NEW APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL OF A COMMERCIAL, MIXED-USE, OR MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE TOWN FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO ONE YEAR; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Town of Juno Beach is a municipal corporation with the constitutional and statutory authority to exercise any power for a municipal purpose, except when expressly prohibited by law, and regulates zoning and land use within its corporate limits through its Comprehensive Development Plan and Zoning Code; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council is concerned with the potential impacts of new development, including, but not limited to, the effect of new development on traffic, congestion, surrounding property values, aesthetics, the demand for Town services; and other concerns impacting the general welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Juno Beach is located on a barrier island between the Intracoastal Waterway, with limited routes in and out of the Town's corporate limits further hampered by drawbridge access, and wishes to evaluate the impacts of new commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family projects on traffic volume, movement, and congestion, as well as the ability to evacuate the Town in the event of a major storm event; and

WHEREAS, the Town further wishes to evaluate its existing Comprehensive Development Plan and Zoning Code to ensure that all legal and necessary steps are taken to preserve the Town's character as a small seaside community; and

WHEREAS, the Town has engaged the services of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to analyze existing conditions within the Town, complete a market study, explore various redevelopment strategies, and solicit public input for the creation of a Community Vision and Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council wishes to preserve the status quo while formulating the Community Vision and Master Plan to promote effective planning and development strategies and determine the appropriate methods and regulatory controls to ensure that future development fits within the Town's vision and does not permanently alter the character of the Town or overwhelm existing infrastructure capacity and roadways, thereby jeopardizing the safety and welfare of current and future residents and visitors; and

1 WHEREAS, the Town has held all required public hearings necessary to enact a
2 moratorium, including review by the Town’s Planning and Zoning Board, sitting as the
3 Local Planning Agency; and
4

5 WHEREAS, the Town Council determines that the adoption of this Ordinance is in
6 the interests of the public health, safety, and welfare.
7

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE
9 TOWN OF JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA as follows:
10

11 **Section 1. Recitals.** The foregoing “Whereas” clauses are ratified as true and
12 correct and are hereby incorporated herein by reference.
13

14 **Section 2. Moratorium Imposed.** The Town Council hereby declares a
15 moratorium on the acceptance, processing, and consideration of any new application for
16 development approval of a commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family residential project
17 within the Town’s commercial and multi-family zoning districts. This moratorium includes
18 the processing of any applications required for such projects, including, but not limited to,
19 comprehensive plan amendments, rezonings, special exception approvals, and site plan
20 and appearance approvals.
21

22 **Section 3. Exceptions.** This moratorium shall not apply to: (a) applications for
23 development permits or appearance review within the Town’s Residential Single-Family
24 (RS) Zoning Districts or Historic Preservation (HIST) Zoning Districts; and (b) applications
25 for modifications to approved site plans for commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family
26 residential projects that do not increase total square footage, traffic impacts, or demands
27 on Town facilities or infrastructure.
28

29 **Section 4. Duration of Moratorium.** This moratorium shall remain in effect for a
30 period of up to one (1) year from the effective date of this Ordinance or the completion of
31 the Community Vision and Master Plan, whichever first occurs.
32

33 **Section 5. Severability.** If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or
34 word of this Ordinance is for any reason held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be
35 unconstitutional, inoperative, or void, such holding shall not affect the remainder of the
36 Ordinance.
37

38 **Section 6. Conflicts.** All ordinances and resolutions, or parts of ordinances and
39 resolutions, in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such
40 conflict.
41

42 **Section 7. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall become effective immediately
43 upon adoption.
44

1 FIRST READING this _____ day of _____, 2025.
2
3 SECOND, FINAL READING AND ADOPTION this _____ day of _____, 2025.
4
5
6 _____ _____ _____
7 AYE NAY PEGGY WHEELER, MAYOR
8
9 _____ _____ _____
10 AYE NAY DD HALPERN, VICE MAYOR
11
12 _____ _____ _____
13 AYE NAY MARIANNE HOSTA, VICE MAYOR PRO TEM
14
15 _____ _____ _____
16 AYE NAY DIANA DAVIS, COUNCILMEMBER
17
18 _____ _____ _____
19 AYE NAY JOHN CALLAGHAN, COUNCILMEMBER
20 ATTEST: APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGAL
21 SUFFICIENCY:
22
23
24 _____ _____
25 CAITLIN COPELAND-RODRIGUEZ LEONARD G. RUBIN
26 TOWN CLERK TOWN ATTORNEY
27



Meeting Name: Town Council
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: Davila, F. CFM
Item Title: Discussion on Lighting and Cameras around Pelican Lake

BACKGROUND:

On January 21, 2025, the Juno Beach Police Foundation offered to provide funding towards video cameras and lighting improvements around Pelican Lake (attachment #1).

In accordance with the Town's Restricted Donation Policy (Resolution 2024-07), all donations related to public safety equipment must be reviewed by the Town Council to assess the Town's critical needs for future funding.

During the same meeting, the Council requested that staff conduct a nighttime survey of Pelican Lake to evaluate the need for lighting upgrades. Staff completed the survey on February 11, 2025, and determined that Pelican Lake could benefit from additional full-size streetlights and bollard lights (attachment #2), which are currently being used around Pelican Lake. Staff recommends the addition of three cameras, to be located at or around the three gazebos within Pelican Lake.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on staff's findings, staff recommends that the Town engage one of its Engineering firms to develop a photometric plan for Pelican Lake, detailing the specific locations and quantities for the additional lighting improvements. Staff would like to emphasize the continued use of the same lighting fixtures, as they are aesthetically pleasing and do not emit the harsh white light associated with LED lights.

Attachment(s):

1. Juno Beach Police Foundation Letter
2. Lighting Fixtures used in Pelican Lake



Helping to Enhance the Safety of Juno Beach

January 21, 2025

Dear Interim Town Manager Davila and Dear Mayor Wheeler,

The Juno Beach Police Foundation is committed to enhancing safety and security in our community, a goal that is central to our mission. To that end, we are prepared to provide funding for video cameras and, if needed, improved lighting in the Pelican Lake area to bolster security measures.

We hope the Town will consider accepting these funds to move this important initiative forward. Please let us know how we can collaborate to ensure its success.

Thank you for your time and support.

Best regards,

Thomas F. Murphy
President, Juno Beach Police Foundation

cc: Town Manager Caitlin E. Copeland-Rodriguez

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Board Advisors

Brian J. Smith
Chief of Police
Juno Beach
Police Department

Mark G. Saloio
Assistant Chief
Juno Beach
Police Department



Item #15.

1221



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: Steven J. Hallock, Director of Public Works
Item Title: 2024 Town Council Goal - Enhancing the Beautification of the Town (US Highway 1 Median).

COUNCIL GOAL #1 (2024-2025)

DISCUSSION:

Town Council had established goals for FY 2024-2025 in which Staff has been working on and providing monthly updates. At this time, Staff would like to further discuss and obtain Council direction for Goal #1: *Develop a plan to increase code compliance and maintenance to enhance the beautification of the Town by December 1, 2024, with the upkeep ongoing.*

Main focus areas are as follows:

- 1) **US1 median enhancements:** Based upon the most recent update on the Goal Update Report (see **attachment #1**), there is a recommendation by staff to inquire about a landscaping architect. The Town recently conducted a Request for Qualifications for Professional Engineering and Related Services which resulted in Council approval of three (3) engineering firms to utilize (WGI, Simmons & White, and Engenuity). These firms offer landscaping architects which can be utilized to recommend or conduct improved enhancements to the US1 medians. Therefore, does the council wish to proceed with budgeting for landscaping improvements by a professional for all US1 median areas within the Town for FY 2025-2026?
- 2) **Determine responsibilities for upkeep along US1 (private vs public) and enforce.** Staff would specifically like to address the area on the east side of US1 between Olympus Drive and Mars Way regarding the landscaping (see **attachments #2 & #3**).

Staff is providing the following options and seeking direction from the Town Council:

- 1) Keep the area status quo; or
- 2) Enforce the Town's landscape code, section 34-1088, which requires that all landscaping in a right-of-way be maintained by the adjacent property owner; or
- 3) Set a budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 to put towards utilizing professional services implement a landscaping maintenance plan for the area as well as ongoing maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff on how to proceed.



Council Goals 2024-2025 UPDATE REPORT

High Priority:

1. **Develop a plan to increase code compliance and maintenance to enhance the beautification of the town by December 1, 2024, with the upkeep ongoing.**
 - **US1 median enhancements – *ONGOING/LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT NEEDED***
 - **Town Center and Pelican Lake – evaluate lawn care. - *ONGOING***
 - **Determine responsibilities for upkeep along US1 (private vs public) and enforce. *COMPLETED***
 - **Sidewalk repairs and pavers refurbishment plan and implementation. *PAVER SECTIONS ON DONALD ROSS ROAD COMPLETED/APPLIED FOR A 200K “TRAIL-GO” GRANT/PELICAN LAKE SIDEWALK REPAIRS BEING SCHEDULED/NEW ATLANTIC BLVD SIDEWALK IS SCHEDULED***
 - **Website complaint portal - *COMPLETED***
 - **Complete Streets status – *COMPLETE STREETS IS AT LEAST 5 YEARS OUT***

STATUS 2/07/25:

- **No Update.**

STATUS 1/03/25:

- No Update.

STATUS 12/06/24:

- All sidewalk repairs around Pelican Lake were completed this week.

STATUS 11/08/24:

- All sidewalk paver section replacement was completed on Donald Ross Road between US-1 and Ocean Drive. Palm Beach County has been contacted about scheduling the needed concrete sidewalk repairs this month.
- Mechanical removal of all Pelican Lake aquatic vegetation was completed and an agreement for monthly treatment for algae control (GreenClean) along with the existing torpedo grass control (TIGR) is finalized.
- Six pallets of new sod were laid in the cattail and aquatic vegetation removal staging areas and broken sidewalks marked for replacement this month.
- Quotes are being received until 11/15/24 to install a new fountain and lights on the south side of Pelican Lake. Installation is expected to be completed this month.
- The Public Works Department rapidly prepared for and cleaned up after Hurricane Milton, and immediately after Hurricane Milton responded to a Styrofoam beach spill that required a major beach cleanup. As a result, the Town impacts from both major events were quickly mitigated.
- New Veteran bricks have been installed in front of the Veterans Memorial Monument.
- The Celestial crosswalk by the 9/11 Memorial Monument was painted and the Celestial Street compass painting will be completed this month.

- Restoration of the Town Center courtyard bronze turtle and the 9/11 Memorial Monument will be completed this month.
- The Donald Ross Dune Walkover Renovation agreements for engineering and surveying services is scheduled to go to the Town Council on 11/13/2024.

STATUS 10/04/24:

- FY 2024-2025 Budget has been finalized.
- Sidewalk repairs were completed on the North side of Donald Ross Road between US1 & Ocean Drive. The Southside is still in the process of being repaired.
- Staff was directed by the Town Council on September 27th to mechanically remove Chara, Marine Naiad, and Hydrilla from Pelican Lake; and to treat the Lake as needed to avoid future algae blooms.
- Discussion on US1 Median enhancements scheduled for November Town Council meeting.

STATUS 09/06/24:

- The Town Council will be finalizing the 2024-2025 budget on September 25, 2024.
- The Town Council made a motion to terminate the 2023 contract with Terracon Services for landscaping services and approved the 2024-26 Contract that they submitted through the Request for Proposals process.
- Pelican Lake cattails were mechanically removed from the southeast corner of the lake and new plants put in by Stocking Savvy. Torpedo grass and invasive species around the lake are being removed monthly.
- Sidewalk repairs are expected to start taking place in October.
- We did receive the grant for Safe Streets study.

STATUS 08/02/24:

- The Town Council gave unanimous consensus to have a discussion on creating an additional Code Enforcement Officer position for the August meeting.
- The Council made a motion to move forward with the proposed repairs on Donald Ross Road now; and authorize \$2,500 from contingency for RMPK's services to apply for the TRAIL-GO grant; authorize the Town Manager to sign all necessary documentation; and have staff evaluate the cost for concrete borders for the brick pavers sections and report back to the Council on the cost differential.
- The Town is currently in the process of re-bidding the landscape & maintenance services contract which will be reviewed by the Town Council at the August 28th Town Council meeting.
- **Code Complaint Portal** has been created for the Town's Website.
- Complete streets is at least 5 years out.

2. Conduct a review and benchmarking of building site regulations for all zoning districts.

- **Prioritize commercial and multifamily.**
- **Consultant versus internal.**
- **Select the top 5 items to compare what will best protect the quality of life for Juno Beach residents.**

STATUS 2/07/25:

STATUS 1/03/25:

- The detailed list of costs from the proposed Zoning Consultant will be brought back to the Town Council for their review at the January meeting.

STATUS 12/6/24:

- Staff will present their recommendation on the Zoning Consultant at the December 17th, 2024 Town Council meeting.

STATUS 11/08/24:

- Staff have advertised for the proposed services for the code re-write, as directed by Town Council at the October Town Council Meeting, a final recommendation will be brought to Council at the December meeting.

STATUS 10/04/24:

- An agenda discussion item that includes prioritizing the Planning & Zoning List of items, quotes for code consultants, and proposed work will be brought to the Town Council on October 23rd.

STATUS 09/06/24:

- No update.

STATUS 08/02/24:

- The Council made a motion to direct staff to benchmark the regulations of other communities for mass, size, and scale; height; building area regulations; wall treatments; second floor area; and off-street parking for single-family homes with particular attention to the existing regulations of the Village of North Palm Beach, the City of Lake Worth Beach, and the Town of Palm Beach.

Priority:

3. **Continue to pursue the creation of a master plan to be implemented or being developed by May 2025.**
 - **Evaluate grants for plan.**
 - **Scope and costs**

STATUS 2/07/25:

STATUS 1/03/25:

- Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council has been conducting their interviews with not only the Town Council but with local residents, business owners, and citizens. They are currently ahead of schedule of their proposed timeline.

STATUS 12/06/24:

- The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council has begun to work on the Master Development Plan as directed by Town Council.

STATUS 11/08/24:

- At the October Town Council meeting, Town Council directed staff for the Town to engage in an Interlocal Agreement with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to provide services to develop a Community Vision and Master Plan.

STATUS 10/04/24:

- No Update.

STATUS 09/06/24:

- The council approved a budget increase for this item and TCRPC is currently working on a revised plan to fit that budget.

STATUS 08/02/24:

- Treasure Coast Regional Planning Agency provided the Town with a project scope and cost estimate for a Public Design Charrette and Redevelopment Master Plan. The council will be discussing how to proceed during the budget process.

4. Evaluate the renovation needs of Town Center and pursue action towards implementation of the needs by May 2025.

- **South patio expansion**
- **Police department**
- **Building department**
- **Council Chambers**

STATUS 2/07/25:**STATUS 1/03/25:**

- Staff will be providing the committee's recommendation for Engineer Firms and Services at the January Meeting after the RFQ for Engineering services is complete. The new Engineer Firm(s) will include an Architect within their umbrella of professionals which will facilitate the process for improvements/expansions to the Town Center.

STATUS 12/06/24:

- Town Council decided not to move forward with the dais expansion. The new audio/video equipment is on schedule for January 13-15.

STATUS 11/08/24:

- Staff will be bringing information about the dais expansion to the Town Council at the November 13th meeting; and the timeline for the installation of the new audio/video equipment is currently scheduled for January 13, 14, & 15.

STATUS 10/04/24:

- Starting October 1st, Staff will be working on extending the Council Chamber dais for the purpose of including the Town Clerk; and updating the audio equipment.

STATUS 09/06/24:

- Staff is in the process of obtaining quotes for new Audio/Video equipment for the Council Chambers as well as a renovation of the dais to extend and fit the Town Clerk Department.

STATUS 08/02/24:

- Staff will be initiating the start of the Police and Building expansions during the 24-25 Fiscal Year

5. Pursue a strategic plan for the town and if approved have it in place by May 2025.

- **Consultant versus Council/staff**
- **New mission and vision**
- **Strategic initiatives and action plan**

STATUS 2/07/25:**STATUS 1/03/25:**

- Mr. Karas is planning to conduct a staff workshop at the end of January on "how to" best accomplish goals and vision set by Council and Residents after their workshop.

STATUS 10/04/24:

- Town Council and Staff met with Mr. Karas. Mr. Karas is now planning an in-person only Strategic Plan Participatory Resident Workshop for October 16, 2024 from 4pm-7pm.

STATUS 09/06/24:

- Town Council and Staff are scheduled to meet individually with Mr. Karas on September 12, 2024. After that date a Workshop with the Public will be scheduled.

STATUS 08/02/24:

- The Town Council contract with consultant James E. Karas who specializes in Strategic & Community Planning to conduct individual one-on-one meetings with the Council and a Public Workshop to obtain input and ideas towards strategic planning for the Town.

Low Priority:

6. **Utilize infographics and enhance public presentation of financials to coincide with the upcoming budget and ongoing by October 1, 2024.**
 - Evaluate finance software for replacement.
 - Format static data to visual.
 - Enhance financial highlights brochure.

STATUS 10/04/24:

- **COMPLETED**

STATUS 09/06/24:

- More visuals such as charts, graphs, etc. are being utilized to convey the not only the budget in a more comprehensible format but projects as well.

STATUS 08/02/24:

- Staff have been incorporating charts and presentations for the public to better understand the budget process.

7. **Improve time management of meetings and professionalism on the dais and in the chambers by September 1, 2024.**
 - Revisit decorum resolution.
 - Implement a civility policy.

STATUS 2/07/25:**STATUS 1/03/25:**

- Code of Conduct policy will be brought to the Town Council for discussion at the January meeting.

STATUS 11/08/24:

- Public Participation policy and Code of Conduct policy will be brought to the Town Council for discussion on November 13, 2024.

STATUS 10/04/24:

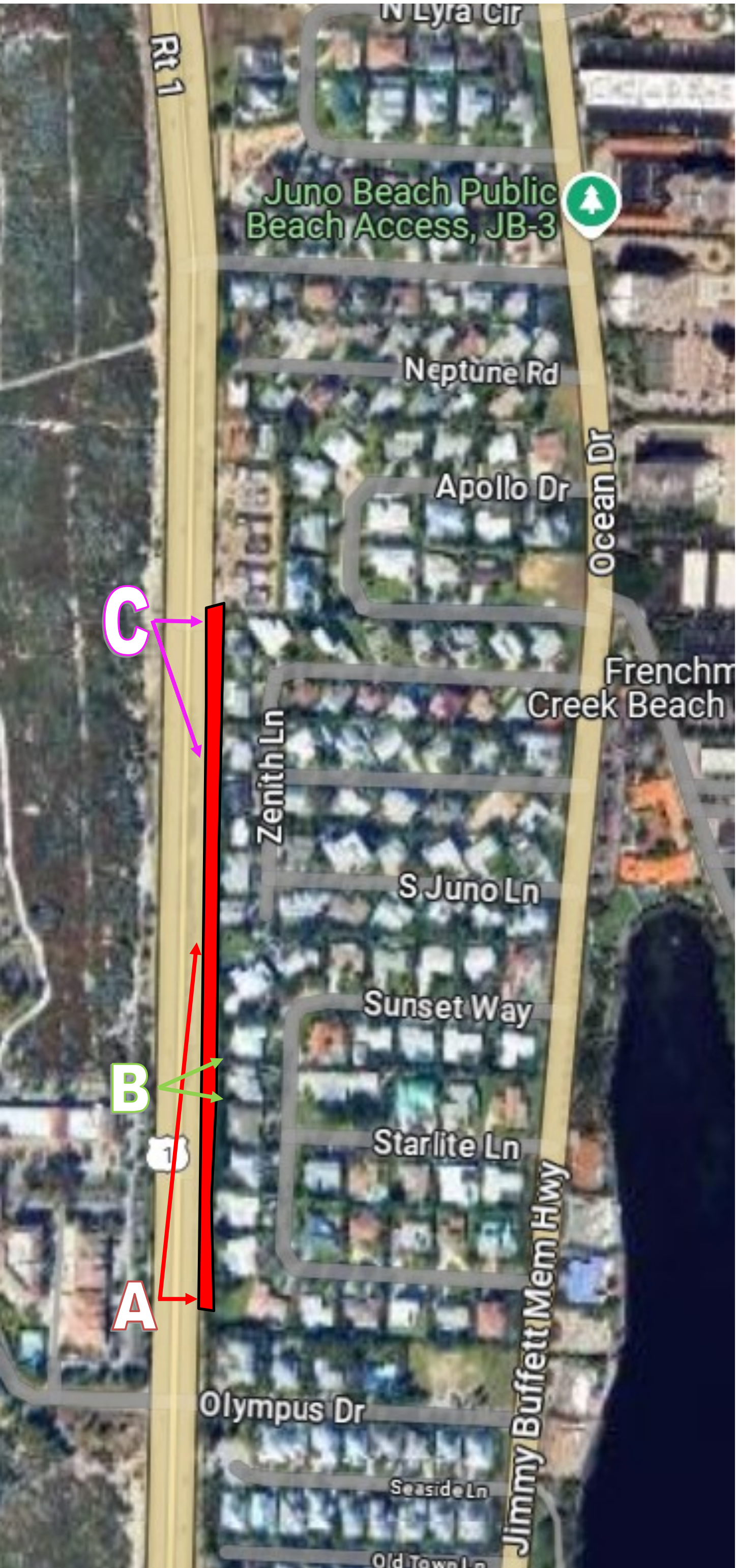
- A revised Decorum Policy is being brought to the Town Council for their consideration on October 23rd.

STATUS 09/06/24:

- No update.

STATUS 08/02/24:

- The Council gave consensus to send the Town Attorney their individual changes for the November 2022 proposed decorum resolution and have staff prepare a draft to review at a future meeting.





***Tripsacum floridana
(Fakahatchee Grass)**





*Tripsacum floridana*¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Florida Tripsacum is an herbaceous perennial originating in South Florida that forms a dense, upright clump of 3-foot-long leaves (Fig. 1). These flat blades of grass grow from a short, thick, underground rhizome. Blades are noticeably more narrow than *Tripsacum dactyloides*. This grass attains a height of about 2 to 3 feet and spreads to form a clump up to 6-feet-wide. The flowers appear in somewhat showy spikes, with rust-colored anthers. These spikes appear in the spring and summer.

General Information

Scientific name: *Tripsacum floridana*

Pronunciation: trip-SAY-kum flor-rid-DAY-nuh

Common name(s): Florida Gamma Grass, Dwarf Fakahatchee Grass, Florida Tripsacum

Family: *Gramineae*

Plant type: herbaceous; ornamental grass

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: accent; border; mass planting; container or above-ground planter

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

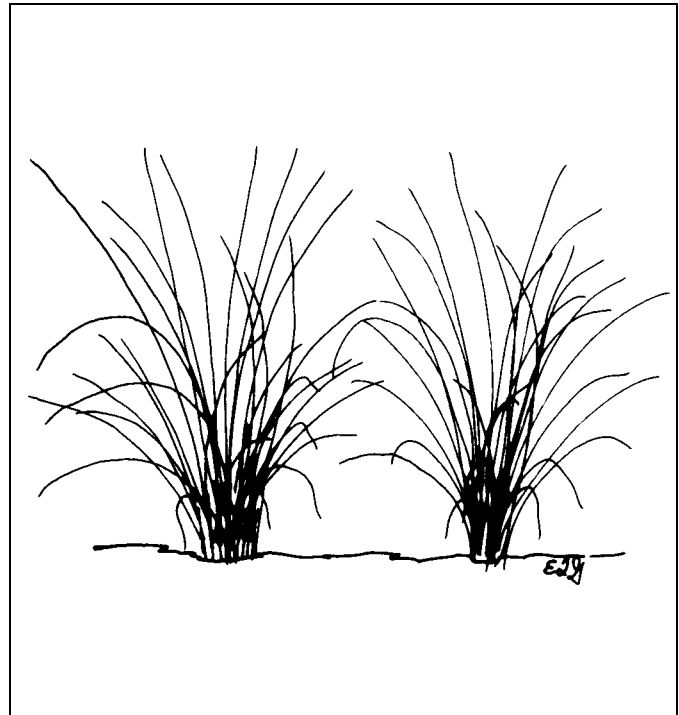


Figure 1. Florida Gamma Grass.

Description

Height: 3 to 4 feet

Spread: 4 to 6 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-589, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October, 1999 Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: semi-evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: moderate

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Florida *Tripsacum* has proven to be an outstanding landscape plant and may be used as an accent in ground cover beds. It is also useful to stabilize banks and steep slopes. This grass may also create a nice edging along streams and ponds. The adaptability of Florida *Tripsacum* makes it well suited for planting in water retention and detention areas. These areas are often wet or inundated for a period of time, then become very dry.

Florida *Tripsacum* needs a full sun or light shade position in the landscape and adapts to dense and light soils. It is tolerant of wet soil conditions but is also quite drought tolerant. It is one of the most shade tolerant grasses, and naturalizes readily in a moist site. It is listed as an endangered plant in Florida.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.



Meeting Name: Town Council
Meeting Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: Mayer, Stephen
Item Title: Subterranean Parking Discussion Item Memo

COUNCIL GOAL #6 (2024-2025)

BACKGROUND:

The Town Council has identified the following Council goals, or subject areas of importance, for staff to discuss. This discussion item is Council Goal #6, as listed in the summary of staff items below (this item is emphasized in bold):

Rank	Subject	Summary	Status
1	Limiting Density for Commercial/ Residential projects	Discussion - as part of the Planning and Zoning Board’s 2024 Topics, they wish to discuss tools to limit density in commercial and residential development projects.	Discussed at the November 2024 P&Z Meeting
2	Single-Family Site Plan Review	Town Council requested for staff to prepare a draft ordinance that includes both site plan criteria and appearance review criteria.	Discussed at the October 2024 meeting
3	Excavation Permit	Staff initiated – following the recent adoption of Construction Site Standards and the Town’s current requirement on not allowing the regrading of a property without a building permit, staff would like additional information and imposing requirements when projects are removing or adding fill to assure their methods are safe.	Ongoing TC (2/26/25)
4	Tower Structure Height	Discussion – Clarify scope of work to only include RH, RM-1, RM-2 zoning districts. Previous directions were to include all applicable zoning districts.	Scheduled for the March 2025 meeting
5	Definitions	Staff initiated – review Section 34-4 to add/modify existing definitions, such as but not limited to, lot coverage, accessory apartments, dwelling units, accessory structures, recreational vehicle (RV’s), swales, Coastal	Ongoing PZ (3/2/25)

		High Hazard Area, North American Vertical Datum (NAVD 88).	
6	Subterranean Parking	Discussion by Council at a future meeting	Ongoing TC (2/26/25)
7	Discussion on Traffic Concerns on Donald Ross Road and US Hwy 1 Intersection	Council requested a temporary moratorium on all new mixed-used development(s) to study the impacts of mixed-use development in commercial zoning districts and determine the appropriate methods and regulatory controls to ensure that future development does not permanently alter the character of the Town and overwhelm existing infrastructure and roadways.	Ongoing
8	Zoning in-progress inspections	Discussion by Council at a future meeting	Pending
9	Vacation Rental Application Fees	Discussion by Council at a future meeting	Pending
10	Non-conforming mechanical equipment	Discussion by Council at a future meeting	Pending

Staff notes that the Council goal was in response to the impact of the subterranean parking structure recently built on the Caretta project. The project included a subterranean (or underground) parking garage that runs below much of the property. The underground parking garage contains most of the project's required parking, 270 out of 365 spaces. The other 95 parking spaces consist of surface parking located on the Donald Ross Road (east) side and on the west side of the project, adjacent to Plaza la Mer. The total square footage of subterranean parking area is approximately 163,000 square feet.

The current Town Code permits subterranean parking and future development, or redevelopment may utilize below-grade parking to satisfy the required parking space counts, just as Caretta. The Town Code has provisions that account for underbuilding parking areas and does not constitute a story in consideration for height (the applicable language ***bold and italicized***). The Town Code defines basement as meaning “a story situated under a building having exterior perimeter walls, a floor level two or more feet below the level of the contiguous exterior ground outside of the building and having one-half or more of its floor-to-ceiling height below the average level of all the exterior ground of the lot comprising the subject building development site. A basement story shall not be considered a story with regards to height regulations contained in this chapter if said story does not exceed eight feet above the average mean elevation for the subject lot, ***and if designed or adapted to and used solely for the purpose of automobile parking*** and/or machinery and essential building utility services not involving habitable space. The exterior walls of said basement story shall be set back from all property lines as required for said building situated over the basement story, and minimum door openings in said basement walls shall be limited to those essential to permit one automobile entry access driveway and ***one automobile exit driveway for each separated under-building parking area***, plus pedestrian lobby entries and required fire escape exit ways.”

The Town Code also defines parking required as “those parking facilities determined as the minimum facilities necessary to comply with this chapter as set forth in the Schedule of Off-Street Parking Requirements in section 34-981(b)(5).” Subterranean parking is considered a parking facility, just like a parking garage, so therefore, the Town Code does not bar the inclusion of basement level, below-grade, or subterranean parking meeting required parking numbers.

In recent years, the State of Florida has seen recent examples of how developers and builders are utilizing underground parking to create more space out of confined real estate. By building the required parking spaces underground, the area that would otherwise be devoted to a surface lot (affecting lot coverage) or above-grade parking levels (affecting building height), wouldn't count against either. This would allow developers to utilize the lot coverage and/or height toward developing more of the site. The Jade Signature Project in Miami, which is a two and a half story subterranean garage built just 100 feet from the ocean, and the Royal Palm Residences in Boca Raton, which is a three-story subterranean garage a half mile from the ocean are two recent and controversial examples of large subterranean parking projects in South Florida. Proponents argue that the use of subterranean parking allows developers to provide retail uses and residential amenities on lower floors, while opponents warn of potential safety, flooding and environmental concerns to these engineering endeavors. Staff also notes that one of the considerations for the Caretta project is the concept that subterranean parking puts the parking out of sight to the public view and could be considered an aesthetic advantage over providing unsightly surface parking.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests from the Town Council review the code provisions for subterranean parking and provide directions regarding issues that need to be addressed by staff.



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting

Meeting Date: February 26, 2025

Prepared By: C. Copeland-Rodriguez, MMC, Town Clerk

Item Title: Discussion on a Policy for Funding Additional Training for Council Members

DISCUSSION:

At the June 26, 2024, Town Council meeting, Mayor Wheeler, Vice Mayor Halpern, and Councilmember Davis gave consensus to have a discussion at a future meeting on a policy for funding additional training for Council members (such as conferences, meetings, seminars, etc.).

Currently, the Town Council has an approved budget of \$9,000 per Fiscal Year for training purposes, which is \$1,800 per person. This budgeted amount also includes all reimbursement requests made by individual council members.

Example: The Florida League of Cities' Annual Conference with hotel stay and a per diem reimbursement request can add up to approximately **\$1,550+ /each.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is prepared to answer any questions on this item.